



## **Class formation and identities**

### **Session: Measuring class in the 21st Century**

#### **Contributions of a materialist ontology to the critical knowledge of labour processes and workers struggles.**

**Maria Ceci Misoczky, Rafael Kruter Flores**

Reading Marx's oeuvre as an ontological critique of capitalism, Lukács (1978a: 5), in his late writings, highlights that "for the first time in the history of philosophy, the categories of economics appear as those of the production and reproduction of human life, and hence make it possible to depict the social existence ontologically on a materialist basis"

Labour is the founding category of the social being because the historical process of its development (from inorganic and organic towards social being) involved an ontological transformation: the rise of a new objectivity expressed in the teleological project as a form of material transformation of material reality. Therefore, human practice is finalistic, it is the ideal positing of an end and its consequence is objectification: it is teleological (Lukács, 1978a and 1978b). Labour – "the original phenomenon", "the model for all social practice", the exclusively human activity that makes "teleological positing" real – can be used to illuminate other kinds of social positing (Lukács, 1978b: 46). For him, the teleology entailed in labour is what distinguishes this specific human practice from the reproduction of other forms of being (organic and inorganic).

Central to the humanization of man through labour is also the fact that its ontological constitution forms the genetic point of departure to freedom. Labour is a casual chain transformed into a posited causality, it involves conscious decisions between alternatives. As "the original phenomenon", it is also the model for all social practices; it is in this conscious decision that the phenomenon of freedom can be investigated in its ontological genesis. In the first place, because "the basis of freedom [...] consists in a concrete decision between different concrete possibilities"; in the second, because "freedom is ultimately a desire to alter reality [...] and in this connection reality must be preserved as the goal of change, even in the most far-reaching abstraction" (Lukács, 1978b: 114).

After this very brief introduction to Lukács' ontology of social being and labour as its fundament, we can also briefly highlight some of its contributions to advance a critical knowledge of labour processes and workers struggles. Firstly, in philosophical terms, it can



contribute to a renewal of critical realism – despite the lack of interest of those who work within this perspective to explore the mutual benefits of combining it with the propositions put forward by Lukács (Duayer and Medeiros, 2005). Secondly, it can advance an ontological critique of the contradiction between the centrality of labour (as a structural social category) and the progressive decrease in the need of immediate work. Thirdly, the ontological critique is also indispensable (even if not sufficient) to a transformative praxis that confronts capitalist organization of labour and creates alternatives for the emancipation of labour and humankind.[]

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## **Processes of class structuring and social stratification in Argentina (1955 - 2010)**

**Adrián Piva**

The aim of the paper is to make a first approach to the study of the transformation of evolution trends of structural class relations and social stratification processes in Argentina since 1976. For this we will make a comparison between trends of evolution of significant dimensions for both processes between 1955 - 1975 and 1976 - 2016 from national censuses of population and economic censuses.

We understand the class as a social relationship that, through the salary relationship, confronts people as character masks of capital and labour, that is, as specimens of class. It is, at this level of analysis, an objective social relationship (independent of the consciousness, identity and will of the people) and antagonistic. Capitalist development tends to increasingly confront individuals as class specimens. And as individuals, their social conditions of existence are presented them as "structure", a functional context that is autonomous and endowed with objectivity. In this sense, we are talking about structural class relations.

However, simultaneously, the capital / labor contradiction unequally go through individuals, producing processes of social differentiation that sociology tended to identify through differential life opportunities of individuals determined by their market situation. Such processes of differentiation configure maps of social stratification.

The distinction becomes relevant insofar as both processes are the basis of class formation / class disorganization processes in the struggles for the definition of the field of social confrontation, determining structural capacities and structural restrictions for collective action by workers.

Our hypothesis is that the capitalist offensive and restructuring process initiated in 1976 produced a profound transformation of the trends of evolution of the structural relations of class and the processes of social stratification. These transformations are characterized by the acceleration of the processes of structuring relations between people as objective class relations and by the simultaneous heterogeneization of workers through processes of social stratification.



## Researching women's class position through work biographies: women and labour in Croatia

Valerija Barada, Jaka Primorac

For over two decades research into class stratification in Croatia has been rather neglected. This can mostly be attributed to political reasons connected to changes from socialism to capitalism: the pre-1990s dominant Marxist use of class went out of favour in the new political set up. Importantly, the few studies that have been conducted on the class distribution of the general population, apart from the typical socio-demographic data, still have failed to address the particularities of social position of women, namely the intersection between class and gender. This paper aims to redeem this absence in social class research in Croatia by intersecting women's work biographies and their class positions.

Inspired by the work of Beverly Skeggs (2002) on the formations of class and gender and Carolyn Steedman's (1986) "Landscape for a good woman", we define class as not just a socio-economic-cultural category, but rather as a thoroughly gendered trait which is both structural and individual. The intersection of these elements is evident in life-course biographies which in the case of women usually mean researching their family life. However, in order to avoid the essentialization of women's lives, we find that this intersection becomes especially clear and empirically and theoretically rich through female work biographies. Since women, arguably, get social recognition only by participating in labour market, paid work is a legitimate frame for investigating the complexities of their class position. That said, in order to grasp the dynamics of gendered female class positions, we define work as all of the everyday activities, and not only those that are paid. Used as an encompassing concept that does not even out women's social positions, work biographies tend to accentuate both the similarities and differences of female class positions.

This paper is based on preliminary results from a three-year (2016-2019) mixed methods research project „Social stratification in Croatia: structural and subjective aspects“ (funded by the Croatian Science Foundation), which is the first major project on class stratification in Croatia since the late 1980s. The paper is focused on findings from narrative interviews conducted with more than 30 adult women (for interview protocols McAdams's (1993) technique of nuclear episodes was used and adjusted). The interviewees were recruited after conducting a national-wide questionnaire thus providing for a maximal variation of research sample in both the social and labour position of women, as well as their regional geographical dispersion. This sampling method ensures that the socio-biographical specificities and inequalities of women of different class positions emerge in diverse and interesting ways.



**Quantifying marxist variables for a more grounded interpretation of capitalism and the social relations of exploitation. The rate of surplus value from 1973 to 2012**

**Camila Brito Sabatini, Joaquin Farina**

For years —and even today— people have questioned the value of measuring Marxist variables in our economy. Our disquisition approaches this discussion by explaining why it is relevant for economists to do quantitative Marxism. On this matter, we will define exactly what quantitative Marxism is and explain what its major weaknesses are, keeping in mind that the data presented to us nowadays responds to a Neoclassic-keynesian model analysis.

We will be mentioning the controversies that have erupted from Marxism itself, mainly from the purists who dismiss the possibility that economic phenomena can be measured quantitatively. However, we will be questioning this stance by providing examples of Marxist measurements developed in the last period of time. It is important to show the advantages of doing these measurements so we can perform a thorough analysis of the applicability and significance quantitative Marxism has in the economic and social field.

In order to study the structure, configuration and dynamics of a capitalist society, we need to understand the main concepts of the Labor Value Theory. And for this, quantifying phenomena is a valid methodological resource for all intellectual currents.

We will be focusing especially on the evolution of the global rate of surplus value as a way of showing class struggle. This discourse will be referring to the methodological discussion about measuring the rate of exploitation. In order to achieve a more efficient and globally homogeneous measurement of this rate, we will be using a method that serves itself from national accounts; thus making a longitudinal and historical analysis of social relations and its structure dynamics.

For the national accounts to be redefined and integrated in a new data matrix, we propose a deconstruction of its concepts and the way it operates. The methodological foundations of the integrated analysis design aimed to calculate the rate of exploitation of the capitalist world are developed with data coming from the regionalized national accounts of at least 90% of the capitalist GDP. In order to calculate this, there has to be a number of variables in mind: income of employees, mixed rents, wages in government and public administration; to achieve the relation between unpaid and paid work, crucial to determine the size of the exploitation rate through the Labor Value Theory.

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In return, we will try to provide a preliminary explanation for this evolution. In response to the tendency of the rate of profit to fall (as foreseen by Marx), we could use the rate of exploitation as an adjustment variable that acts as a cause for a counterbalance. The resulting series of measurement will allow us to ultimately describe the evolution on the levels of exploitation and its social and political impact.



## **Session: Class and inequality in the cultural industries**

### **Socio-cultural reproduction of economic inequalities in independent cultural sector: fighting for the margins**

**Jaka Primorac, Valerija Barada, Edgar Burši**

This paper deals with the reproduction of inequalities in the independent cultural sector focusing on how socio-cultural conditions create economic inequalities and vice versa, how economic relations create socio-cultural differences. This, almost historical interplay of social, cultural and economic realms, structure rather firmly both the individual as well as the institutional laboring practices in the independent cultural sector in Croatia. Despite the continuing economic crisis in Croatia, workers in this sector have found a labor market niche for themselves, with ways to fund their production activities mostly through state-funded subsidies for civil society organizations (CSO) in the field of culture and the arts. Workers in the sector firstly self-define their work as well as the sector and then struggle over scarce financial, material and human resources, all in the attempt of maintaining presence (and their work places) in this marginal reproduction sector.

These issues of economic inequality will be addressed on three levels: 1) the issue of regional differences of laboring in this sector that is built on the socio-economic relation between the capital city of Zagreb and other parts of Croatia; 2) the gender differences among cultural laborers connected to typical work-family balance differences, but also to more refined gender creative labor imbalance; and 3) the socio-demographic differences that can be interpreted as class differences or differences in social and cultural capital of cultural workers. Authors will show how these inequalities are not only created only within the sector itself, but also how they are juxtaposed with and reproduced from broader societal conditions.

This paper is part of an ongoing research analysis of work in civil society organisations in the field of contemporary arts and culture in Croatia, which is based on mixed methods empirical study conducted in 2014 and 2015 and on additional secondary and statistical data. The scope of the primary empirical data entails two questionnaires (one on institutional conditions of labour in civil society organizations in contemporary arts and culture, second on personal labour conditions of employees in those organizations; and 22 semi-structured interviews with leaders of the longest-running CSOs in arts and culture in nine Croatian cities. The secondary data analyzed came from the database of project applications from foundation that supports these CSOs; and current statistical data on the socio-demographic of the employed in the researched sector.

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## **'Raw talent' - classed constructions of inequality in the cultural industries**

**Kate Oakley**

Recent years have seen rising awareness of the issue of inequality in the cultural industries - in the academy, in the sectors themselves and among policymakers. Drawing on empirical work among policymakers (and part of a larger international study), this paper will look at how questions of class inequalities in particular are understood and presented in UK policy discourse. In particular, it will consider the notion of 'raw talent,' a term, which is generally reserved, in this discourse, for the working class and people of colour. It argues that the mobilisation of this term, both to suggest untapped economic potential and the possibilities of meritocracy, simultaneously works to maintain class distinctions and thus helps us to understand both the limited success of policy initiatives thus far, and the terrain on which labour organisations need to fight.



## **Session: The making and unmaking of the working class**

### **The Organisation of Labour in Rio Grande, Brazil: productive and reproductive processes in the uprising and decay of shipbuilding industry**

**Guilherme Dornelas Camara, Diego D'Avila Rosa; Rogério Faé**

The paper develops the category of 'organisation of labour' in order to analyze how labour productive and reproductive processes take place in the city of Rio Grande, southern Brazil. Such category reflects the appropriation of traditional Labour Process Theory (LPT) authors (Braverman, 1981; Marx, 1996) to analyze the particularities of workers' lives in countries characterized as economical dependents in the world division of work (Marini, 2005), and more specifically in Brazil. The case of Rio Grande is interesting because the shipbuilding industry implemented in the city, under President Lula's government, was advertised as a potentially great cycle of development, capable of bringing social and economical evolution to the city for around fifty years. The shipbuilding industry was one of the many economic cycle the city has undergone throughout all 20th. Century; it began in 2006, changing the skyline of Rio Grande: ports and shipyards were installed and increased, thousands of immigrants and temporary workers arrived.

The perception about the local economy - which used to be qualified as depressed - changed and was promising to flourish through the process started together with the new economic structure and the arrival of workers to the shipyard and shipbuilding. Shipyards installed at the city directed their production, mostly, to Petrobras, a Brazilian state ran oil company. A few of the ships were exported to China. This cycle lasted until 2015. The decreasing of the crude oil barrel price at the global market provoked doubts about financial sustainability of the Petrobras operations for which ships buildt in Rio Grande were demanded. At the same time corruption scandals involving Petrobras and many politicians in the country had been publicized, among them entrepreneurs of the shipyards based in Rio Grande. As a consequence, since 2015 investments to the city are progressively decreasing, thousands of job positions were closed and the economic cycle that potentially would last for fifty years lost its power in less than 10 years. In this context, a qualitative research was held to analyze how the productive and reproductive processes are connected to: accumulation of capital in an extractive economy, the



mobilization of workers and their unions, the changing context of the city and in particular with regard to the living conditions that emerged in that context. Appropriating the category 'organization of labour' to primary data collected in shipbuilding industry in Rio Grande allowed us to grasp how life in this city is historically reorganized by capital.

The workers from shipbuilding industry, that travel all over the country to find workplaces, are the greatest example of how accumulation of capital determines life in the city. Living apart from their families and their homeland, these workers suffer the pressure for intensifying their production and increasing surplus value even putting in risk even their survival. Filthy accommodations, cultural struggle with their temporary city and other colleagues - together with the over-exploitation of labour - reinforce their condition as a mere productive resource. For capitalists, they differ from the machines only in quantitative terms, not qualitatively.

## **Labour struggle, dynamic of strikes and forms of worker organization in the wood industry of Buenos Aires city, 1890-1920**

**Walter Ludovico Koppmann**

Over the last decade, worker class history regained popularity in the academic field. The classical relation between politics and economy has been re-signified and focused on the working environments. The aim of this paper is to study the wood workers of Buenos Aires city from the emergence of union organizations, *circa* 1890 to 1920. This sector of the industry gathered multiple trades which were tightly connected to the construction area. The development of the labour movement in the wood industry occurred during an enormous process of urbanization and demographic growth caused by mass immigration coming from Europe, mostly from Italy and Spain. In this context, the Argentinean economy employed a big mass of proletarians who worked long hours for low salaries, in factories and in small establishments called “boliches”, with a standard population between five and twenty people. These boliches were very common in the wood industry dedicated to furniture production. However, carpenters were also employed in building works, sawmills and in the Buenos Aires port.

Despite these rudimentary forms of production (far from the large industry and near the craft sector), the workforce of the wood industry was highly qualified. This was a big advantage when negotiating with their employers. One of the main purposes of this paper is to analyze the labour struggle in the working environments and how through this constant confrontation the wood working class started developing its own character. In the case of furniture workers (“cabinetmakers”), the high-skilled ability required in the productive process determined different forms of worker comptroller called “craftsmen



autonomy”. Moreover, technical knowledge acquired on the job was embedded in a mutualistic ethical code, also acquired on the job, and together these attributes provided skilled workers with considerable autonomy at their work and power of resistance to the wishes of their employers. In this way, the autonomy of the craftsmen allowed workers to be connected, even when they were geographically dispersed in small establishments. In addition, woodworkers were organized in trade unions, through delegates in the working places’. This was a key element from the beginning of their trade union activity along with left wings that were also in the centre of the worker’s trade union organization process. Socialists, anarchists and, lately, revolutionary syndicalists and communists activists configured a complex political map and took part in the making of the working class.

The particular study of the wood industry allowed us to perceive some phenomena that usually go unnoticed. To carry out this investigation, we have researched several trade union papers’ (*El Obrero Ebanista, La Sierra, El Obrero en Madera, Acción Obrera, Bandera Proletaria*), political publications (*La Vanguardia, La Protesta, Nueva Era, La Internacional, Revista de Oriente*), national newspapers (*La Prensa, La Nación, La Razón*) and other documents, leaflets and meeting acts.

## **Connecting tasks, times and demands. Labour process and labor community in the Puerto de Buenos Aires (end of the 19th century - early 20th century)**

**Laura Caruso**

From the end of the 19th century to the beginning of the 20th century, the Puerto de Buenos Aires became one of the largest in the continent and the hub of a rail and river transport network which has been the central economic activity of Argentina. Above its structural transformation and complex infrastructure, port operating originated in the daily work of thousands of workers from diverse backgrounds, trades and ages. This paper explores the forms of port labor: stowage, work aboard merchant ships and shipbuilding. The dockers, concentrated in docks and wharves, performed the tasks of loading and unloading for the transport and storage of goods. This practice in those days developed around the increased steam navigation and load packages, bundles and sacks, and in an incipient mechanized large-scale stowage. Merchant shipped workers, aboard steamers and sailing ships, transport woods along the river and coasts from the places of production to where merchandise would be sold for consumption or processing. Maritime workers were composed of very different categories among the crew: sailors, stokers, waiters and cooks. Between official there was captains, officers, boatswains and machinists. Finally,

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the workers of the shipyard, dedicated to repair and, to a lesser extent, to the construction of boats and barges, had also a great diversity of trades: painters, carpenters, machinists, among many others. The analysis of each of these labour processes, its concrete historical forms, categories, hierarchies, conflicts and solidarities, allow us to know the particularities of each activity, their organizational and material transformations, the new demands and specific dynamics. As approximation to the working universe, the reconstruction of the port labour processes shows working experience in the immediate field production, stressing conflicting character of work, technology and class relationships. Such an analysis of the labour process constitutes a fundamental conceptual and methodological tool to understand the forms of exploitation, work experience and their characteristics in the social history perspective. This analysis puts in the foreground not only the working experience, but also the particular port enterprise configuration: exporting companies, importers of coal, construction of dams, dredging, river and maritime transport, railways, and also small shipyards and fluvial patterns. In this connected heterogeneity, various labour processes converge to form a particular labour community in the port territory. Their analysis is based on an extensive bibliography and a different documentary corpus, which includes state sources (censuses, regulations, reports and balances of Prefectura General de Puertos, publications of the Departamento Nacional del Trabajo) company files (memoirs and proceedings of the Centro de Navegación Transatlántica, among others) commercial, local and tradeunion newspapers.



## Session Class and precarity

### Precarious Work in Chile. A typology of labour precarity for the South of Chile.

Dasten Julian-Vejar, Osvaldo Blanco

The studies on precariousness have reached enough breadth in the actuality of the social sciences. Its wide density and presence in the scientific publications, investigations, congresses, etc., has found its echo in the studies of work. This situation opens up questions about the definitions and peculiarities of precariousness, as a concept and relation, for the investigation, understanding and analysis of the Latin American reality. Considering that this debate originated mainly in European countries such as France and Germany, and followed in diverse countries around the world (US, South Africa, Brazil, China, etc.), it is necessary to problematize their relevance to contexts and social configurations where the dynamics of protection and social welfare have not been historical guarantees of state policy, or nor are they associated with processes of industrialization and "early modernities". Taking into account the diversity of their approaches, such as their geographic and thematic contexts of references, I will present a typology of precarious work in Chile, using the data of Socio-economic Characterization Survey (CASEN, 2015). We present 10 groups of workers, characterized by the definition of 5 dimensions (Working conditions, temporality, instability, insufficiency and insecurity), like a results of the second year on our Project "Mapping Precarious Work(s) and labour relations Macro-Southern Area of Chile".

This project is supported by the National Council of Science and Technology (CONICYT) and is part of the program of regular research in social sciences. In these results is possible understand the labor precarity multiplicity and heterogeneity in the Chilean world of work, considering three regions from the South from Chile: Maule, Biobío y Araucanía. This approach is based in the complexity of labor precarity for understand social class, race and gender in Latin America like different manifestation of power and domination regimes. Through this distinction the project shows a complicated definition of "social class", which refers to a critical view of the classical models based on occupation and wages. I argue than the precarity and precariousness are determinant relations of the social structure, and are important input for understand the new forms of social classes in the contemporary capitalism. Finally we generate some conclusions for the empirical study of labor precariousness in the current contexts of neoliberalism, globalization and diversification of the forms of work.



## **Social class and precariousness: an alternative to neo-Marxist class measurement"**

**Orielle Solar, Carles Muntaner, María José González, Natalia Sánchez**

The increase in job insecurity and temporary labor contracts in the last 30 years has led to a growing interest in the health effects of employment conditions. In Latin America and particularly in Chile, labor market changes in recent decades have been characterized by greater labor flexibility and a “tertiarization” of the workforce (Atria, 2004). Social epidemiology has been quick in understanding the potential relevance to health of these labour market changes. With the pragmatism that characterizes this discipline, researchers have developed instruments to capture “precariousness” based on several domination and exploitation mechanisms (Vives et al., 2010)

Paradoxically, sociology during the same period struggled with the relevance of traditional concepts and measures of social class, notably those based on the Marxian tradition (Grusky et al 1998; Gorz, 1997; Paluski, 1996). However, neo-Marxian sociologists developed social class measures under the postulate that social classes involve are real mechanisms that have a causal force in the lives of people (Wright, 2016). Among the most popular neo-Marxian social class indicators are EO Wright’s (Wright 2000). This indicator measures social class in terms of employment relationships, while leaving aside the mechanism of exploitation which is nevertheless key in Wright’s class theory (Muntaner et al 2015). The core of theory are the relations of ownership and control of productive resources and their underlying domination and exploitation mechanisms which cause social inequalities, including health inequalities (Rocha et al, 2014). We claim that Wright’s theoretical-empirical effort is in some measure relevant to the contemporary class structures. However, the model show an internal inconsistency, since the class theory (including is not reflected in its entirety in the empirical measurement model.

Our aim is to improve Wright’s measurement of social class by adding to it several indicators of domination and exploitation included in contemporary measures of precariousness. Contemporary measures of labor precariousness include *de facto* dimensional indicators of exploitation and domination. Thus, our strategy allows us to distinguish between more and less dominated workers and more and less exploited workers. We test the predictive validity of our augmented Wright’s class measure with self-reported health. We test the hypothesis that more dominated and exploited workers have worse health than workers who are less dominated and exploited



We used the National Survey on Employment, Work, Health and Quality of Life, applied in Chile, will be used in 2010-2011 (MINSAL, 2011) and Survey on employment, work, health and quality of life applied in Bogota City in 2013 (FLACSO, 2013) Domination and exploitation indicators were measures were obtained from some domain of the "EPRES" Precariousness Scale (Vives et al 2010). Exploitation was assessed with the Economic Deprivation scale, and domination was assessed with the Vulnerability, Temporality and Exercises of Rights scales. Additional questions was include in survey 2003 useful to test this approach in other country .We stratified each worker category in EO Wright's social class indicator (Wright 2000) with high / low exploitation and domination levels using tertile scale scores. Our hypotheses on the effects of high domination and exploitation on self-reported health were been confirmed with the three indicators of domination (temporality, vulnerability and exercise of rights) and with the indicator of exploitation (economic deprivation).

Our scales differentiate between more or less dominated and exploited workers within the same class position thus incorporating these core class mechanisms into a social class measure that relied only on labor market positions (i/e. Worker, manager and owner). In this sense we would have improved Wright's measure by making it more valid according to his own theory by going beyond the relationship in the labor market and capturing domination / exploitation.

## **Reclaiming precariousness**

**Iwona Wilkowska, Mike Healy**

The notion of precariat has been popular with academics and practitioners, what has been evident in the social scientists' fascination with 'the age of insecure employment' (Fevre 2007) and the BBC's formulation of a large internet survey on social classes (Savage et al. 2013) according to which precariat constitutes 15% of British labour force. In this paper, we argue against the notion of precariat as a social class which is presented in opposition to a stable working class. We postulate use of Marxian approach which sees precariousness as a defining element of working class existence and the norm of capitalism.

For Marx precariousness is intertwined with the constant threat of being thrown into the reserve army of labour. Traditionally, this surplus population has been perceived as existing outside of organisations in the form of unemployed or underemployed. We want to draw attention to the form of surplus population existing within organisations and on the verge of the so called boundaryless organisations. Our case study research of a multinational organisation based in the UK generated qualitative data from focus groups

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and in-depth interviews with a set of highly skilled ICT professionals. Experiences of our respondents such as internal commissioning of work and ‘the bench’, project work including engagements on external assignments, transfer of undertakings and Lean IT highlight the commonality of precariousness as a process which permeates society beyond the periphery implied by the notion of precariat. Furthermore, it illustrates that the privileged position of the primary group has been overstated.



## **Cooperation and Self-organisation**

### **Session: The solidarity economy and workers self-management I**

#### **Popular economies, cooperatives and commons: an ethnographic perspective on a selfmanaged textile cooperative in Buenos Aires**

**Alioscia Castronovo**

The neoliberal austerity policies in the global crisis and the news expulsions (Sassen, 2014) deeply redefine both the time and spaces of urban life and labor conflict (Obarrio, 2002): in this context the concept of multiplication of labor (Mezzadra, Neilson, 2014) permit us to rethink the relationship between exploitation and accumulation in the contemporary capitalism analyzing the "actually existing forms of labor and class relationships" (Carbonella, Kasmir, 2008). From this perspective, popular economies, as an assemblage of productive and reproductive activities, subjectivities, practices, spaces, infrastructure and social relationships (Gago, Mezzadra, 2015) emerging in Argentina, and in different forms in Latin America and in the Global South, constitutes a complex space of social processes confronting the precariousness of work and life conditions and enabling a innovative critique of the category of informality (Hart, 1972, Denning, 2005). Facing neoliberal capitalistic accumulation, dispossession, extraction and urban transformation (Brenner, 2014; Harvey, 2013) precarious, unemployed and informal workers started to organize during the last years in the urban territories recuperating factories (Ruggeri, 2014) creating new forms of organization that combines calculation and self-entrepreneurship with mutualism and solidarity networks (Gago 2014). Through a spatial genealogy of the textile informal workers' struggles in Buenos Aires this paper, based on an ethnographic fieldwork, aims to critically analyze the political, cultural and economic challenges of the self-managed cooperative "Juana Villca" composed by Bolivian migrant workers. By developing a strong and constitutive relationship with political collectives and with the trade union of popular economy workers' CTEP, this experience is confronting subaltern conditions in the market's hierarchies and spatial injustice dynamics (Soja, 2016), challenging hierarchies and power relationships through building collective and common enterprises. This processes are opening new possibilities of agency of the subaltern both as resistance and project (Ortner, 2016) transforming collective labor (Fernandez Alvarez, 2016) in urban commons based on reciprocity, community and cooperative practices (Gibson Graham, 2013; Aguilar Gutierrez, 2015).



## **Precarious Labor in the Fishing industry in Ocracoke Island, North Carolina**

**Beverly Geesin, Simon Mollan**

This paper examines the development of new organizational structures formed by members of a small fishing community on an island off the coast of North Carolina, USA in order to preserve jobs. It explores resistance to precarious labor through organizational innovation.

In 2006 the last remaining fish house on the island of Ocracoke, North Carolina was closed. This closure occurred within the context of general decline in the fishing industry due to competition from imported seafood, state and federal regulations, loss of waterfront access and a shortage of skilled labor (Newsome, 2014). In response to this the local fishing community formed the Ocracoke Foundation (OFI) as a non-profit organisation with an aim of ‘community revitalisation through the responsible promotion and use of Ocracoke’s assets’ (Ocracoke Foundation, n.d.). The Ocracoke Foundation functions as the umbrella organisation for the Ocracoke Working Watermen’s Association (OWWA) funded by the OFI, and the Ocracoke Seafood Company, a for-profit subsidiary of the OFI. The Ocracoke Foundation purchased the fish house and opened it as the Ocracoke Seafood Company, which now buys fish from the local fishermen to sell to a wholesale distributor, and through its retail business to locals and tourists on Ocracoke. While a for-profit business, the purpose of the Ocracoke Seafood Company is primarily ‘to provide a base of operations where all watermen... could operate from and expand their potential’ (Ocracoke Foundation, 2009). For the past ten years this ‘innovative organisational form’ (Childs, 2016) that encompasses interlocked organizations has successfully managed to maintain the fishing industry on Ocracoke Island. From this context stems a need to examine how collective agency emerges (Kalleberg, 2009). The formation of alternative organisational structures is pre-eminently a political process from which novel forms of collective action, especially connected social movements, have the potential to emerge (Rao et al, 2000). Relatively unfashionable industries—of which fishing is an example—are not often discussed but nonetheless can provide deep insight into the changing nature of capitalism, “for in their histories and in their present circumstances, they have experienced how capitalism can create and then dismiss a way of life” (Nadel-Klein, 2003: 1). With this context of decline this study demonstrates possible strategies for preserving the jobs, industry, and communities, through novel forms of collective action, organisational structures, political lobbying and marketing. This paper is based on data



collected via interviews with local participants and representatives of relevant organizations, as well as through the use of secondary sources.

**Beyond the rhetoric of „slave labor“: subaltern experiences of self-organization among precarious workers in Argentina.**

**Nicolás Fernández-Bravo**

In the context of a labor market in transition (2014 – 2017), I will analyze the recent evolution of the idea of ‘slave labor’, as it emerged to describe the working conditions of two particular sectors of the Argentinean economy: the seasonal migrant rural workers (“*golondrinas*”) and the informal textile workers (“*costureros*”). My ethnographic approach aims to explore the relation between the agency of the subjects of such characterization, and the way policy makers and the media have produced distinctive categories to implement public policies. While the rural and urban sectors have evident – and even radical– differences, I found isomorphic structures that explain why the logic of outsourcing, efficiently operates to generate profit by creating specific difficulties to the possibility of collective organization.

In order to illuminate what I characterize as a successful subaltern process of self-managed collective production, I will focus on the case of the *Centro Autogestivo Juana Villca*, a self-organized textile worker’s initiative that emerged from former immigrant home-based workers of the sector in contemporary Buenos Aires. By expanding their view not only as a working-perspective but also as a *political* and a *vital* one, this group has challenged the rhetoric of ‘slave labor’ by arguing against the exploitative conditions *and* combating the rhetoric of ‘rescuing slaves’ promoted by the State and the civil society. This case has contributed positively to understand the limits and the contradictions of modern unionism in Argentina, and outlines the tendencies of the future of employment in the informal sector.



## Session: The solidarity economy and workers self-management II

### Exploring resilience in hybrid organization: the case of workers buyout in Italy

**Barbara Barbieri, Marco Zurru, Alessia Conta**

The financial and economic crisis has had a clear global dimension. In Italy one of its dire consequences which is also evident in other European and in Latin American countries, has been the increased number of firm shutdowns. Since 2008 about 82000 firms have declared bankruptcies (Cerved, 2015); and many more have closed down their activities. It is in such a scenario of crisis that we have witnessed the emergence of workers-recovered firms.

In this paper we analyse the Italian situation showing the key similarities and differences between the Italian context and experiences with the well-known cases in Latin America. Our comparison centres on Argentina where the phenomenon of the *empresas recuperadas* has significant proportions and has been well documented (e.g. Vieta, 2015). In Italy the phenomenon was already present in the 80s as a result of the crisis of Fordist system that invested the Milan-Genoa-Turin 'industrial triangle'. At present there are about 252 (Vieta et al. 2015) workers' recovered firms mostly located in Centre-North regions. The contribution of this paper is to highlight the fundamental and discerning role the institutional environment plays in Italy and the opportunities and challenges this opens up in relation to a number of questions on local economic development, and organisational and managerial dilemmas and options.

A key point of distinction we highlight in our study is how in Italy there is an institutional terrain that facilitates and supports workers' recovered firms. Zooming in on the legislative framework (based on the Marcora Act n. 49, 1985) we show how this creates the conditions that allow workers to become owners of the firm. The expectation is that such institutional framework facilitates the re-constitution of the firm as a solid economic, productive actor. This would include fruitful relationship with banks and investors with access to credit flows and options for consolidation and growth, for example through investments in technologies and human resources. We explore if and how such expectations are realised by focusing on the actual practices and experiences of reconversion of Isolex a chemical firm in the north of Sardinia. The company shutdown occurred in 20xx and his 30 workers have recovered the firm and are currently continuing



production. Using the normative instruments of the Lega Nazionale delle Cooperative, Cooperazione Finanza Impresa (CFI) and Fondo mutualistico della Lega Coop (Coopfond) workers initiated a process of by-out which ended up with the transformation of the company into a workers cooperative governed with principles and practices of self-management.

Our study overall opens up a number of reflections and fruitful research questions on the following areas: 1. Identification of differences between workers-buy out and the empresas recuperadas; 2. Exploration and explanation of territorial heterogeneity and its diverse conditions of possibility in the uptake and diffusion of practices of recuperation 3. Analysis of governance, managerial and organizational dilemmas faced by recovered firms.

## **Session: The solidarity economy and workers self-management III**

### **The Social Bases of the Solidarity Economy**

**Julian Rebon, José Itzigsohn**

In this paper we examine the bases for the emergence and growth of solidarity in the economy. The economy is considered to be the realm of instrumental rationality par excellence. Yet, there are many economic activities—such as cooperatives of all kinds, mutual aid organizations, or associations of producers or consumers—that operate on a logic of solidarity. Our goal is to investigate the social and institutional bases that can support the development of solidarity in the economic realm. We do so by analyzing three very different experiences of solidarity economic organization—the Argentine recuperated enterprises by their workers, the Mondragon cooperatives, and the experience of self-management in the former Yugoslavia—and extrapolating from them what forms of embeddedness and what kind of institutions can sustain solidarity. We identify three elements that can contribute to the emergence and expansion of the solidarity economy. First, institutions that generate interests in cooperation. Second, a collaborative relation with the state that can help the solidarity economy growth while allowing for its autonomy. Third, the presence of social movements that make their goal to build and expand the solidarity economy

**Cooperatives, labour processes and the mobilization of the precarious – from injustice to strategic positioning in a “global world”?**



## Lee Pegler, Yannis Chourdakis

Cooperatives are often seen as an effective and participative way of mobilizing workers, especially in times of crisis. In recent years many organisations have advocated cooperatives as mechanisms of voice, security and social justice, not just within a specific production setting but also, within Global Value Chains (GVCs) (FBB 2004; UNRISD, 2015). What is not clear is whether such labour process contexts generate the conditions (re: Kelly, 1998; Atzeni, 2009) of injustice necessary to cement and retain effective mobilization and representation?

The specific questions we turn to in this paper are- to what degree does mobilization (into cooperatives) have to be driven by a sense of injustice? That is, what form(s) might this sense of injustice need to take? Secondly, what role do external actors (e.g. agencies of assistance; buyers; suppliers) or structural “imperatives” (e.g. organizational form) play in the ongoing (cooperative) development process without compromising initial principles of representation?

This paper uses two different examples of cooperatives to reflect on what might drive and what might maintain worker cooperatives. The first example is an older cooperative project for the supply of fruit from the Brazilian Amazon (Pegler, 2009), the form it took and challenges it faced in developing and maintaining structures and worker commitment for a new enterprise (but one tied to global production). The second is the Viome workers mobilization in Greece and the challenges workers faced to reestablish hands-on management and organizational commitment to a family run national firm/cluster within the context of sector uncertainty (Chourdakis, 2015, unpublished).

The cases allow us to contrast two situations of injustice, former mismanagement and sector uncertainty. At Viome the trigger point comes from existing workers, poor work processes and a workforce (plus their leaders) who felt “they” could do better. In the case of Novaamafutas, the injustice was previous mismanagement but also poverty, partly due to the uncertainties of demand from a more distant buying public (of fruit). Yet it was more the leaders and “helpers” of the workforce who saw the need for a new form of organization.

Once established, however, both cooperatives faced internal and external challenges. For example, how to establish work, reward and incentive systems? Secondly, how to decide on suppliers (i.e. do they have to be cooperatives?) but also basic production questions (i.e. what volume, quality and flow of production).

In terms of our main objective, how important is the initial drive for a cooperative (e.g. the nature of injustice, leadership and degree of solidarity) to the continuation of its



fundamental principles of participation and equity, this is an important axis of analytical comparison but also of great practical and policy relevance. This paper's discussion confirms our hypothesis that space and context complicate the drive for worker driven cooperatives in GVC contexts. Yet the prospect of injustice driven "reasons for solidarity" may still exist. Secondly, even in situations where conditions favour injustice driven solidarity (e.g. Viome), conflicts over fundamental labour processes and class dynamics will still abound.

## **Precarization of work, the fallacy of entrepreneurship and solidary relations as resistance: scenes from the Brazilian context**

**Leny Sato**

This presentation aims to reflect on the implications of the discourse and practice of entrepreneurship for the working conditions and the subjectivity of the workers. It also seeks to discuss possible ways of resisting the precariousness that such reality imposes through solidary relations. It is important to consider the uniqueness of work in Brazil throughout its history, mainly in the sense of showing that the precariousness of work is a reality that is always present, as some authors like Francisco de Oliveira and Otávio Ianni point out.

To reflect on the theme of entrepreneurship, the theoretical reading of Adriano Campos and José Soeiro will be used. The object of criticism is the "narrative of entrepreneurship, which presents it as an 'attitude', a 'spirit' and a 'way of being' of the individual capable of solving those problems (p.10). It is she who deserves the "greatest distrust" (p.10). For Campos and Soeiro, it is an ideology. This narrative presents itself as an outlet for the employment crisis - making the individual responsible for solving his problem. In this logic, "The issue of unemployment would be solved by promoting entrepreneurial behavior by individuals rather than by public policies of job creation and countercyclical investment" (p.49). In this logic, success in the job market depends only on the individual. Specifically, we are interested in discussing the term "social entrepreneurship", which refers to the importation of business logic and private enterprise by organizations providing social services, or, as it is called, "third sector" organizations (mutual societies, cooperatives, foundations, mercy, etc.). These companies are neither governmental nor "private" and sell their services to the State. Initiatives in this sense have been adopted in the areas of health, social assistance and education. As a result, the state hires poor jobs. To bring elements about reality in Brazil, documentary data will be used. It can be seen that these services have been outsourced, compromising the working conditions of the professionals who provide these services and also the quality of the work provided to the population.

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There are many levels and many instruments from which it is possible to face this reality that we have lived. I bring here the idea that one of the levels is located in the sphere of daily life, which refers to the daily activities, the activities common and small. I believe that building a counter-discourse and a practice that rescues and strengthens the solidary relationship allows us to experience other ways of living and relating in the Work, which, at the same time, opposes resistance to this neoliberal ideology and to the precariousness of life.

In Brazil, we have known several initiatives to build other ways of being and relating that have a clear political position - self-management in the field of Solidarity Economy and the Landless Workers Movement. Both are movements that have anti-capitalist, anti-neoliberal and anti-precarious principles of life.

In addition to these two great social movements that guide their strategies for action by clear political principles, in Brazil, poor workers who find themselves in the informal labor market, create work to survive - "turning around" individually (that is, without being part of enterprises or collective initiatives). But even in these cases, the creation of work is based on solidarity, based on the relationship of friendship, neighborhood, kinship and anchored in forms of sociability of the simple man - who learned to live his life always beside and with others. Without ignoring the extreme relevance of adopting forms of coping aimed at achieving structural change, it is important to shed light on these everyday practices of resistance.

## **Labor Conflict and Union Strategies**



## **Session: Precarious and informal workers organisation**

### **The temporary dock workers and union action: the case of northern Chile.**

Camila Álvarez

This presentation aims to analyze the strike from the perspective of a port federation in northern Chile, which in the context of the "Port Work crisis", has managed to reinvent its ability to mobilize trade unions. In general, the characteristics of the labor conflict of eventual dock workers place these workers in a context of particular contradiction between the conditions of employment (quality of "eventual") and the ability of the trade union organization to face the conflict. Leaving them in a "negotiation space" that does not contemplate the law, but that allows them to advance in salary without social rights. This presentation will analyze two dimensions of port conflict: the conditions of temporary port work at a structural level, and the repertoires of union action and agency that characterize the strike of this federation. This in order to characterize the port labor conflict, from its conditions and repertoires to the consequences expressed in terms of salary and rights.

### **"The Times They Are A-Changin'": Collaborative Workers & Citizens Mobilisations. An interpretation through the Grey Zone of Employment**

Christian Azaïs

The notion of "employment grey zone" (EGZ) is widely used in developing countries and developed countries. It reflects the changing nature of employment relationship (Supiot, 2000). It highlights the difficulties in identifying the employer's power in productive systems or towards independent networks such as "uberised" workers.

Theoretically, the grey zone underlines the changes in wage-earning relation and their effect on class structuring. The former relationship between employee and employer moves towards an "equal partners" relationship. Consequently, subordination is diluted in a commercial contract and the worker cannot make use of protecting rights. Moreover, the EGZ stresses the institutionalisation of new labour and employment regulations, based on individualisation, in a way that excludes class analysis, as if it was belonging to the past.

Nevertheless, looking at the effects of globalisation in the "Collaborative Economy" obliges to recognize the emergence of new forms of mobilisations. This can be seen in the emergence of new professions that reflects transformations in labour and employment

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relations and renews the sociology of professions perspective. To interpret professions, I propose a three-part typology. On the one hand, due to globalisation some professions become disqualified and low-paid –they are *declining professions*–; on the other, the *intermediary occupations* can be seen as a lock chamber for young people yearning for a better and steady activity out of an internship period, for instance. They try to withdraw from precariousness. Finally, *ascending professions* can be considered as marked by the individual wishes or utopia. The three of them get off the usual binary understanding of labour relation subordination vs autonomy and shed light on new forms of individual or collective engagement.

To explore such an assumption, I will focus on the uberised workers mobilisation against collaborative platforms, in Brazil and France, mainly. Some other countries such as the UK and the USA will help to stress diverse sorts of mobilisation. In some places, cities are challenging Uber –being the most emblematic case, London, but also Austin –, elsewhere it can be the state which adopts new approaches of the phenomenon and in other cases, evolving unions. The forms struggle is taking are quite different; it goes from the app. prohibition to a more “classic” mobilisation through union action. In France, unions with diverse political perspective are implementing the independent workers defence. For example, CFDT (*Confédération française démocratique du travail*) & CGT (*Confédération générale du travail*) unions; the former, a compromise union, the latter, a struggle union, are taking into consideration independent workers and bending on “uberised” workers conditions. Interviews with platform workers, secondary data, academic writings will be the key elements to nourish the argument. Such examples shed light on how in current reading of capitalism dynamics, on the one hand, the issue of individualisation is at stake and, on the other, how workers mobilisation can renew social classes issue, but with a, no more based on far from any binary approach dependent vs independent, subordination vs autonomy, and proposing a different perspective, because “The Times They Are A-Changin”.

**“Successfully Organizing against Worker Misclassification: Port Trucking and Construction in the United States”**

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**Michael Slone Timothy Black, Alicia Smith-Tran**

In recent decades, the practice of misclassifying workers as “independent contractors” has undermined state fiscal policy and substantially harmed a vast swath of the American working class. We recount the institutionalization of this unique form of precarious labor which dates back to political efforts began during the late 1970s. The undoing of a legally-defined relationship between employer and employee is consistent with the broader trend of workforce casualization under neoliberalism. As researchers continue to document this practice from a scholarly remove, unions and labor advocates are successfully organizing to combat worker misclassification in several sectors—most notably, in the construction and port trucking industries. In both sectors, labor unions have formed coalitions with community leaders, local economic development organizations, legal advisers, and immigrant labor advocates to combat the practice of worker misclassification at the local and state levels. This paper analyzes two successful organizing campaigns against misclassification: an IBT-led port trucking campaign and the UBC-led initiative within the construction industry. We conducted interviews with the leaders of these campaigns in order to trace how political-economic and sectoral conditions shaped organizing strategies. While organizational strategies varied according to unique sectoral conditions, both case studies offer new insights that can be leveraged to combat precarious working conditions.

**Session Work in the Primary Sector**



**From Peasants to Workers: the Building of the Itaipú Dam in the Making of the Paraguayan Modern Working Class (1974-1989)**

**Carlos Gómez Florentín**

The history of the Paraguayan working class remains unexplored. The work of early historian and labor leader Francisco Gaona (1967) launched the field of labor history in the country. Later historian Milda Rivarola (1993) told the story of the early formation of the Paraguayan working class (late 19th and early 20th centuries) working the documents in Francisco Gaona's repository. Historian Roberto Céspedes Rufinelli (1989) put the role of state's companies workers within the context of the democratic transition after the 1989 coup d'état that ended Alfredo Stroessner's long dictatorship (1954-1989). However, after a highly productive era that followed the ousting of Stroessner (1989), the field of labor history fell behind in the late 1990s and early 2000s. Only recently the field has reemerged with the work of Ignacio González Bozzolasco (2013), Jorge Coronel Prozman (2009; 2012; and 2014), and Carlos Pérez Cáceres (2017) among others. Céspedes Rufinelli, González Bozzolasco and Coronel Prozman pointed out the importance of the workers of the public sector in the transformation of the working class in the 1980s during the neoliberal reforms that lasted the following decades. This paper comes back to the 1970s to explore the role of construction workers in the public sector during the building of the Itaipú Dam (1974-1989) to explain the making of the modern Paraguayan working class.

Usually the Paraguayan working class is presented as an outlier in the regional history of the modern working class. Unlike neighboring countries, the Paraguayan working class did not come out of the regional processes of industrialization by import substitution (ISI) in the 1940s – 1970s due mainly to its unfit internal markets. My goal here is to shed light on the process of transformation of the Paraguayan working class in a transnational approach bringing the narrative to a less parochial perspective. The building of the Itaipú Dam, the largest in the hemisphere, put in contact the Brazilian and the Paraguayan working class under military dictatorships in both countries. I explore here how both collectives influenced and reshaped each other during the 1970s and 1980s. My goal is to trace the transformation of many 'campesinos' into workers during the construction of the Dam. And the rise of a new working class in Paraguay that would play a decisive role in the democratic transition of the country during the 1980s. Through private and public repositories, interviews, company's files, and newspapers, this paper returns to the building of the Itaipú Dam as a contested process that led to the rise of the modern Paraguayan working class.

**Extractive Industries and Changing Means of Rural Livelihood: History and Future of Soma Coal-Mining Community**



**Cosku Celik**

This paper attempts to analyse the impact of private sector investments in underground coal mines on rural population with reference to experiences of miner families in Soma coal basin-one of the leading basins of coal reserve in Turkey experienced the biggest work accident of Turkish labour and employment history that resulted in the death of 301 miners on May 13, 2014. Within the scope of the paper, first, huge wave of proletarianisation in Soma that has accompanied the neoliberal transformation of agriculture and coal mining will be elaborated on. Through this wave, entrance of international capital to tobacco farming and implementation of quota for small scale farming have forced small-scale farmer families to sell their labour in labour market. As long as this process has coincided with privatisation of lignite production and increasing attention of big business to invest in Soma basin, male members of these families have started to work in underground mines. Secondly, based on the transformation of the local population into a mining community, local class relations and class formation process in Soma will be analysed with reference to miner families' way of articulation or resistance to the social structure built by the state and capital before and after the mine disaster of 2014. The related analysis is built upon the field research carried out in Soma within the scope of an ongoing research.

### **Toil for Oil: A critical analysis of work and employment in the North Sea Oil Sector**

**Jennifer O'Neil, Vaughan Ellis**

Whilst oil prices fluctuate and oil companies perceive the North Sea to be too expensive to drill (Shepherd, 2016) decommissioning plans have been formulated by Government and employer taskforces. These groups have tended to focus on technical and fiscal challenges facing the industry and the need for state financial support to cover the costs of decommissioning. Workers voices have largely been missing from these debates on the future of the industry. Press and union reports suggest that job security, terms and conditions and career prospects have all been adversely affected (OCG, 2016). Estimates are that roughly a third of the workforce (120,000 - 185,000) have suffered job losses between 2014-2017 (The Guardian 2017; BBC 2016) However to date there has been little scholarly consideration of the impact of these changes and any others which may be occurring from the perspective of workers. Furthermore there has been little explicit consideration of the support needs of workers for finding new and/or alternative employment. This paper seeks to address that gap by exploring firstly, how the declining employment opportunities within the Scottish oil industry has affected the lives of



workers and secondly, how workers have responded to declining opportunities within the sector. We argue that the absence of workers' voice in policy discussions about how best to safeguard the strategically important oil and gas industry and utilise their skills has meant that other stakeholders' interests have been privileged. Drawing from in depth oral history interviews with off shore oil workers, employed within the industry during the previous two years, this paper presents initial findings on how declining production levels have affected work and employment. The paper seeks to begin the process of influencing Scottish Government, and employers' policy towards managing the decline of the industry in a manner that is more sensitive to the needs of the working population.

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## **Session: Souther Cone dictatorships and the labour movement**

**Labour conflict, disciplining and repression in YPF La Plata (Province of Buenos Aires, Argentina, 1974-1980)**

**Andrea Copani**



The purpose of this presentation is the discussion of certain topics engaged in my current doctoral research project, regarding labour organisation and repression in industrial factories located in the Capital City and the Province of Buenos Aires during last Argentine civil-military dictatorship. Particularly, I aim at presenting the progress made so far concerning the analysis of the working class and labour movement in the specific case of Yacimientos Petrolíferos Fiscales (YPF) oil distillery located in the junction of La Plata, Berisso and Ensenada, in the Province of Buenos Aires, between 1974 and 1980.

Firstly, I will go through the main features regarding work relations and labour process in the distillery, considering both their technical and social aspects. Secondly, I will address the issue of labour conflict, taking into account not only formal and centralised union organisations, but also those forms of struggle which developed at a shop-floor level, usually outside formal structures –and sometimes challenging their authority-, as well as conflicts among different currents within the working class. Likewise, I intend to reflect on the way these structures and forms of organisation developed by YPF Distillery workers established links with other trade-unions, as well as political and armed-political organisations which had influence within workers. In this vein, my look intends to go beyond the boundaries of the distillery, so as to analyse it within a wider regional framework, as part of La Plata, Berisso and Ensenada industrial district. Moreover, I aim at studying the distillery as part of YPF oil company as a whole, considering those particularities which characterised labour organisation in Argentina’s largest industry.

For the sake of this project, I base myself on a wide range of primary sources: both business and union records, as well as different types of oral and written testimonies given by people who took part in or witnessed these historical processes, in addition to material produced either by press or by contemporary political and armed-political organisations. I also rely on surveillance documentation coming from the Intelligence Section of the Buenos Aires Province Police, kept in the Provincial Memory Archive, located in La Plata, as well as official records of the National Ministry of Labour.

Evidence analysed so far for this particular case suggests that studying labour organisation thoroughly –that is taking into account not only formal structures but also the informal or “underground” ones, which prove that workers and union activists were not an homogeneous group- becomes vital in order to understand not only the development of labour struggle itself, but also disciplining and rationalisation processes which took place in workplaces in the dictatorship context, together with repressive policies against labour activists.



## **Labour process and conflictivity, repression and corporate responsibility in crimes against humanity in the factories of Fiat in Cordoba, 1974-1983**

**Marianela Galli**

This paper analyses the transformation in the labour process in the Fiat Cordoba factories in relation to the experience of trade union organisation and struggle and repression carried out against workers in Fiat factories in Ferreyra(Cordoba) between the years 1974 and 1976. The province of Cordoba and its capital city constituted the epicentre of workers and trade union since the 1960s and was characterised by the emergence of combative unions.

Workers'activism grew in relation to the expansion of industrial production towards the end of the 1950s. Cordoba province was particular dynamic in the metallurgic and automobile sectors. The workers'and students' uprisings known as the *Cordobazo* in 1969 and in *Viborazo* in 1971 are key chapters in Argentine political history. So too repression of combative unions in the province was increasingly intense from 1974 onwards and became even more acute after the coup of 24th march 1976.

There are numerous investigations in social sciences and historiography that analyse the industrial process, the conflictivity between capital and labour and the repression carried against workers. However there are a few investigations into these issues during the dictatorship of 1976-1983. So too, the majority of that body of work has focused on analysing the repression dealt out by the Armed Forces, omitting the role played by companies. In this sense, following on from the "Report: Corporate Responsibility in Crimes Against Humanity, Repression of Workers during the State Terrorism", we propose to analyse the company as one more actor within the repressive apparatus and also investigate the different forms in which the company's responsibility in the repression of workers appeared.

The methodology is based on analysis of various documents and dossiers from archives and oral history. The Cordoba Provincial Memory Archive and National Memory Archive have been crucial to broach the deployment of state terrorism as well as the social and institutional response to state violence. The process of growing conflictivity between the company and workers was identified by exploring archives at the National Ministry of Labour,the digital archive of SITRAC Union,interviews and local media. Audiovisual material found in the University of Cordoba Film Archive were consulted and the testimonies made in court during the trials for crimes against humanity found in the "Trial Diary" produced by H.I.J.O.S Cordoba was also used. Other documentary sources that provided valuable information to observe the process of production and labour in the



company as the reference material at the CISEA-CESPA in the Economics Faculty (University of Buenos Aires) and the magazine published by the company itself, *Nosotros* ("Us").

**Control, consensus, resistance and creation. The Uruguayan trade union movement against the last dictatorial government (1973-1985).**

**Sabrina Alvarez**

During the last Uruguayan dictatorship (1973-1985), forms of control designed to undermine the strength of trade union organizations were tried out of the State. Although this seems to be a constant in the history of the relationship between employer sectors, the State and workers, in the mentioned period it occurred in a special way. The union organizations, mostly based in the "Convención Nacional de Trabajadores" (CNT), were quickly outlawed. During the general strike that began on the day of the coup d'état, the new government authorized the bosses to resort to the public force to repress any demonstration. They also tried on two occasions to regulate the functioning of the trade union organizations as well as to expand the social consensus. The last attempt, proposed in 1981, was used by a new generation of union activists and clandestine militants to organize the workers. This is how the "Plenario Intersindical de Trabajadores" (PIT) emerged and then merged with the "old" CNT, forming the PIT-CNT.

The historiography about workers and their organizations is quite meager for the Uruguayan case, except for particular periods better studied. Although the last dictatorship and its antecedents have been widely visited by numerous social scientists, the study of the role of workers and trade union organizations has been left aside, except for some specific works. The problem of the scarcity of documents referring to that time can be corrected, at least partially, by the consideration of memories and essays of people linked to the trade union environment

The objective of this paper is to present in a general and exploratory way a tracking of the main measures taken by the last Uruguayan dictatorial government tending to repress and control the trade union organizations on the one hand, and the pretensions of organizing a union movement favorable to the regime, for another. Likewise, the responses of trade union and political organizations to these measures will be considered. The approach of this issue has allowed to visualize several facets of the period until now little studied: search of social consensus on the part of the regime, forms of clandestine resistance, continuities and discontinuities in the positions of the tendencies of the union movement, new / old forms of organization (Convention, Central or Plenary),

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intergenerational tensions, among others. Putting these issues in dialogue with other views will surely enrich its study.

**Session: Union revitalization debate and collective bargaining**

**Collective bargaining and union strategies in contemporary Argentina.**

**Marticorena Clara**



The aim of this paper is to discuss the relevance that the dynamics of collective bargaining has in the explanation of the characteristics of union organization and labor conflict in contemporary Argentina, centrally during kirchnerists governments (2003-2015). We approach to this goal through the critical review of main studies on labor relations and the analysis of our research results about collective bargaining in manufacturing industry. Our main sources are data bases of collective bargaining and labor conflict, collective agreements and interviews to union's leaders and delegates, HR managers and businessmen, and state officials of labor relations area.

Despite the importance that collective bargaining has had in the traditional field of Industrial Relations studies, in Argentina this issue hasn't been deeply studied and problematized. On one hand, that could be a consequence of the interrupted history of collective bargaining in our country, but, also, on the other hand, it could be the result of the predominance of the institutionalist approach as the main theoretical perspective in this field of studies. In contrast, conceptualizing collective bargaining as a form of class struggle institutionalization allows us to establish a broader view about working conditions and union organization.

During the period 2003-2015, collective bargaining and labor conflict have acquired a significant importance in the dynamics of labor relations in Argentina. For many authors, this implies a sign of revitalization in union's strategies and increasing union power. For others, the quantitative evolution of labor conflict and collective bargaining coverage isn't enough to set the development of a new union revitalization process. Critical authors highlight the importance of qualitative research approaches to study labor relations in different cases or economic sectors. However, qualitative analyses usually don't take into account the link between labor conflicts and the institutionalized forms of labor relations, in particular collective bargaining processes, as a key dimension to understand the development of union strategies.

Furthermore, researchers on labor conflict usually study the link with trade union organization, including the dynamics of bases and union's leaders, but scholars on collective bargaining, have paid less attention to its relationship with union organization building processes. In this point, we aim to underline the relevance of collective bargaining not only to assess the ways and characteristics of union revitalization strategies, but also to study the processes of union organization. Our hypothesis sets that this dimension has particular importance to understand both the union's leaders strategies and grassroots workers organization, and to explain the grown of workplace organization at the first decade of s. XXI in Argentina. The configuration of union strategies around bargaining processes and the importance it acquired as a way to regulate-institutionalize labor conflicts in the everyday workplace organization extend the



study of grassroots organization beyond radical or left unionism. Finally, we aim to discuss if can be defined the development of different temporalities in grassroots organization during the studied period.

## **Post Troika Ireland – union revitalisation in firm level bargaining.**

### **Eugene Hickland**

This paper will outline the changed industrial relations landscape of Ireland, recent developments in wage bargaining that has seen the emergence of private sector firm level pay bargaining and the return of bitter industrial disputes. It will also outline how the slow pace of pay restoration in the public sector is acting as a barrier to wage growth in the private sector. The paper discusses the revitalisation of grassroots union activism spurred by firm level bargaining and a changed IR regulatory framework. In the aftermath of the global economic crisis the economy of Ireland suffered immensely. It is now well known that Ireland's infamous "Celtic Tiger" era ended with the sudden and dramatic collapse of the country's corporatist model of social partnership amidst neo-liberal pressures (McDonough and Dundon, 2010; Roche, 2011). An IMF paper (Laeven and Valencia, 2012) estimated that Ireland's banking crisis was one of the most severe in world economic history. The 'Troika' bailout package was not just financial but included major reforms with the creation of new employment rights and industrial relations bodies (Regan, 2012) and changes to wage setting mechanisms in key economic sectors (Barnard, 2012). Thereby changing the IR regulatory scene and posing new challenges on the ability of trade unions to effectively defend or advance the interests of their members. In the period 2009- 2011 real earnings fell by 7% which was the largest fall in real earnings since World War 2 in Ireland (CSO, 2015). From 2014 onwards Ireland has witnessed clear signs of economic recovery and the emergence of patterns of increased union militancy in both private and public sectors. Workers have sought restoration of pay and conditions or to obtain 'catch-up' pay for forgone potential earnings, although average weekly earnings are broadly unchanged since 2008. Private sector earnings increased have been growing at an average rate of 1.1% over the last five years. The orderly process agreed between the government and most public sector unions to phase out emergency pay legislation is being severely challenged through industrial action within the public sector from teachers, police and transport workers. In the private sector the modest pay rises of 2% have become the norm from 2011 onwards in some sectors but not in others. Sectoral performances have varied and weekly earnings have fallen in the accommodation and food sector (mainly private sector) over the last five years as well as in the education and health sectors (both mainly public sector) (McDonnell, 2016). Irish trade unions participated in a national level social partnership process from 1987-2009 when pay rates across the private and public sectors were agreed on a voluntary basis at national level. Trade union officers have had to relearn old skills of firm level pay bargaining and



developing strategic ‘whipsawing’ negotiations in profitable firms, which are fashioned as moral and practical suasion in obtaining pay increases across other firms and sectors. Irish trade unions have seen a revitalisation of firm level membership participation and growing demands for higher pay. The new industrial relations architecture put in place at the behest of the Troika is being challenged by the spread of enterprise level pay demands which are the result of pent-up frustration of many years of cutbacks in real earnings. Irish trade unions have also adapted to new IR laws and have effectively utilised them to achieve pay rises, improvements in conditions in a small number of firms; which are highly significant gains to allow unions organise in previously non-union firms and establish effective collective bargaining mechanisms in them.

## **Unions and the changing world of work: existential crisis or sustainable alternatives? Steve Davies, Helen Blakely**

Unions have had to cope with massive changes in the world of work in recent times. This is as true for the Global South and transition countries as it is for the Global North. The changing economic world has included the shift from rural to urban, from agriculture to manufacturing, from manufacturing to services, from public services to privatised services and a huge increase in new forms of work including, for example, the digitalisation of work and precarious work. Ensuring that unions remain relevant and representative in this changing world of work has been a challenge for the labour movement everywhere and many have adopted new methods and approaches in response.

In this context this paper draws on ongoing qualitative research, which identifies and analyses how trade unions are responding to this changing world of work. The research questions include:

- ❑ How are unions responding to changes in the sectoral/industrial make-up of the economy?
- ❑ How are unions responding to changes in the type of employment contract?
- ❑ How are unions responding to changes in the type of worker employed?
- ❑ How are unions changing the way they organise among traditional and established areas of operation?

With these research questions in mind we discuss several case studies, which stand as exemplars of different ‘types’ of union responses to the changing world of work. The case studies reflect a spectrum of trade union activity, from forms of social movement, community based unionism, with no immediate ‘pay off’ in terms of securing collective bargaining coverage or membership fees for unions (in the form of ‘alt unions’), to activity



which has secured collective bargaining agreements and transformative increases in membership. Moreover through these examples we see the challenge to, and hence the necessary response from, unions is multi-scalar – at workplace, company, national and international level.

Our research demonstrates the ways in which trade unions are increasingly working 'beyond the comfort zone'. We suggest the ways in which trade unions are able to use their collective strength to campaign for and achieve progressive change are shifting, with far reaching implications for the development of sustainable models of union organising. This examination of some of the new ways in which unions are influencing and shaping the world of work, demands we re-visit our conceptualisations of the key characteristics of trade unions. Specifically here we consider the extent to which trade unions' responses to the changing world of work adds to our understanding of their attempts to act as both 'vested interest'; and 'sword of justice' (Flanders 1961) within society.

## **Session: Unions, racial justice and the environment**

**Jobs vs Clean Air?": Unions and Greenhouse Gas Emissions in a Comparative Perspective"**



## **Allen Hyde, Todd Vachon**

Researchers have begun to examine some of the political and economic determinants of environmental performance, including forms of governance and presence of green parties. This paper examines one particular institution that has received surprisingly little attention in empirical research despite its inherent connection to economic activity and political activism—labor unions. In particular, we explore three hypotheses about the possible effect of unions on the environment. Interest group theory suggests that unions will have a detrimental effect on environmental performance by resisting technological change in order to protect their members' jobs. Corporatist theory suggests that when unions have a voice in governance they are able to negotiate policies that both protect the environment and the livelihoods of their members. Green unions theory suggests that unions have long fought for health and safety standards to protect workers in their workplace and in their communities, thus having a net positive effect on environmental performance regardless of participation in corporatist governance. To test these theories we utilize three different measures of union strength and examine their relationship to levels of greenhouse gas emissions per capita among 18 affluent capitalist democracies between the years of 1985-2010. In sum, we find some support for each theory. Specifically, strong employment protection laws are associated with higher levels of emissions; union participation in corporatist governance is associated with reduced levels of emissions; and high levels of union density are related to lower levels of emissions, net of employment protection laws and corporatist governance.

## **Incorporating Racial Justice: Strategies for Overcoming Structural Constraints in American Labor Unions**

### **Amelia Fortunato**

This paper explores two American labor unions, both with majority black and Latino members, whose recent efforts to address racial injustice issues have gained visibility. In 2014, starting with the uprising in Ferguson that sparked protests around the country, the conversation about race in the U.S. began to shift substantively. Two years later, Trump's presidential campaign increased visibility of white supremacist groups, bringing America's race problem into sharp relief once again. In the face of white working class racism and the impending assault on labor, some unions have entered the fray, taking actions to incorporate race in union work and engage in a broader racial justice movement, including participating in black lives matter rallies, forging alliances, endorsing criminal justice reform, allocating resources to train and hire people of color, and addressing racial disparities through contract language. Through interviews with union staff, this paper

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explores the motivations, both ideological and practical, for incorporating race in union work. Certain union insiders see them as imperative to supporting members, deeply linked to economic justice, essential for building alliances that will strengthen the labor movement, and vital to addressing the racial tension and the lack of diversity among union staff. However, these efforts have often been stalled and thwarted. This paper delves into obstacles, including practical barriers like lack of resources, employers' restrictions, and conflicting goals with partner organizations, and argues that conversations about race have led to considerable tension inside progressive unions and locals, particularly between staff and white members. Further, this paper highlights the motivated actors' strategies for navigating conflict and constraints, including engaging in political education with members and making explicit connections to workplace organizing campaigns. Where staff have pushed this agenda successfully, they have done so through trial and error and careful deliberation, developing "best practices" for methodically incorporating racial justice, which include targeting particular locals to test controversial programs, bringing in "experts" from outside organizations to consult on trainings, and, perhaps most importantly, being proactive about talking to white members about race and listening to, rather than ignoring, their anger. The extent to which unions have incorporated race and engaged meaningfully in a broader racial justice movement is due, at least in part, to key motivated union insiders

## **Worker fragmentation and imagined solidarities: Swedish blue-collar trade unions and migrants in an age of neoliberalism and extreme-right wing populism**

**Anders Neergaard**

The Swedish blue-collar trade unions, while still comparatively strong, are faced with substantial challenges visible in a shrinking group of blue-collar workers, decreasing rates of unionization and increasing internal fragmentation in which gender, racialization and age is increasingly linked to variations in working conditions. Parallel to this the power asymmetry of capital vis-a-vis workers and white-collar vis-a-vis blue-collar workers is growing. These developments are taking place as the economy is increasingly internationalized/regionalized, increasing migration and at the same time a resurgence of nationalism, xenophobia and racism with strong support among (male) blue-collar workers.

The aim of this paper is to analyse how the Swedish blue-collar confederation, LO and their member trade unions navigate in a context of challenges everywhere. In focus is the dilemma of both dealing with a context of economic transformations and policy changes, weakening the collective strength of organized, particularly blue-collar, labour, and at the



same time dealing with a bifurcation both structurally and ideologically linked to the racialised character of blue-collar workers. The paper explores the strategies of the TUC (LO), and four of its unions – industrial workers (IF Metall); municipal workers (Kommunal); construction workers (Byggnads) and hotel and restaurant workers (HRF) – in dealing with changes in economic policies, an increasing strength and offensive of employers and an increasing internal bifurcation of blue-collar workers. At the core is the question of how the organisation of production in different sectors links to processes of imagining solidarities in a context in which the members are increasingly supporting the cultural racist Sweden Democratic party and with an increasing share of foreign born members.

The theoretical framework is drawn from labour studies and industrial relations research along with migration and ethnic studies. The focus is on theorizing the concept of trade union solidarity. Methodologically, the project is a qualitative study with representatives of LO, IF Metall, Kommunal, Byggnads and HRF, employing semi structured interviews, complemented with analysis of statements and policy document

### **Session: Strikes and Protets**

#### **The problem of temporalities involved in contemporary labor conflicts: The strikes of 2011-2014 in the chilean docks""**

**Camilo Santibáñez**

In Chile, contemporary labor conflicts has gained a particular notoriety in the strategic sectors of the national export economy. In the attempt to reverse their precarious conditions and salaries, the workers of the copper mining, the forestry industry and the maritime terminals - who ship these merchandise- have staged important strikes in the last decade, overflowing by the way of the facts narrow labor legislation inherited from the Pinochet dictatorship.

In order to propose a model of analysis for the study of labor conflict described above, and paying attention to what I have called in the title as "the problem of temporalities", this paper examines the work stoppages inflicted by stevedores during 2011-2014 on the Chilean coasts.

The purpose of this paper is to discuss current studies on Chilean trade unionism, and particularly its exclusionary approaches between structure and agency, opposing them a reading that allows to gather both approaches from the unraveling of the different historically conjugated temporalities in the particular cases. The most extensive research



in which it is framed is the study of the potentially conflicting role of labor traditions in the processes of precarious modernization.

By "temporalities" I mean the historical notion of time, whose analytical differentiation implies to distinguish time from long durations, conjunctures and events; whose approaches confer different degrees of autonomy to the agents with respect to the structures. By "the problem of temporalities" I understand the specific way in which these three temporalities overlap and shine in certain conflicts.

The hypothesis, therefore, is that labor conflicts always involve a set of different temporalities, and that in the case of port strikes, they should consider at least the nineteenth-century continuities in the organization of port operations, the conjunctural frameworks suffered by the work force as result of the modernization of maritime terminals initiated in the dictatorial context, and also the events that contributed to the outbreak of strikes in those years; as the substitution of government agents in charge of dealing with union organizations, produced by the arrival of the first right-wing government in Chile since the return to democracy in 1990. Without the analytical dismantling of these temporalities, labor conflicts can not be understood in its depth.

With this object, the entire bibliography on the Chilean stevedores of the 19th, 20th and 21st centuries has been examined; particularly to establish the longtime continuities. To document rigorously the strikes of 2011-2014, the crucial parliamentary reports, the workers declarations and press have been consulted to; in this last case, searching the employers complaints. The workers who staged them have also been interviewed in profundity.

### **Reconstituting strike theory for the 21st century: forms and arenas of power in the employment relationship**

**Chris Rhomberg, Steven Lopez**

In recent decades, a marked decline in the frequency of strikes across the advanced capitalist world has led some scholars to announce the death of the strike. Yet, even as economic strikes by established trade unions have declined, new types of unconventional strikes have emerged in unorganized sectors in the United States, along with a surge in political strikes in Europe, and a wave of militant strikes across the global South. The complexity of these events requires a rethinking of the strike beyond traditional theory. In this paper, we trace the intellectual tradition of strike theory in the U.S. from economic bargaining models to institutionalist critiques to social movement theories. Building on the work of Beverly Silver and Jennifer Chun, we then propose an alternative approach. We argue that strikes can be better understood in terms of a multidimensional view of power in the employment relationship, including three interrelated forms of



worker power: structural, associational, and symbolic. The balance of these relations of power in any industry or juncture is shaped by paths of development in the economy, state and civil society. These dimensions affect how we understand not only traditional measures of strike activity but what strikes *are* in the contemporary period. We demonstrate the utility of our approach here via an analysis of recent unconventional strikes in the “Fight for \$15” campaign in the US.

## **Political culture of protest and reflectivity. Notes on a cycle of protests**

### **Fernando Aiziczon**

The following articles seeks to investigate what conditions made it possible for a group of teachers to begin reflecting on their own strugglin pratices. After reconstructing a strike during 2007, that ended tragically in the same way as another strike taht took place 10 years ago, led by the same trade union (Association of Education Workers of Nuquén, ATEN), our research observes the opening of a space for reflection that the workers themselves expressed in documents, balance sheets and books, the aim of wich is to try explaining the dynamics and the result of their struggles between the periods 1997-2007. However, our hypothesis holds that , whitout intending to do so, these documents also allow as to investigate how workers think of themselves imagining themselves as part of a culture of resistance built over time.

## **Session: Labour Conflicts en Argentina**

**Work and union militancy: the role of delegates in drinking wáter supply. A study case in Argentina.**



**Carlos Galimberti**

The aim of the paper is to tackle, from a qualitative perspective, the role of delegates in drinking water supply in Gran La Plata (provincia de Buenos Aires, Argentina) that is represented by the Sindicato de Obras Sanitarias de la provincia de Buenos Aires. In the context of a new government, national and local, of Pro Coalition our aim is to analyse the role of delegates in their workplaces attending to the following questions. How are their everyday activities? Which are the main conflicts and how they try to solve them? How are the relationships between workers, delegates and union leaders? We are going to link these questions with two dimensions, the generational relationships and political adscription.

**Trade union revitalization and economic austerity: A comparative study of workplace occupation as labor struggle in a context of restrictive economic policies (Argentina 2015-2017)**

**Julieta Haidar, Agustina Miguel**

In the last ten years, research on labor relations in Argentina and neighboring countries of Latin America (Brazil, Uruguay) had studied the revitalization of the union movement as one of its main themes. This concept had been used in the United States and some of the European countries to refer to union strategies to confront policies that destroy employment and worsen working conditions, and, therefore, led to a crisis of union's organizational and representation capacities (Heery, Kelly & Waddington, 2003, Fairbrother, 2005, Baccaro, Hamann & Turner, 2003, Hamman & Martínez Lucio, 2003, etc.).

In Argentina, however, the concept was used to analyse strengthening of unions in the context of progressive governments (2003-2015) that allowed the reversal of neoliberal policies and the union crisis of the 1990s (Atzeni & Ghigliani, 2008, Etchemendy & Collier, 2007, Senén & Haidar, 2009, etc.)

Since 2015 a new government reintroduced policies against the working class, what is an opportunity to study trade union revitalization in an adjustment context in Argentina. In this context, the objective of this paper is to analyze the occupation of establishments as a strategy carried out by Shop-floor committees (comisiones internas) against the offensive of capital and the government.

In order to carry out this research, we will compare three cases of occupations of establishments promoted by Shop-floor committees between 2016 and 2017 in Argentina:



AGR-Clarín (graphic industry), Pepsico (food industry) and Ministry of Science and Technology Nation (State).

The proposal is to compare the following dimensions of analysis: decision-making mechanisms (union democracy), relations with other trade union or political organizations, relations between Shop-floor unions and the branch's trade union, political traditions of Shop-floor committees and the trade union, the effects on employment and working conditions, the effects on the union model. This research analyses publications of the trade unions, news reports on conflicts, interviews with trade union leaders, union shop stewards and workers. The comparison of cases in Argentina will allow to find similarities and differences, to weight the most explanatory dimensions and to redefine the concept of "union revitalization".

## **The political-governmental influence on the evolution of the membership in the unions of the public sector. A case study in Argentina**

### **Santiago Duhalde**

In Argentina, trade union competition in terms of equality only exists in the public sector. It generates a particular dynamics in the relation between the State and the unions of this sector. The action of the government presents certain peculiarities: on the one hand it acts as employer (in parity round tables, for example); on the other it exerts decisive political influences in the configuration of the trade union map. In this sense, it usually implements strategies of division between these unions, with the target to become stronger and this way to avoid labor and social discomforts coming of those actors. One of these maneuvers is to encourage dialogue and negotiation with one of the unions – showing it as the “valid speaker” and the “real representative” of the state workpeople– and de-legitimize the actions and claims of the rest of the unions –identifying them with violence, intransigence, absence of realism–.

This political intervention of the government in the State-public employees relation generates unequal conditions for the unions of this sector. Whereas the relegated organizations lose resources of power, the benefited one manages to grow and to increase his influence. These changes can be clearly seen in the evolution of membership in the rival unions of the public sector bearing in mind different governmental stages. The alliances that are established between unions and governments change across the time and depend on different factors: the ideological identity of these actors, the need of the government to displace to a too powerful union, the need to support the mastery of one of them to avoid labor and social disorders, etc.



To illustrate in depth this phenomenon, we will present a case study. In this sense, we will analyze the relation between the municipal unions of the Azul city (province of Buenos Aires) and the different communal governments that have taken place from 1991 until our days, indicating the impact that the governmental changes have had in the evolution of the union membership and in the variation of the union power opposite to the State as employer.

To develop this work, we conducted interviews with key informants from the political and union scene of this city. Also we have interviewed current and former union leaders and municipal government officials. At the same time, we have realized an examination of documentary material –both of the unions and of municipal and national official departments– relatively to the number of workpeople, his membership, his contractual status, etc. Finally we have made use of journalistic archives of the city, and we have carried out participant observation in trade union head offices and in some state agencies.

## **Trade unions action in Macri's time: mechanisms of union representation from the change of government in Argentina**

**Tania Rodriguez**

The end of Néstor and Cristina Kirchner government (2003-2015) and the assumption of Mauricio Macri Presidency in 2015 establishes the beginning of a political and economic era of constant transformations for Argentine trade unions. In this context of changing government and the orientation of economic and labour policies, the debates about the place occupied by unionism in the labor market and in Argentine political system (Torre: 1989, Armelino: 2004, 2015, Etchemendy : 2015) arise once again. Between 2015 and 2017, the first stage of the Cambiemos administration, the dynamic of labour conflicts focuses on the dispute of trade unions and other labour organizations defending job positions and the continuity of labour rights and institutions.

Considering changes in the structure of opportunities (at the economic, political and legal-regulatory levels) in Argentina during the period 2015-2017, this paper summarizes the debates about union representation and participation mechanisms of working class in their organizations taking into account studies about the corporate character and the political nature of unionism (Murillo: 1997, 2005, Diana Menéndez: 2007, Ghigliani, Grigera and Schneider: 2012, Varela: 2013), in other words, tensions between the economic and the political struggles in unionism.

The purpose of this paper is to study the mechanisms of representation of Argentine trade unions - confederations (third level trade unions)- from relational dynamic with the

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national government and the governing party in the period 2015-2017 based on the strategies of action and union organization.

Taking into account the word “change” as a key word in Macri’s political discourse, in what way this change of political scenario in Argentina after the presidential election in 2015, stresses, redefines or reinforces traditional forms of trade union representation? What are the effects produced on the union representation mechanisms of CGT, CTA-T and CTA-A after the change of government in 2015? What are the forms of representation of argentina union confederations in the period 2015-2017?

To answer all of these questions, there are three main points of analysis chosen for this debate: political-union identities and union legal model; Trade union representation and political exchange; Mechanisms of representation and union democracy.

In the first part, there is a presentation of the construction of political-union identities of the labour centrals and a subsequent analysis of the relationship between trade unionism and the State and present the characteristics that define the Argentine Trade Union Models. The second part presents the forms adopted by the mechanisms of political exchange between the trade union centrals and the government from 2015 to 2017. In the final section, internal dynamics of the trade union centers are analysed from the moment the change of government begins: the relationship between leaders, union memberships and the dynamics between old and new forms of representation of workers interests

**Session: Workers and unions against digitalization**

**From the Führer to the sex toy. Humour and solidarity under the cybernetic regime.**

**Simon Schaupp**



This presentation examines the subversive qualities of rebellious humour in digitalized industrial organizations. It is based on an empirical case study of digitalized industry in Germany, consisting of an ethnography and a series of semi-structured interviews and group discussions. The first section outlines the concept of the cybernetic regime of production, which emerges in the current digital transformation of industries. At its centre is the vision of the self-organization of production based on ubiquitous digital feedback loops. The second section identifies rebellious humour in general and the ridiculing of technology in particular as an important strategy of workplace resistance against the cybernetic regime. Rebellious humour deflects interpellations of self-optimization and fosters resistant solidarity among the workers as opposed to management. Together with other forms of workplace resistance, rebellious humour has the capacity to influence the implementation of the cybernetic regime of production.

## **‘Smart’ industrial relations in the making? Insights from the analysis of union responses to digitalisation in Italy and Spain**

**Stefano Gasparri, Arianna Tassinari**

‘Smart’ has become a contemporary buzzword often used to describe the capacity to make the most of technological advancements such as those brought about by digitalisation. From smart cities to smart production to smart working, research has also started considering the topic of ‘smart industrial relations’: analysing, in other words, the development of industrial relations practices able to anticipate, manage and accompany effectively the ongoing digital transformations in the productive structures of advanced capitalist economies. But can we really speak of ‘smart industrial relations’ in the making, or does digitalisation represent instead a threat for established industrial relations actors and practices, that remains yet to be adequately managed and understood? In this paper, we focus specifically on the role of trade unions as key industrial relations actor, and analyse their developing responses to the challenges of digitalisation in two Southern European countries: Italy and Spain. We adopt a multi-level approach and focus on analysing union’s strategic responses to digitalisation at the three key levels of industrial relations: macro (political-strategic) level; meso (sectoral/industry level); and micro (workplace level). At the meso-industry level, our analysis will focus more closely on the service sector, which has received considerably less attention so far than manufacturing.

Our preliminary findings, mapping out union responses to digitalisation in Italy and Spain, are divided in three sections, according to the level of industrial relations. At the macro level, we find that bar a few exceptions, the involvement of trade unions in national policy initiatives related to digitalisation, such as ‘Digital Agendas’ and ‘Industry 4.0’ strategies, has so far remained fairly limited. This is despite noteworthy attempts on part of unions to influence the public debate on digitalisation and ‘the future of work’ through policy



proposals and initiatives. On issues relating to the regulatory models for new digital players (e.g. platforms), the interventions of mainstream trade unions in the public policy debate have also been limited so far, as the formulation of coherent regulatory proposals is still ongoing for the majority of confederations. At the sectoral level there are instead more signs of pro-active adaptation, especially in the Italian case, where unions have been taking up issues and demands relating to digitalisation (e.g. individual right to training) as central parts of their collective bargaining platforms. However, the extent to which these collective bargaining strategies are sufficient in countering the polarisation trends associated with digitalisation is debatable. Finally, at the workplace level we observe emerging and deepening disparities between sectors with regards to unions' capacity to intervene to govern the ongoing workplace transformations arising from digitalisation; and considerable difficulties in building up power resources and representative capacities in the emerging 'platform economy' segment of the economy.

Overall, we find that Italian and Spanish unions' strategies and demands so far have been primarily focused on arguing for an extension of traditional forms of protection to deal with the disruptive effects of digitalisation. However, this has been coupled over the last two years with some mild innovation in unions' agenda – possibly driven by a desire on part of unions to re-build their strategic power resources and 'innovate' their image after having been weakened and delegitimised during the crisis period. These findings question technological and economic deterministic explanations - underlying much of Cassandra's predictions of inexorable job losses and union decline supposedly due to digitalisation – and point to the fact that, if 'smart' industrial relations are to be made, unions seem to have an active role to play in them.

## **Digitalisation, Work and Works Councils in the German Manufacturing Sector**

**Thomas Haipeter**

Digitalisation is discussed as one of the main trends of work and economy in advanced industrialised societies, forming a new digital capitalism based on platform and share economies or new forms of automation. Moreover, in some of the advanced economies like Germany, digitalisation has become a Pandora's box in the public debate in the way that it seems to be an indispensable condition for the modernisation and long-term competitiveness of the manufacturing sector. However, the effects of these changes on labour, labour policy or labour regulation are hotly debated. There are different and competing scenarios discussed, ranging from rising unemployment and precariousness of work and employment or the standardisation and automation of labour to more

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optimistic views pointing to economic growth, increasing skill demands, flat hierarchies, decentralized organisations and more autonomous work.

However, there is little evidence yet about the real changes of work that have taken place in the course of digitalization in the manufacturing sector. There are several important questions to be posed here from a labour process perspective: How advanced is the technological change produced by digitalization today? How does it affect work and work organisation? What are the effects on labour regulation in terms of working times, wages or other issues? And, finally, what could be the responses of workers and labour interest representatives like works councils and unions?

In my presentation I will try to tackle these questions, referring to findings from the German manufacturing sector. My presentation is based on the results of a two-year research project financed by the German Hans-Böckler-Foundation. In this project we evaluated a union project from the German Metalworkers' union IG Metall focusing on consulting works councils, analyzing digitalization and its effects and identifying problems of labour policy caused by digitalization. As more than 30 companies have been included in this project and we could analyse about the half of the cases in depth, it is possible to make statements on the state of the art of digitalisation in the German manufacturing sector, on the political issues and conflicts arising from digitalisation and on the effects of the campaign on the practice and patterns of interest representations of works councils.

## **Session: Workers, labour law and regulations**

**The Future of Right to Strike in Turkey in the Clamps of Bans, Restrictions -Finding New Strategies or Being Sisyphus?-**



### **Berna Ozturk**

In this article, the right to strike in Turkey is examined in every aspect. The restrictions, bans and the effect of the conditions of the state of emergency on the right to strike are analyzed and also Turkish workers' new strategy, which is collective actions, is examined. Right to strike is recognised by the Constitution of Turkey. It is also regulated by The Act on Trade Unions and Collective Labour Agreements, no. 6356 (TUCLA). According to the Constitution, if a disagreement arises during the collective agreement process, workers have the right to strike. Constitution does not put any other restrictions on political, solidarity and other types of strike. On the other hand, according to TUCLA, strikes have to meet some legal requirements. If the parties do not abide by these rules, the strike becomes unlawful. TUCLA limits the aim of strike. Syndicates only declare a strike to protect or improve their member's economic and social rights also working conditions. In addition to this, public servants do not have the right to strike. As there are very serious restrictions and bans on the conditions of legal strike in Turkey, workers only have one choice: Collective actions! And collective actions must be examined in the light of international law. More than 15 years enjoying the right to strike in Turkey has become very difficult. For example, TUCLA gives an authority to Council of Ministers to postpone a legal strike for sixty days on the grounds of public health or national security. And a postponed strike can not continue after the postponement period. In the last 15 years, all of the strikes were suspended by this way. Postponements of legal strikes actually mean bans of strikes. In 2016, the state of emergency was declared in Turkey after a failed coup attempt. After that, so many statutory decrees were taken into force. One of these statutory decrees regulated some provisions about right to strike. Thereafter, on 12.07.2017, the president of Turkey said, "Strike is a threat and we use state of emergency's conditions to prevent this menace." In Turkey, workers have started to enjoy the right to strike by collective actions. Collective actions are not regulated by law. It takes its power from international law (Turkey approved ILO Conventions 87-98; European Convention on Human Rights). The Turkish Supreme Court does not interpret collective actions as illegal but these collective actions must satisfy some Supreme Court's criteria. In these conditions, if workers do not apply for collective actions, legal strikes are banned easily by legal ways. Turkish workers are like Sisyphus. They always do the same thing but the result is always the same: a new failure. So collective actions may be a new choice until a new mentality comes.

### **The first attempt of labor regulation in Argentina: The “Ley Nacional del Trabajo” of 1904 and the reaction of working-class organizations**

#### **Lucas Poy**

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## CLASS AND THE LABOUR PROCESS



In the first months of 1904, in a context of intense labor unrest, the Argentine Minister of Interior, on behalf of the executive branch, presented to Congress a bill that became known as the “National Labor Law” (“Ley Nacional del Trabajo”). The bill included a long report, signed by the minister Joaquín V. González and the president Julio A. Roca, and a very extensive set of rules designed to regulate the labor market, the labor process and — last but not least— also the workers’ organizations. By that time, Argentina had a growing capitalist economy, a young and radical labor movement, and no labor regulations whatsoever—in this context, the bill was the first attempt of regulating the relations between capital and labor and, not surprisingly, it sparked an important debate not only in the chamber itself but also among the ranks of workers and capitalists alike. Although it never became a law, as it was rejected in Parliament, the bill became an iconic reference in the history of labor regulations in Argentina. In this presentation, I will briefly introduce the main characteristics of the proposed bill and I will focus on the reactions that working class organizations developed towards it. While anarchist-oriented groups and unions made clear its complete rejection towards an initiative that was seen another intervention of an authoritarian state, the Socialist Party found itself in a much more complicated position. Some of its intellectual and middle-class cadres had actually participated in the making of the bill, but most of its working-class rank-and-file showed a big concern towards a bill that, while giving some concessions in the field of labor demands, established a heavy control on union activities. This paper will address these debates and tensions in order to better understand the reactions of working class organizations with regards to the first attempt of labor regulation made by the Argentine state. This presentation falls into the theme “Regulation, institutions and labor process”, although it also deals with working class resistances and union strategies.

**The everyday construction of strikes: the movement against reforms proposed by the Brazilian government at the end of 2016**



**Maria Ceci Misoczky, André Dias Mortari**

The study from which this article originated was developed amid an important national cycle of protests in opposition to a constitutional amendment that established a cap limiting the growth of federal government spending to the rate of inflation for 20 years, and to a bill introducing radical changes in high school curriculum. Both reforms were proposed by the government that took power after the Brazilian parliamentary coup of May 2016 and ended up being approved by the parliament at the end of this year. These projects were opposed by massive student's movements and university strikes, among others. At the Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul (Porto Alegre), a technical-administrative staff strike lasted 44 days, and a teachers' strike 21 days. We were part of the strike commands – one of us is an administrative staff (and an MSc student at that time), the other a teacher. Both of us are members of the research group Organization and Liberating Practice, based at the School of Administration. At this group, we have been studying Marx and Marxist authors, such as Henri Lefebvre. Therefore, it was quite obvious that we could interconnect these two spaces (militancy and academy) with the help of Lefebvre's (2014) propositions on the critical knowledge of everyday life.

The aim of this militant research was to analyse the everyday construction of these strikes, taking into consideration the living and the lived experience of workers and its meaning to potentially transform their everyday life. Lefebvre (2014) provided the theoretical support to analyse conflicts, practices, ruptures, discontinuities, repetitions and creations, mainly through categories such as ambiguity, alienation, moments and possibilities.

The data were collected during the strikes, but also complemented with social network information and interviews with members of the strike commands after the end of the movements. The rupture with labour's mechanic repetition of everydayness, the recognition of the importance of cohesion beyond the hierarchies determined by the university structure, and the widening of the horizon of possibilities for the movements participants were some of the research's conclusion.

Another relevant aspect is that these strikes were not organized in defence or to achieve goals directed related to conditions of work. They were organized, in alliance with the student's movement that occupied more than 40 buildings in different campuses, in defence of the education system as a whole, providing a space for mutual recognition that went beyond tactic alliances involving the three sectors of the university community. The everyday collective construction of this movement made evident the importance and potentialities of articulating and supporting each other in each specific workplace struggle



while, at the same time, being intensively involved with the wider context of social struggles.

Reference

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## **Session: Structural power and union strategies**

**Between the strategic position and the political orientation. Elements to think about the union strategies in the workplace.**

**Lucila D'Urso**

In this work we recover the concept of *strategic position* and its relation with bargaining power (Womack, 2007; Silver, 2003) to reflect on the political orientation assumed by the union strategies in the workplace. To this aim, we will study two cases of important unions from the automotive sector in Argentina and Brazil: *Sindicato de Mecánicos y Afines del Transporte Automotor (SMATA)* and *Sindicato dos Metalúrgicos do ABC (SMABC)*. From the analysis of trade union and companies documents and semi-structured interviews to union leaders and delegates, workers and Ministry of Labor officers, we will study the collective bargaining dynamics and their relation to the characteristics of labour conflict in an American-owned automotive terminal with subsidiaries in the aforementioned countries between 2003 and 2014.

We use the concept of strategic position as an attribute of the workers who, as owners of their workforce, from an industrial or technically strategic position, can trigger (or prevent) an interruption in the production process, which confers them bargaining power. This perspective counterpoints with the dominant approaches which, anchored in institutionalist perspectives, tended to analyze the union power in relation to elements such as the economical and political juncture and the relation between the unions and the political party running the government.

Our main hypothesis states that the possibilities for organization and resistance in the industrial workplace are limited by the private property of the means of production. On this basis, the companies deploy different control mechanisms while the State establishes forms of regulation that impact on the dynamics of labor conflict, in which it highlights the forms adopted by the collective bargaining. Nevertheless, the control of capital over labor involves a process of struggle by the workers who daily and more or less explicitly manifest the conflict of interests between the classes (Hyman, 1981). In this picture, the



role played by the unions is crucial. Through the forms of organization in the workplace and the political-ideological orientation of their action they may add tension or, on the contrary, validate the power of capital –which is presumed hegemonic- in the industrial workplace.

The deep study of the SMATA and SM ABC cases confirms that between 2003 and 2014 the workers of the automotive industry in Argentina and Brazil kept a strategic position and established themselves as strong actors facing the capital and the State. However, each trade union developed unique strategies: SMATA's legitimacy was based on a profound disciplining and restraint of the labor conflict, while in the case of SM ABC it came from the workers organization in the workplace without discarding the confrontation with capital. Such differences refer to the political-ideological orientation of the trade union's actions among which it highlights the role played by union leaders and delegates.

## **The Strike and the structural power in workplace. An analysis of labour strikes results in chilean private salaried area (2006-2016)**

**Nicolás Ratto**

Several analysts identify (and describe) a resurgence and revitalization of workers mobilization in Chile during the past ten years. This context connects with the emergency of different social movements that, together, may be stressing the neoliberal hegemony that governed in relative peace from the military dictatorship (1973-1989) to the end of the *Concertación* period (1990-2010)

About the results of this new collective conflictive actions of the workers in Chile, mainly the strikes (most of which happens at workplace level) there has been a big lack of sociological work: there's too little preoccupation for identifying the levels of success that the strikes reaches (salary adjustments, for example) nor for identifying the diverse causes that makes the strikes in neoliberal Chile reaches good results for the workers. In general, analysis tend to look at Chilean workers as a whole, what finally highlights the low power that they have, due to the productive restructuration during the last 40 years and the still active labour laws "pro company" implemented during the dictatorship. Because of that, it is logical to expect bad results in the mobilizations. In this way of studying the workers as a whole, the political and legal analysis attending to the last failure that meant to the workers the discussion and approbation of the Labour Reform in the years 2015-2016 become important. Also, the comments about the low incidence that collective negotiation has to reduce the salaries inequality in Chile.



This investigation contributes to revert this situation describing the tools and positions of workers, referring to structural power in the labour place, market and associative power (Wright, 2000; Silver, 2003), that makes of the labour strikes in the private sector of the economy an effective one in economic and organizational terms. This powers emerge in different ways between the diverse economic sectors, due to the unequal capitalism develop, and due to the different trade union efforts to revitalize collective labour action.

For this, a qualitative study has been made through interviews, about ten labour strikes that took place in Chile between 2006 and 2016. This strikes were made by workers of diverse economic sectors, and reached different economic and organizational results for them. The conclusions points that is the structural power of the workers in the working place the dimension that tends to explain in the best way the effectiveness of a strike

## **Labour containment strategies and working class struggles in the neoliberal era: The case of Tekel workers in Turkey**

**Galip Yalman**

This paper aims to refresh class analysis in order to develop a better understanding of different modalities of reproduction of labour quite often without economic and social security in different historically specific contexts, as this also pertains to workers' diverse ways of living as well as to their experiences at work. It also aims to draw attention to the pertinence of exploring the ways in which the individuals comprising a particular movement experience specific moments of collective will formation within an authoritarian state form.

*Putting an end to class-based politics* could be described as the core of the new hegemonic strategy which accompanied the restructuring of the state in Turkey since the military coup in 1980. A key component of this 'hegemonic' strategy was to discredit the trade unions by turning them into inept structures which fail to deliver the expected goods to their constituencies. In fact, neoliberalism in the Turkish case was ushered by an authoritarian state form which has remained in effect until the present. The shift in the balance of class forces has disabled the reintroduction of class considerations into the political agenda. Thereby, appealing to the people, workers in particular, as individuals, while trying to discredit the trade union movement by labelling it as a vested interest became the hallmarks of the day. The new labour containment strategy opted for the market as a mechanism to control and weaken the unions as much as possible so as to push forward the neoliberal policy agenda of financial liberalization and privatization. Championing the vigorous virtues of the individuals, while strengthening the authoritarian prerogatives of the state was in line with the New Right thinking that a



strong state would be necessary as the political guarantor of economic individualism. Moreover, the neoliberal transformation process would not allow different segments of the working class to transcend their economic-corporate moments on the basis of the solidarity of interests, albeit in the purely economic field.

This paper aims to illustrate the limitations of challenging the neoliberal hegemony by focusing a particular episode of workers' resistance to the privatization of TEKEL (a major SEE established in the 1930s), pondering why such a moment of collective will formation failed to pave the ground for the development of a counter-hegemonic strategy. On the basis of a field research conducted with more than 100 ex-workers who were made redundant, deprived of their social rights and offered precarious employment status, it will contend that the particular employment policy did not simply introduce informalisation into public sector, but functioned as a labour containment strategy at the same time. This gains saliency in preventing the emergence of an 'antagonistic subject', as it entails the reconstitution of the former workers as stratified, contradictory subjects. The transformation of individual subjectivity in the context of the Tekel privatisation and consequent resistance process underlines what Gramsci noted, people's consciousness is inevitably contradictory, as the individuals are the object of different competing temporalities

## **Labour markets and employment regulation**

**Session: Labour markets and precarity**



## The role of the State in the precarization of the grape export sector in Chile and Brazil: movements and counter-movements

**Claudia Cerda Becker**

The present investigation is part of my Phd Thesis and presents the preliminary results regarding the role of the State in the precarization of the grape agro-export sector. Based on the study of two cases (small-N comparison), it is sought to compare: (1) the similarities and differences in the precarization processes in Chile (Elqui Valley/Limarí) and Brazil (San Francisco Valley) and (2) the mechanisms promoted by the State that favored the precarization of the sector and its counter-movements. To carry out the above, a combination of methods was used. Whereas sociohistorical comparison was used to analyze - at the macro level - what has been the role of the State in the precarization of the sector (Skocpol and Somers, 1980, Mahoney, 2004, Mahoney and Rueschemeyer (eds.), 2003) a multi-sited ethnography (Peck and Theodor 2015, Mah 2014) was deployed to identify the practices of resistance in the territories.

One of the central concepts used in my research, has been *Landnahme* (capitalist colonization) (Dörre 2009), which allows to relate the expansion of capitalism with the precarization process, considering not only the economic factors involved but also the role of the state (political dimension). My preliminary interpretation of findings suggests that in both territories (Chile and Brazil), the State fostered a process of *Landnahme* from the 1970s on that involved both the *colonization* of natural resources -land and water- and labour force –feminization and proletarianization. This brought with it the precarization of the working and living conditions of rural wage earners, which was not only the result of the recommodification of labor, but also of a broader process involving unequal access to land, water, and labor and social rights.

Despite the similarity of macrosocial processes (water/land/labor commodification) in both territories, the responses to precarization have differed considerably. So in the Elqui/Limarí Valley (Chile) is possible to observe a weak union movement, without negotiation power, being NGOs the actors who opposed these commodification processes. On the contrary, in the San Francisco Valley (Brazil) it has been a strong and organized trade union movement the one reversing the precarization of the formally hired workers. Finally, from this interplay between commodification/decommodification (Polanyi 1944), I suggest there were three periods of precarization between 1970 and 2017, each one characterized by precarization mechanisms and particular practices of resistance.



## **New Capitalism and Precarious Forms of Employment: A View from the Post-socialist Periphery**

**Mislav Zitko, Jelena Ostojic**

In the contemporary debates on transformation of labor process during the so-called post-industrial period it is often asserted that globalization, technological change and the rise of service sector have paved the way for the proliferation of the precarious forms of employment. However, in many cases the empirical evidence given in support of this claim is often anecdotal or completely missing. Having said that, this paper aims to clarify the concept of precarious employment, i.e. to delineate its qualitative and quantitative aspects in order to set forward an analysis of the recent trends in the Croatian labor market. More specifically, we seek to compare the changes in the share of precarious employment in the pre-crisis period (2006-2009), the period of prolonged recession (2010-2013) and the post-crisis period (2014-2017). In the course of our analysis we shall try to indicate the merit of occupation, class and gender as the potential explanatory categories through which one can account for the transformation of labor relations in Croatia during the last decade of the post-socialist transition.

## **Myth of the German Miracle: Precarity in Perspective**

**Ravi Tripathi**

The aim of this research is to challenge the mainstream narrative of a German 'job miracle' during the 2008 financial crisis. It attempts to highlight the potential policy traps in the neoliberal model of an efficient high employment labour market regime. The research study analyse the historical evolution of the German labour market reforms and focus both on the strength and the weakness of the German experience. The project aims to go beyond the labour market performance to include macroeconomic and gender perspectives. It takes a closer look at the changing employment structure in Germany, low-wage sector boom and social costs of the alleged 'job miracle'. The study examines changing employment dynamics in Germany by analysing expansion in low-wage employment, working poverty, and temporary employment. It also changes in the demographics and female labour force participation in German labour force. The research draws a comparative study between Germany and France from the perspectives of Esping-Andersen's welfare regime typology of welfare capitalism and attempt to find evidences of convergence from the continental-conservative model towards the liberal model of increased flexibility, precarity and low levels of work security. Long considered the classic coordinated market economy featuring employment security and relatively little employment precarity, the German labour market has undergone profound changes in



recent decades. The transition of Germany from its status of “sick man of Europe” in the post-unification years to current high employment economy compared to other countries in the EU termed as German “employment miracle” is central to this research. Some scholars present the ‘German model’ seen with the adoption of Hartz reforms introduced between 2003 and 2005 as a successful model for other European labour market. Although employment overall has increased, there has been a simultaneous significant increase in earnings and wage inequality. The consequences of this far-reaching deregulation of the labour market have been growing social insecurity and an increasing importance of precarious employment. With unemployment rates crossing over 10 per cent in most European economies, a number of governments shared desire of bringing in reforms to liberalise the labour market. The reduction of unemployment benefits, cuts in welfare state expenditure, re-structuring social security system and weakening of collective agreements became the core part of these reforms. The declining importance of full-time and non-limited employment is associated with a growing number of workers who, due to their employment status, are confronted with low job security and little influence on their working situation. The debate on “precarious employment” is closely linked to the debate on the distribution of risks and of societal and economical achievements. This research discusses the claimed “miracle” argument in the German labour market and finds answers to explain its impact on the welfare state. The contrasted evolution of employment and unemployment of men and women in France and Germany during the 2000s is empirically analysed. The research highlights the following questions in some depth after a tour d’horizon into the changing patterns of labour market related issues of Germany: Has a German employment miracle really existed or was it only limited to women workers in atypical jobs? Was the German employment success mainly the result of favourable macro-economic conditions, in particular high competitiveness in international trade (export) based on diversified quality production in manufacturing and low unit wage costs? Or if the true miracle in the German labour market is the capacity to persuade workers in accepting low wages, relative to productivity improvements, than in other countries. The research takes in to consideration the Hartz Reforms, increasing flexibility of wage determination & collective bargaining, allocating working time accounts and share of women in the growth of atypical employment. The trade union responses to precarious employment in Germany are also taken in to account. In methodological terms the proposed research aims to employ socio-economic and interdisciplinary approach with structural analysis. It makes use of institutional economics and applied economics with a comparative approach to study the labour market evolution in Germany and France.

**Session: Space, Labor and Precarity**



## **Outsourcing as a strategy to contain labor conflict: a case study from the guild of private surveillance in Mexico City.**

**Laura Victoria Alvarado Aizpuru**

The case study focuses on private security workers in a middle class housing complex in Mexico City. The personnel started as unregistered workers throughout the 90s, and by the year 2014 developed an organization that pursued two main demands: labor contracts signed by mutual agreement and access to social security. Faced with this, the diffuse employer figure of “the administration” resorted to an outsourcing company, in order to absorb the workers and fulfill employer responsibilities. The research results from an ethnographic exercise with a sustained stay in the field for a year and a half. And its main purpose is to explore the outsourcing of workforce as a mechanism in which employers can contain labor conflict and comply with national labor regulations, without this having a positive impact on the life conditions of the workers.

The concept of non-classical work is used in dialogue with the ideas of Loïc Wacquant on advanced marginality; thus making a translation that shows that, although the neoliberalization process in the countries of the global south did not have the same implications as for the industrialized countries, the conditions of those workers who historically have been excluded from the benefits of the Welfare State, did not remain intact during the pass of time. In this sense, throughout the investigation it is argued that when the formalization of the work is achieved by the means of an outsourcing company a paradox appears: with the formalization of labor emerge a series of problems such as flexibility, and decreased wages.

The research privileges an ethnographic approach of the labor relationship between workers and neighbors (using the complexities of consumer oriented services, in which the consumer plays a crucial role in the labor dynamic). Both, the neighbor and the surveillance worker, are positioned as agents with a limited, yet accurate cognition of the situation. This breaks the Manichean conceptions where neighbors are “heartless” beings whose only motor is the minimization of costs; while workers are subjects unable to cope with their circumstances. On the contrary, the research shows how the everyday order is marked by attitudes highly conditioned by morality and voluntarism, which use affection and paternalism as a way to lessen the precarious working conditions. This is permeated also by narratives that interweave, sometimes incoherently, notions about responsibility, voluntarism and care.

I refer to the previously mentioned “everyday order” as incoherent to point out that it relies more on a paternalistic interchange of favors than in appropriate working



conditions with full labor rights. It is one of the reasons why, when formalization of labor is achieved with an outsourcing company, these everyday affection-based strategies can no longer continue; leading to the conclusion that outsourcing is not only an employer strategy for cost reduction, but a way to contain the conflict and narrow the paternalistic and incoherent, yet useful, networks between care workers and its consumers.

### **Impact of displacements costs on a spatially scattered labor market - A theoretical approach**

**Aboukacem el Mehdi**

We develop In this paper a theoretical model at the crossroads of labor and urban economics, used for explaining the mechanism through which the home-workplace trips generalized costs impact the labor demand and supply in a spatially scattered labor market. The main innovative aspect of the paper, but not the only one, consists on building a micro-geographic founded matching function that links the parameters of the passengers transport system to those of employment. Thanks to this function it is possible to deal with a spatial mismatch issue at an aggregate level.

The spatial disconnection between home and job opportunities is referred to as the spatial mismatch hypothesis (SMH). Its harmful impact on employment has been subject to numerous theoretical propositions. However, the theoretical models proposed so far are patterned around the American context, which is marked by racial discrimination against blacks in the housing and the labor markets. Therefore, it is only natural that most of these models are developed in order to reproduce a steady state characterized by agents carrying out their economic activities in a mono-centric city in which most unskilled jobs intended to blacks are created in the suburbs, far from their residency area in the city-centre. As a consequence, the Black population suffers from a higher unemployment rate.

The model we build in this paper is designed to describe and explain situations that are more general and more complex than the ones most of the models proposed so far deal with. It is intended to set a theoretical framework thanks to it can be possible to deal with some SMH related issues whatever the geographical structure of the considered city is.

The model we present doesn't rely on any racial discrimination and doesn't aim at reproducing a steady state in which the stylized facts above mentioned are replicated; but it takes the main principle of the SMH -the spatial disconnection between homes and workplaces- as a starting point.



We consider here a city that consists of  $Q$  districts and we reason with a series of short periods. In each district unemployed workers seeking for job opportunities are residing and firms looking for labor force are located. In each period, unemployed workers are informed of the existence of job opportunities in  $k$  different districts. The information relates to the availability of the job and the productivity (and thus the wage) of the unemployed worker if hired. The latter chooses to send his application for a job only if the proposed wage net of displacement costs is higher than his reservation wage. On the other hand, if the employer receives some applications, he hires the most productive candidate. Otherwise the proposed position remains vacant. At the end of each period, the unemployed workers who did not get a job start a new search and the positions that have not been filled are proposed again in the next period.

Based on this mechanism, we build a global matching function for the whole city, and a "partial" matching function for each couple of districts. We demonstrate that the sum of the "partial" matching functions is exactly equal to the global matching function.

The findings show that unemployed workers living in areas benefiting from good transport infrastructures and services have a better chance to prefer activity to unemployment than those who live in areas where the transport infrastructures and services are poorer, that the firms located in the most accessible areas receive much more applications and are more likely to fill their vacancies more quickly and with better workers than the firms located in the less accessible ones and that better transport infrastructures and services lead to a better matching at both the district and the city levels.

## **Accommodations at work and workers mobility. Perspectives from Europe**

### **Antonella Ceccagno, Devi Sacchetto**

Based on extensive fieldwork in Europe, we offer a new approach to the mobility of workers living at work. In the last 20 years the phenomenon of workers living at work has reemerged. Mostly, workers accommodations at work have been discussed for factories in China and other Asian countries. The dormitory labour regime in China has specific traits due to the huge dimensions of the plants, widespread availability of industrial dormitories, and to dormitories being available to all workers and industries to the point that it has been described as 'systemic'.

Nowadays different kinds of accommodation for workers controlled by the management and organized in a way that they fit into the organization of production are increasingly widespread worldwide across productive sectors especially in countries that use migrant workers, a category of labour that is increasing globally. In Europe, the diffusion of



accommodations at work for workers is slow, but growing, and it is affecting different kinds of labour processes in different countries. We explore two cases in Europe – the Chinese migrants in Italy and European and Asian migrant workers in Czech Republic. The ‘mobile regime’ of the Chinese workers within the network of fashion workshops in Italy and the exit strategies enacted by the migrant workers employed at the Foxconn plants in Europe show a pattern of workers mobility different from most literature.

In fact, while most scholars, mainly focusing analytical attention on Asia, conceptualise the mobility of workers living at work as only directed from above, our cases enable us to point at forms of workers’ self-tailored mobility that take place outside of the established and often policed tracks. We are therefore able to conceptualise the mobility of workers living at work in Europe as the outcome of the interplay of both employers’ strategies and workers’ agency and thus unpack an established framework that, in Europe, does not reflect actual processes.

Moreover, we discuss the outsourcing of the social reproduction linked to the dormitory regime both as a form of dispossession and a condition workers increasingly take advantage of as it increases their potential for mobility in and out of the European labour markets.

## **Session: Labor Market Trends**

### **The problem of labor exclusion in Argentina. Analysis of the intermediation policies**

**María Eugenia Sconfienza**

This document analyses those segments excluded and at risk of being excluded from the argentinian labor market. From quantitative information that is collected by the Permant Survey of Households made by the National Statistics and Censuses Institute, it is develop a description of some of the most significant characteristics from this segment. Also, from qualitative information it is investigate the incidence of the active labor policies in general and the intermediation service in particular promoted from the national government.

Between the most remarkable findings are: the prevalence of educative policies that don’t mean the labor insertion; low complementarities between local and national policies; absence of diagnostics refer to the local labor demand; and low skills from the workers that manage these policies.

**Availability to work and job search: inactivity as unemployment veil. An analysis of Spanish potential working forcé**

The 36th International  
Labour Process Conference

# CLASS AND THE LABOUR PROCESS



**Valentina Viego, Margarita Gallego Sanchez, Sofia Perez de Guzman Padron**

Despite the increase in employment and the reduction of unemployment that has taken place in Spain since mid-2013, almost 75% of Spanish population consider unemployment as the main problem in that country (Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas, 2016). Some researchers (Prieto, 2017) have argued that this apparent mismatch between official statistics and population views is explained by the fact that, for the Spanish population, the vulnerability of precarious workers places them closer to unemployment than to employment. A second complementary explanation is related to the existence of a "sociological unemployment" (Sanchís and Simó, 2014: 53) that remains hidden in official figures due to the regular criteria applied to identify individuals into and outside the labor force, which consider those people who are available to work but do not search for job as non-active; any average citizen would consider those individuals as unemployed. The objective of this work is precisely to analyze this group, whose magnitude currently exceeds 500 thousand people. Its evolution is analyzed in the last years in order to determine if (and how) the Great Recession has influenced the size of potential working force. Subsequently profiles are presented in terms of age, levels of education, nationality, trajectories with respect to job and, especially, gender and how they influence their attitudes towards job search. We carried out a statistical analysis based on the microdata of the Survey of Active Population using multivariate logistic regressions in order to estimate the probability of belonging to different categories of non-working population according to the characteristics of the subjects.

**A surplus of university graduates for capital in Argentina? An exploratory approach based on journalistic statements**

**Ricardo Donaire**

As long as higher education as a means of life is only available for the bourgeoisie and the wealthy strata of the petty bourgeoisie as a way of reproducing their class position, it also mainly functions as the grounds of a title under which these strata can appropriate a part of the social wealth. The possibility that this association is no longer restrictive might be an indicator of some degree of social decomposition of intellectual workers as part of these groups. This situation is more apparent in the possibility of unemployment among higher graduates, although it could also be extended to all those situations in which the categories that were trained to perform intellectual functions cannot be effectively employed in those activities. The generation of a surplus of these characteristics might be associated with a process of expropriation of their conditions of existence, and therefore, of proletarianization.



As a part of our research on the proletarianization of intellectual workers in Argentina, we have observed, at least in the last two decades, the existence of a significant volume of higher graduates inserted in typical occupations of, either the lower strata of the small bourgeoisie or the proletariat (especially as small traders or low-level clerks), if not directly unemployed. We have provisionally conceptualized this population as a "mass of reserve" for intellectual functions in relation to the immediate needs of capital.

However, this characterization must necessarily correspond with the appearance of elements that place them as such from the perspective of the bourgeoisie. Is it possible to find these elements in recent Argentina? One possible way of operationally detecting this need of the bourgeoisie is through those who express their general interests, that is, their organic intellectuals.

For that reason, we prepared a first exploratory approach, based on the compilation and ordering of journalistic material, attempting to detect there elements that either account for the levels of demand on higher graduates, especially university graduates, or that characterize a part of them as surplus. We have selected articles in which we could find some of the following subjects:

- Overt characterization of the existence of a surplus of professionals, higher graduates or university students ("overproduction", "education for unemployment", etc.)
- Supply and demand of professionals either in general terms or specifically referred to some occupations: engineers, physicians, etc.
- Educational politics in higher education especially those either fostering or preventing an increase of new higher graduates and its consequences to the supply of professionals.

For this first compilation we have focused mainly on "La Nación", national newspaper of daily publication and where the interests of the upper echelons of the great bourgeoisie of Argentina are often expressed, not only in the opinions that the newspaper itself spreads through the voice of its leader writers, but also in those of the intellectuals to whom this newspaper gives room to express their points of view. We have focused on those articles, about the problem that we are dealing with, published during the period after the crisis of 2001, although we have paid special attention to certain conjunctural moments of conflict, such as the controversy around the creation of new universities or the debate about modifications to the law that governs higher education, moments when these opinions acquired more presence. This first exploration will allow us to establish an initial ordering of the information that could be further enriched through the analysis of more



material and even of documents elaborated by the intellectuals of the different quoted "think tanks".

## **Session: The Value of work**

### **Dimensions of worth in work. Values from markets, performances and tasks**

**Bengt Larsson, Ylva Ulfsdotter Eriksson, Petra Adolfsson**

During the classic "Swedish model"-era wages and wage-increases were to a large extent defined in central national collective agreements and coordinated tariffs, under the general principle of "equal pay for equal work". During the last three decades wage setting has been decentralized and the local space for individual differentiation through performance pay has gained ground – particularly in the public sector and for white collar workers. Performance pay systems define what is valued in work by the employer, but to what extent do the (e)valuative criteria used match the employees' notions of what should be valued in work? This paper contributes to that question by analysing what dimensions of worth that public sector employees in Sweden believe individually differentiated pay ought to be based on. The empirical data analysed in the paper is from surveys with employees in big public sector organisations. Theoretically the paper is influenced by the sociology of valuation studies, the "orders of worth" theory developed by Boltanski and Thévenot, and the psychological strand of organizational justice theories. The results show the existence of a set of underlying dimensions defining the value of work to different degrees and in somewhat different combinations according to different categories of employees. The main dimensions found in these normative valuations of work are: the employee's performance and development of tasks; the employee's attitude to the organisation; the employee's market value; the employee's experience and education; the overall organizational performance, and the complexity and responsibility of the tasks performed.

### **A Critical Review of Meaningful Work**

**Carolin Suedkamp**

Meaningful work research is widely observed and constantly growing across disciplines and offers conceptually rich and promising directions. At the same time, a critical evaluation of the concepts, sites, and practices of the scholarship is needed because significant challenges mark the literature. It appears that meaningful work research is particularly fractured. Differences in conceptions, definitions, and the valuation of these obstruct productive cross-disciplinary engagement. One of the most significant problems is that the research inherently centralizes a specific type of work (paid employment),



mainly grounded in neoliberal notions of capitalism. The paper demonstrates the lack of alignment between meaningful work research and contemporary conditions of work. This belies the incumbent precarity of work and its detrimental consequences for project and temporary workers, among others. Instead, the paper emphasizes traditional work and measurement of performance. Thus, unpaid activities and tasks are unrecognized, despite their productive capacity and necessity for society. This oversight is regrettable because it fails to include industries (e.g., culture industries) that are marked by instability and looming precarity. Yet, the relevance of the nonprofit and cultural industries, both with regard to precarity as well as economic contribution, is evident in two aspects. For one, their characteristics include personal sacrifices in the form of unpaid internships, low wages, and volunteering. Secondly, in 2010, the nonprofit sector in the U.S. employed over 10 million people, making it the third largest sector in the country. Yet, they do not seem to warrant investigations of how people makes sense of forms of work in the absence of monetary incentives. A phronetic analysis of 50 articles in 35 journals yields questions that exceed the functionality of a concept and centralize concerns of meaning and power instead. This includes the consideration of where meaningful work is present, who has access (or lacks access) to meaningful work, and how it is examined. This review argues for theoretical reconsiderations that give way to reflexivity and sensitivity of the research contexts and methodologies.. Improvements are necessary to examine (precarious) occupations and geographical regions – mainly western industrialized societies – identified in the literature.

### **Session: Labour reform and welfare systems**

#### **Young people and pension savings in times of increasing employment uncertainty: A comparison of seven European welfare systems**

**Dirk Hofaecker, Sina Schadow, Janika Kletzing**

Faced with the foreseeable prospect of demographic ageing, in recent decades, many international organizations, such as the World Bank, the OECD or the European Union, have advocated the establishment of multi-pillar pension systems – combining components of public, occupational and private pensions – to ensure the sustainability of pensions. Many countries have introduced such pillars and young cohorts entering the labor market now are often expected to invest in to multiple sources of old age income.

At the same time, the labor market situation of youth has worsened dramatically. Young people increasingly have difficulties to enter the labor market and thus often end up in (long-term) unemployment. They are also disproportionately represented in atypical work form such as fixed-term “employment, low paid work or (false self-employment). The



uncertainty associated with these employment instabilities often hinders young people to make appropriate savings for old age.

Given these conflicting trends, the old age security of today's young generations – i.e. the future generation of pensioners – is at stake. Our paper will analyze evidence from seven selected country cases representing different types of welfare regimes – Sweden (social-democratic), the United Kingdom (liberal), Germany (conservative), Italy (Southern European), Poland, Estonia and Ukraine (post-socialist) – to investigate what consequences employment uncertainties today have for young people's future pensions and to what degree country-specific policies mediate their possibly detrimental effect.

To that end, the paper utilizes findings from comparative institutional analyses of public pension systems. In addition, given the scarcity of cross-nationally comparable quantitative data, expert interviews with economic and political scientists as well as with administrators from financial institutions were conducted to similarly assess the effect of employment uncertainties on private and occupational pension plans. The paper synthesizes the findings from these analyses and derives recommendations for pension and labor market policies to ensure sustainable pensions for future generations.

## **Two waves of pensions' financialization: The UK Case**

**Jo Grady, Ian Clark**

In this paper we argue that there has been two distinctive waves of pension financialization in the UK. Wave 1 occurred before the 2008 financial crisis, and Wave 2 has been on-going since the 2008 financial crisis. We argue that both waves are still underway, and that the impact of the particular type of pension financialization experienced in each wave is neither entirely static in character, nor over. We argue that pension financialization in wave 1 (characterised by pension scheme closure/downgrading) laid the much needed groundwork for further pension financialization in wave 2 (characterised by more pervasive forms of value appropriation). The 2008 crisis plays an important role in the distinction between waves. In short, the impact of the 2008 finance crisis resulted in losses for both state and capital, and thus prompted a change in strategy of pension financialization in wave 2.

Wave 1 occurred between 2002 and 2008, when we witnessed the acceleration of final salary pension scheme closures, and the replacement of these with less favourable pension schemes, such as career average or defined benefit (Grady, 2013). We identify this as an era of pension financialization, as the arguments used to underpin the scheme reforms were rooted in neoliberal ideology, and financialization of the labour process



(Grady, 2013). Obviously pension scheme reform existed prior to 2002, and has continued since 2008, but we argue that this period represented the height of pension scheme reform, and more importantly, it was during this period that widespread acceptance of the neoliberal argument for pension reform became embedded in political dialogue. In short, that social democratic pension settlements of the Keynesian period were deemed unsustainable within a period of financialization inspired by neoliberalist orthodoxy. Thus the political rhetoric which advocated a financialized pension reform was manufactured during this period as legitimate, accurate, and true. Our argument illustrates that organisations financially benefitted from the pension financialization that occurred during wave 1. They did so in numerous ways; reduced employer contributions, scheme closure, pension contributions holidays, and removal of financial responsibility to underwrite a scheme; these were the main vehicles that delivered financial dividends. Wave 1, therefore, represented multiple financial gains for capital and the state, however, as a result of 2008 crisis, both state and capital incurred significant losses. Thus the gains that had been achieved from wave 1, were somewhat diminished by crisis losses.

A significant characteristic of post-crisis accumulation is a determination by the state and capital to 'take back', make-up, or re-capitalize the losses that they sustained during the crisis. As such, the strategy for pension financialization differs quite significantly in wave 2. As noted above, wave 1 continues, and this is evident in UK universities at the moment with debates about the future viability of USS, but in wave 2 pension financialization does not just focus on pension scheme reform and closure, but also appropriation of pension value in other ways. This is achieved via particular forms of financialization of the labour process and exploitation of disconnected financialized regulatory mechanisms, which permit historical wage theft from pension schemes (Grady and Clark 2017).

Wave 1 therefore represented (and continues to represent) efforts by employers to reduce payments into pension schemes. Whereas, wave 2 represents the search for further savings, both from workers already in schemes (generally older workers), and savings from those placed in precarious employment (often, but not always, younger workers). With regards older workers, the savings take the form of recuperation of pension payments, via two interrelated activities by employers. The main activity of appropriation we see is the deployment of several strategies to seize back pension contributions previously paid – this is evident in the UK in both private, public, and post-takeover firms (Grady and Clark, 2017). These strategies include, amongst other things, direct appropriation from private sector schemes, transferring funds from scheme to shareholders, over calculating value of schemes (Clark, 2018; Grady and Clark, 2017). We argue this represents historic wage theft of the labour process, by essentially appropriating back value paid, often over several decades. A further activity of pension financialization and appropriation is associated with increased precarity of the labour



process via the deregulation of labour market. This has a dual impact of driving down wages, whilst companies simultaneously appropriate value that used to pay more lucrative rates of wages for employees, and in form of higher pension contributions (Grady, 2017). Younger workers and increasing numbers of precarious workers are predominantly affected.

This research provides new theoretical critiques of financialization, and we illustrate our argument by examining cases of UK pension financialization, the appropriation (historic, current, and ongoing) of value this involves, and the manifest ways this impacts on the labour process.

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## **Poverty reduction as reproduction of capitalism: The role of CCTs in preserving capitalist work**

### **Firat Durusan**

It is the contention of the presentation that the widespread treatment of the subject conditional cash transfers in either social policy or development economics conceive the issue in income distribution terms, and thus is prone to miss the role they play in ordering social relations in capitalist labour process. This mishandling of the issue goes hand in hand, and in part is caused by another misapprehension: that of the poor and under- or unemployed as not being a part of the working class. In this study, Marx's concepts of



surplus population and reserve army of labour are utilised in reconceptualizing poverty and unemployment in contemporary developing country context, reminding their necessity in the reproduction of capitalist social relations. Conditional cash transfers, in their turn, are analysed as a means to ensure the reproduction of the surplus population as the reserve army of labour. Said reproduction is analytically separated as two interrelated processes, namely, the reproduction of labour power on the one hand and reproduction of the wage labour relation. As the role of CCT's in the former is apparent, it remains to show how they reproduce the wage labour relation by serving as a compulsion to work in the conditions determined by the logic of capital. The application of social risk mitigation project in Turkey and Asignación Universal Por Hijo in Argentina are the country case studies which will be considered in pursuing the above summarised reconceptualization

### **Session: Labor Law**

#### **Selective Enforcement of Labor Law in China: Evidence from Chinese General Social Surveys**

**Hailong Jia, Mingwei Liu**

Despite China's recent progress in labor legislation, labor law enforcement has remained weak and uneven. While existing accounts of the weak, uneven labor law enforcement focus on local states' resistance or poor capacity of implementation, we contend that the causes are more complicated involving not only local states but also other employment relations actors as well as their interactions. Drawing on logics of action theory, theory of segmented labor market, literature of China labor studies, as well as our extensive field work, we develop a theory of selective enforcement of labor laws in China. We argue that China's labor law enforcement is contingent on how specific regulations are written, local political economy factors such as level of economic development, economic growth rate, wage level, and degree of labor conflicts, employer characteristics such as industry, ownership, and size, and employee attributes such as *hukou*, gender, education, work position, and political affiliation. Further, time periods associated with significant institutional changes matter as they may influence labor law enforcement both directly and indirectly through shaping the effects of other factors. Results of multilevel analysis of the Chinese General Social Survey from 2006, 2008 and 2013 largely supported our hypotheses

#### **Outsourcing in the Preliminary Draft Labour Reform in Argentina, A new setback in the protection of workers?**



**Jorge Afarian, Julieta Lobato**

The outsourcing, which many companies in our country use as a central productive strategy, generates a triangulation between the principal company, the worker and the contractor. This process makes it difficult to identify the employer, and waters down the fulfillment of their responsibilities against eventual breaches. This device of labour fragmentation and lowering of the costs is a form of precarization of labour relations that is constantly growing globally.

For more than forty years, the writing of the current section 30 of the Labour Contract Law (N° 20.744), which includes the cession of place of business, contracting and subcontracting of works or services, has led to numerous and contradictory discussions about its scope and interpretation. From restrictive to broad positions, which are conditioned by the economic, social and political scenario, our jurisprudence has shaped the interpretation of this norm.

At the beginning of November of 2017, and after a favourable parliamentary election, the Argentine national government presented a Draft Labour Reform, which substantially modifies numerous protective norms in individual and collective matters. The case of section 30 is not an exception since, as we will show, the reform limits its application and the grounds for allocation of responsibility in the case of a violation of the law.

Although the future of the regulation is still uncertain, we will make a critical comment about the "new" article 30 proposed by the government. We will point out its main characteristics which, in a first approximation, we could consider harmful to current labour relations (not so to business ones).

We intend to use the Preliminary Draft as a trigger for the discussion of a range of issues such as: What is the current government's criteria regarding labour relations? How is the government's position towards labour relations evidenced in the standard under examination? What consequences would the sanction of this reform terms bring? Could outsourcing be regulated in another way? What breaks and continuities exists between the proposed section and the existing jurisprudential doctrine? Which strategies could workers develop in order to address the problems that the reform may arise?

**The labor reform approved in Brazil: a regressive attack on social rights and the public institutions that operate in the labor world**

**Magda Biavaschi**



The article aims to analyze the Brazilian Labor Reform and its impacts on labor relations and public institutions operating in the labor world, as well as its detrimental effects on the economy as a whole, proceeding with a comparative dialogue with analogous reforms in other nations, such as the ones carried out in other Latin American and European countries, including Chile, Argentina, Mexico, Spain and the United Kingdom, looking at their similarities and differences, with a focus on the violation of social rights that protect employment and on the institutions whose duty is to supervise and make this safety net effective. Public labor protection legislation in Brazil was regulated by the Consolidation of Labor Laws (CLT) from May 1, 1943, whose rights and guarantees were broadened by the 1988 Constitution, that raised worker's rights to the status of fundamental social rights, incorporating the principles that underlie the Labor Law. The Brazilian Senate approved the so-called "Labor Reform" in July 2017 and it became effective in November 2017. The main argument for the Reform was that updating the labor safety net was necessary to remove the "rigidity" that contributes to the increase in unemployment and insecurity. This proposal aims to analyze this reform, revealing the fallacies of these arguments. To this end, it will engage in a dialogue with the experiences of other countries which, implementing similar reforms, have not fulfilled their promises. On the contrary, the result was an increase in precarious work, whereas the unemployment issue remained unresolved. In the case of the Brazilian reform, the analysis of some of its aspects reveals that, unlike what was promised, it aims to override the universal law in favor of the "free" encounter of the individual wills of employees and employers, reducing the wage level, expanding the use of atypical contracts that mask the employment relations, reducing the role of Labor Justice and the federal supervisory system and legitimizing outsourcing by extending it to all activities, causing detrimental effects on the already fragmented workers' organization and increasing litigiousness.

## **Session: Self employment and precarity**

### **Self-Employment India's Informal Sector: The Case of Handloom Enterprises in Assam**

**Anamika Das**

Expansion of informal sector particularly in developing countries has triggered a major debate among the researchers and policymakers. One half to three-fourths of non-farm employment in developing countries is in the informal sector: 65% in Asia, 51% in Latin America, 48% in North Africa and 72% in sub-Saharan Africa. In India, informality is the most dominant characterization of jobs in the non-farm sector, accounting for 72% of non-farm employment in the informal sector in 2004-05 (NCEUS 2007). Almost all the workers in agriculture sector are informal workers. They don't have any social or economic security, work in very deplorable condition and are left with very few livelihood options.



As much as 63% of informal workers in the non-farm sector are self-employed in India (NCEUS 2007). Self-employed belonging to the middle and high income group accounting for 25.3% are mostly urban traders with sufficient capital and skill, independent skilled workers or professionals (NCEUS 2007). However, 75% of them are poor and vulnerable (NCEUS 2007). These are mainly petty commodity producers (PCPs) such as small peasants, artisans, small shopkeepers etc.

Theories of development of capitalism or the market economy are based on ideas of *institutional convergence*: which is linked to the emergence of a specific production relation under capitalism, dominated by the relation between capital and labour (through the wage- labour route). But other forms of production relations (pre/ non-capitalist) continue to be present in many developing economies. Why do such diverse production relations survive and coexist under capitalism? What are its implications for labour?

Extent literature identifies some processes which help in the persistence and reproduction of PCPs in the presence of advanced capitalism. These include value chain, exploitation involved in PCPs and social norms. In the backdrop of this, we have made an attempt to explore the processes through which PCPs survives in the contemporary Indian economy. We have studied the relations of production involved in informal enterprises in general and those involved in handloom sector in particular.

To address above questions, we have studied the weaving cluster of Sualkuchi in Assam, a North-Eastern state in India. We have also used the data collected in 67<sup>th</sup> round National Sample Survey on unincorporated enterprises in India.

Our study indicates that existence of PCPs actually helps the capitalists to extract surplus value by making them part of their production system through value chain. Apart from wage labour route, surplus product of direct producer is extracted via unequal exchange, unpaid family labour, labour bondage, subcontracting to home workers, casual labour. Social identities such as gender, caste and religion also play an important role in this regard.

## **Towards an employment precariousness based-typology of self employment in Chile**

**Fernando Baeza, Alejandra Vives**

Employment precariousness has been traditionally conceptualized as the weakening of salaried employment relations. However, in Latin-American countries important proportions of the workforce correspond to own-account work. In Chile own-account work rises over 20% of the workforce, one of the lowest in the region.



Self-employment is generally characterized as a form of informal and precarious employment, lacking job stability and social protection. However, it is heterogeneous in nature, where only some forms correspond to subsistence work for those excluded from the formal labour market. Others correspond to traditional self-employed jobs (e.g. liberal professions and shop owners), and still others to a response to the flexibility regime (flexible production and employment) and hence, the precarization of salaried jobs (e.g., individuals who value the autonomy and control over the work process over the securities of precarious salaried work, bogus self-employed workers, and workers forced into becoming externalized providers).

Adopting a multidimensional approach to precarious employment originally developed for salaried workers, we aim to describe this heterogeneity by identifying types of self-employed workers according to the dimensions of precarious employment that are applicable and in a second moment, to incorporate specific dimensions to own-account work.

Data comes from a nationally representative sub-sample of 1.893 self-employed workers (own-account workers and employers of up to 5 unpaid or temporary workers) from the First National Survey on Employment, Work, Health and Quality of Life (ENETS-2010).

Four of the six sub-scales that make up Amable et al's Employment Precariousness Scale (EPRES) were used for the analysis of employment precariousness: job stability, incomes, social-protection rights and capacity to exercise time-related rights (13 of the 22 original EPRES variables). The disempowerment and vulnerability dimensions, as well as a variable referring to Occupational health and safety coverage of the social-protection rights sub-scale have been excluded, as they do not apply to self-employed workers. The abbreviated scale demonstrated acceptable psychometric properties in this population.

Latent class cluster analysis was carried out (LatentGold 4.0) based on the four subscales scores. The best-fitting latent class cluster model was selected according to model fit and interpretability of the solution. Descriptive statistics were run for the resulting classes of jobs (SPSS.23).

Six clusters were identified, with average EPRES score ranging from 0.66 to 2.44. Significant differences were observed in their profiles of precariousness, especially relative to incomes, job stability and capacity to exercise time-related rights, giving rise to the following classes of jobs: stable precarious, subsistence autonomous, subsistence precarious, stable entrepreneurs, impoverished entrepreneurs and unstable autonomous jobs.



Significant differences were also observed in the composition of these classes of jobs according to socio-demographic and occupational characteristics and to additional dimensions considered relevant for the analysis of self-employment like their dependency to single suppliers or buyers and the financial risks they assume. The study results so far suggest that we can speak of different "forms of precariousness" among Chilean self-employed workers, and that the specific dimensions considered to self-employed workers can and shall be integrated in subsequent analyses to refine the typology described above.

\*Preliminary results of the FONDECYT project N° 1171105

## **Uberization: advanced stage of flexibilization of work relations**

**Rodrigo Bombonati de Souza Moraes, Marco Antonio Gonsales de Oliveira**

By the end of the 20th century, we had already clarified the role of new technologies in production and its role in increasing productive flexibility for the formation of new organizational configurations (Kalleberg, 2009; Sennett, 2000; Vallas, 2015). Today, new individual transport applications are attracting social researchers to their consequences for working relationships. Uberism is experienced as a way of organizing and remunerating the workforce, making the regularity of formal employment and the guarantee of social and labor rights tend to be reduced. In this research, we aim to reflect on the uberization of labor relations, in view of Accredited Transport Technology Operators (OTTs). We understand that uberization does not refer to a specific company, but to a logic of labor relations, we use the analysis of these applications, the empirical object of research, to construct a more general idea of the new flexible form of work of the society. Because of the new flexible logic, or as a more recent expression of flexibilization, what some authors will call uberization of labor (Abilio, 2017), the age of uberization (Fleming, 2017) or uberization of the labor force (Pochmann, 2017). Uberization is 'a new stage of labor exploitation, which brings qualitative changes to the status of the worker, to the configuration of the companies, as well as to the forms of control, management and expropriation of labor' (Abilio, 2017).

In Brazil, according to Lobel (2017), there are around 500,000 drivers working for Uber in 2017, showing a growth of 10 times compared to 2016 (50,000). Due to the almost unpublished nature of the theme and the consequent scarcity of scientific productions for consultation and analysis, we propose to carry out a qualitative and quantitative research with 50 app drivers around the Gru Airport, São Paulo. All day, hundreds of app drivers spend the night waiting around the airport for a good ride. As results, we verified that, in Brazil, uberization is part of a greater logic of labor relations, characterized by the



flexibility of work. This seems to represent precariousness, loss of rights, just-in-time work, exploitation of overwork, partial work, unstable work - a kind of nano-entrepreneur-of-self. However, in Brazil, the struggles and the achievements of the working class were diverse, but insufficient to overcome the conditions of precariousness and despotism in the relations between capital and labor. In this context, for many app drivers, their work is not only an alternative to unemployment but an alternative to even more precarious jobs. 'Here, in my car, I hand, I choose my schedules and no boss shouts at me' (Driver24, 2017). On the other hand, the legislation in the city of São Paulo brings, through Decree 56.981/16 (SÃO PAULO, 2016) and Resolution 16/2017 (DIÁRIO OFICIAL DA CIDADE DE SÃO PAULO, 2017) new barriers to application companies and drivers by imposing new rules on the provision of services. In addition, there is a bill in the federal senate that, if approved, will impose greater restrictions on the use of transportation applications, "as the service ceases to be a 'private activity'. The cars would be described as 'rental', similar to taxis, and with a requirement of 'specific authorization' of the municipal public power, besides red plate" (Fernandes & Lobel, 2017). Therefore, uberization in Brazil is being institutionalized more by the pressure of taxi services than by the demands of workers for better working conditions.

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### **Session: Labor Market Regulation**

#### **Ruptures and continuities in matters of public employment policies in Argentina (1990-2015). The case of the Municipal Employment Offices**

**Irene Provenzano**

There is a broad production about the role of labor policies of flexibilization, reduction of wage costs and management of unemployment in shaping the neoliberal strategy. In Argentina, after the 2001 crisis and its sequel to unemployment, precarization and pauperization of the popular sectors, the demand for employment became a political and social axis of magnitude, and this was assumed by the Kirchner governments, with arguments that prioritized active state policies, economic reactivation and social inclusion.

In this framework, it is essential to investigate the relationship between the dynamics of the labor force market, the process of capital accumulation, and the type of state intervention matrix that is configured in this matter, in different historical periods, analyzing ruptures and continuities.

To this end, we will consider the policies promoted by the Secretary of Employment of the Ministry of Labor, Employment, and Social Security (MTEySS). In particular, the policies and social processes articulated around the creation of the Public Employment Services Network and the consolidation of municipal employment offices (OEMs). We will seek to identify the social and political actors that take center stage in the framework of the developed policies, recognizing continuities and / or ruptures in the actors that these policies prioritize, in the specific patterns of state action against groups and actors with different political positions and belongings of class and in the allocation of costs and benefits thereof. We will focus on the specific state management, to analyze to what extent these policies have a differential quality with respect to the neoliberal stage and understand what their limits have been. This Network represents an institutional innovation with respect to the 90s, and it implements many of the programs and active



employment policies promoted by the Ministry; Likewise, OEMs are central to the strategy of municipalization-territorialization of MTEySS intervention in the period, above all for the universe of unregistered, informal, unemployed and / or underemployed workers. We will try to reconstruct a periodization of employment policies, articulating the different functions and policies in charge of the Network with the characteristics, profiles and structural biases assumed by the labor market in the period under analysis.

This analysis of policies, although not enough to generalize, aims to illuminate, be part of broader reflections on the transformations that have taken place in the State in the last decade, within the framework of the "crisis of neoliberalism", as well as contributing to the most recent discussions about new regressive turns in labor matters, based on the state regulation of the capital-labor relationship and the changing and dynamic correlations of force between social classes.

## **From shock absorber to institutional mediator: the evolving macro-regulatory functions of the temporary staffing industry in the United States**

**Nik Theodore, Jamie Peck**

The temporary staffing industry (TSI) has long been regarded as a leading indicator of macroeconomic change. TSI employment tends to decline shortly before the economy begins a downturn and it rebounds in advance of a recovery, a pattern that has been observed over the last several business cycles. But the TSI's role in labor market adjustment appears to have evolved beyond its traditional "shock absorber" function. By the early 2000s, the TSI had achieved a new newfound capacity to mediate cycles of boom and bust. This could be observed during the 2001 recession, which represented both the TSI's stiffest test and its crowning achievement: the shedding of more than half a million temporary jobs in the downturn was accompanied by the shuttering of hundreds of small agencies; yet the extent of these losses is also testimony to the TSI's "institutional" capacity as a large-scale labor-market intermediary. The TSI's capacity to absorb employment losses was again put to the test during the 2007-09 Great Recession. And again it shouldered a significantly disproportionate share of unemployment and job displacement

Looking across the last two recessions and the jobless recoveries that followed, this paper examines the TSI's changing capacity to manage and mediate labor-market adjustment. Over the course of several decades, the TSI has moved from the role of stopgap-staffing provider to a more systematic and continuous function, mediating between companies' HR departments and their preferred labor supplies across an increasingly broad array of industries and occupations. The TSI's success in embedding itself within the American economy has been remarkable, and it can now be seen as a



purveyor of flexibility not just at the “micro” level (meeting the needs of individual enterprises) but also at the “macro” level—mediating macroeconomic pressures and socio-economic risks across the labor market as a whole. The paper quantifies this change by examining the timing and extent of cycles of job loss and gain, and it considers changes in the wage distribution of highly temped out occupations and what these mean for low-wage workers. The paper concludes with reflections on the TSI’s role in the jobless recoveries that have followed the two most recent “flexible” recessions.

## **Manpower under Tripartism in Singapore**

**Stephane Le Queux, Adrian T.H. Kuah, Chris Leggett**

Organizations and employers are often concerned with the design and implementation of HRM practices to fit the various institutional structures. Our paper examines the motives behind policies for productivity management and the shifting institutional supports to employment in Singapore. In the absence of natural resources, the availability of skilled labour and its level of productivity have been central to the industrialisation of the city-state and commonly viewed as one of the keys to Singapore’s economic success: ‘There can be few other places in the world where the social regulation of the labour market has been so consistently and explicitly a central component of national development strategy as it has been in Singapore’ (Coe and Kelly, 2000: 414).

After outlining the tenets of Singapore’s corporatism, we review the policies that characterize the ‘productivity movement’ from the early 1980s (Ohno and Kitaw 2011) to recent developments following recommendations from the Inter-Agency Productivity Taskforce which proposed a range of initiatives that included ‘Skills Future’ under the Workforce Development Agency led by the Singapore National Employers’ Association (Leggett, Kuah and Gan 2017). While maintaining (labour) productivity growth is identified by Singapore’s tripartite institutions to be a national priority as the country climbs further up the global value chain (Leggett 2013), it is primarily directed at the Singaporean ‘core’ workforce (Kuah, Le Queux and Hassan 2016). The Tripartite Alliance for Fair and Progressive Employment Practices (TAFEP) was also formed to promote and encourage the wider adoption of fair and progressive employment practices among employers. There is indeed a socio-demographic component underlying the economic imperative. Social pressures are mounting over the dramatic increase in the ratio of migrant workers to Singaporean workers. Tightening the labour market is therefore perceived as a means to persuade employers to extract the best from their human resources, and reduce their dependence on foreign skilled manpower.

The success of the new agenda still need to be assessed over time. The agenda is full of challenges. First, because Singapore aims to become a regional talent hub, authorities



want to reassure international investors that they will not be restricted from access to the human resource competencies they need. Despite upskilling, a critical issue is whether or not the Singaporean ‘core’ workforce, and especially its young graduates, are competitive with global talents. Second, in a dual labour market, a challenge is how to manage the only ‘partially incorporated’ migrant workers (Leggett and Le Queux 2014) for social cohesion and industrial order.

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## **Session: The international political economy of work**

**Towards a Marxist Dependency Theory Interpretation of Outsourcing in Latin America: overcoming the misplaced concept of precarization of labour in dependent countries**

**Paulo Ricardo Zilio Abdala, Fernando Nichterwitz Scherer**

In this paper we defend that the study of flexibilization of labour in Latin America (LA) is better explained by the Marxist Dependency Theory (MDT) than by concepts created in

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other realities, such as the precarization of labour (PL). MDT studies the singularities of capitalism in LA. Based on the comprehension that development only exists because of underdevelopment, MDT explains why dependent countries will never reach developed levels within capitalism. This approach is considered one of the most creative appropriations of the Marxism and its method to a singular historical analysis, withstanding the test of time due to its capacity to provide key concepts to understand contemporary issues (Misoczky, 2011). To reinforce our position, we analyze data concerning outsourcing in Brazil, contrasting PL and MDT. We argue that, in dependent countries, the PL theory lacks historical adherence, since it was originated as contradictory trends against the social state in “advanced” economies, implementing flexibility and “the rule of the markets over the welfare state” (Appay, 2010, p. 25). For Pereira (2012), to talk about social state in LA is an anachronism, since all attempts to produce social development in the region were always subordinated to the international capital, generating more profits to the financial capital than benefits for the workers. When military dictatorships came to an end in LA region, mainly during the 1980s, the re-democratization processes occurred in the dawn of the neoliberal stage of capitalism, a capitalist class project aimed to maintain historical privileges (Puello-Socarrás, 2015), preventing the universalization of social rights in the new civilian constitutions. In this sense, generalization of outsourcing, as recently approved by law in Brazil, is not a form of PL, but a deepening of dependency in response to the renewed capitalism crisis context, marked by the fall of commodities prices. Marini (2000) argues that dependency was historically produced by an uneven trade system based on the international division of labour, in which dependent countries export products of extractive activities while import industrial and technological goods, creating a structural unbalance. That results in a mechanism called overexploitation of labour, through which LA capitalists compensate their losses over exploring workers, generating an extraordinary surplus value at the expense of workers health. It operates through three mechanisms: constant payment of the worker below workforce value; and increasing of work journey or labour intensity without increasing salary. Data about outsourcing in Brazil indicates that outsourced workers are less payed, work longer, have more turnover, suffer from more occupational diseases and the do the worse and heavier activities (Dieese, 2017). Even if it is tempting to analyze this process as PL, the fact is that overexploited workers never get enough payment or rest in any condition. Also, the social protection system that once supported them was only a limited form of counterbalance to the capitalist compensation, not a social advance of labour over capital. We conclude that outsourcing of labour in LA is a renewal of the overexploitation of labour in the neoliberal stage of dependent capitalism.



**Rate of profit and rate of surplus value. An international comparative study from input-output tables (1995-2011)**

**Santiago Capobianco, Joaquín Farina**

The debate surrounding the recent global economic crisis (2008-2012) has not yet ceased. Inquiring about its origins and dynamics is an urgent need task if one wants to obtain deep insights of its structural determinants and possible future paths. The present exposition intends to estimate the average rates of profit and average rates of exploitation for the set of countries that make up the World Input-Output Database (WIOD) and the base of harmonized input-output tables of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development. (OECD). These databases cover a total of 40 and 34 countries, respectively, for the period between 1995 and 2011. This temporary cut allows to study with a high level of detail the period immediately before the outbreak of the crisis (2008). Adapting and expanding the methodology developed in Capobianco (2012 and 2013) it is proposed to build, for each country, an annual series of the average rates of profit and average rates of exploitation, within the framework of a labor values and production prices model that contemplates the variable capital part, the constant circulating capital part and the constant fixed capital part (when available). To have a reference of the global economy as a whole, a global input-output matrix for the same period will be constructed. The relationship between the rate of profit and the appropriation of surplus value by sectors known as unproductive will also be explored (Shaikh & Tonak, 1994). Obtained results will be compared with other measurement methods commonly used in the literature, which use national accounts information without making any transformation. In the case of the rate of surplus value, it will be compared with that obtained by the Farina method (2017), supported methodologically in Farina & Ralón (2015) and Farina & Brito (2017). In the case of the rate of profit, making a critical appraisal to previous efforts such as Cockshott, Cottrell & Michaelson (1995) and Barrera & López (2010). By means of this analysis, the proposition of Shaikh (2006) about a quasi-linear and monotonic relationship between the rates of profit in values and in prices of production or transformed, can be contrasted. It will be explored if a similar proposition can be postulated for the rates of surplus value. Finally, methods that consider negligible in variable capital and the constant capital in circulation will be discussed.

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## **The falling wage share: NIDL, deindustrialization, neoliberalism and beyond**

**Juan Graña**

Wages and labour market reforms are back in the agenda of right wing parties specially - but not exclusively- in Latin America. After a decade where some progressive policies were followed and positive trends in employment, wages and social welfare where accomplished, the region has fallen back to an agenda similar to the “Washington



consensus". Their spokesman stated that the slow and volatile growth in the region is the consequence of rigid labour markets, high wages and labour unions that leave little incentive for investment.

However, these is only the extreme regional expression of the labour market trends experienced in the developed world since the seventies with the emergence of the New International Division of Labour when jobs fled to Southeast Asia looking for lower labour costs. But a difference remains, in the "developed" world only low skilled jobs fled and highly skilled continued a fairly good trend, while in the rest of the "global south" the deterioration took place for all labour classes.

This paper looks at the functional distribution of income as a starting point for the study of, at least, two key aspects of the economic trends of any country. In fact, it reveals, on one hand, the way in which labour force is employed, by analysing the relationship between real wage and productivity. On the other, how income (wages and surplus) is used in the acquisition of consumption or investment goods, and therefore shapes aggregate demand trends.

In this context, the aim of the present paper is to analyse the long term stagnation –in the best case scenario- of workers living conditions in Latin America taking into account what has happened in "developed" countries in order to distinguish which factors are domestic, which regional and, finally, which are the result of changes in global economic trends.

For that objective, we choose two types of countries: the so-called "developed" ones, and the Latin American ones. In the first group, we will work with the United States, Japan and France (which have some differences between them) while for the second group we will focus on the largest regional economies: Argentina, Brazil, Chile and Mexico. As these transformations are long term based, our analysis starts in the 1950s.

## **Session: Notions of the active labour force**

**The shift from early exit to active ageing in European societies: Towards a better integration of older workers or the re-emergence of old inequalities?**

**Dirk Hofaecker, Stefanie König, Moritz Hess**



From the 1970s until the mid-1990s, most European countries followed a strategy of early retirement to relieve their strained labour markets. Yet, when demographic projections anticipated an unavoidable ‘greying’ of national labour forces, these ‘externalisation measures’ increasingly were considered as socially and financially unsustainable. Many European governments revised their labour market and welfare policies accordingly to foster higher employment among senior workers. Legal retirement ages were raised and public pension benefits were cut to reduce the incentives for early retirement. Furthermore, employment-sustaining measures such as active labour market policies or lifelong learning were increasingly implemented. These measures were often referred to as ‘active ageing’ policies, a term that has gained remarkable popularity in public and academic discourse.

Most recent figures indeed suggest that these policies have been effective, as older workers’ employment rates have risen substantially since the turn of the millennium. Yet, it remains an open question whether this aggregate increase has spread equally among all labour market strata or whether certain labour market groups are structurally excluded from this upward trend. We argue that - simultaneous to the increase in late-career employment – active ageing policies have led to an increase in social inequalities among the older workforce. Particularly weak labour market groups –those with low education, in blue-collar occupations or working under hazardous conditions – have hardly been able to profit from employability measures while at the same time being confronted with an increasing pressure to prolong their working careers.

To substantiate this allegation empirically, we provide a stylized sketch of major institutional trends based on most-recent macro data. Data from available micro studies will then be used to reconstruct over-time shift in social inequalities in late career employment within European countries.

## **Challenging disability inequality constructed by ‘ableist’ recruitment processes**

Frederike Scholz

This UK based study is primarily concerned to explore how disabled people experience ableist recruitment and selection practices embedded within organisations. This paper



is informed by the extended social model of disability (Oliver, 1990; Thomas, 2004) which acknowledges that disabled people not only experience external oppression in form of social or material restrictions, but also internal oppression in form of socio-cultural processes that generate negative attitudes and sustain the prejudice and stigma attached to their individual potential (Thomas, 2004). This study engages with the concept of 'the ideal worker', generally a masculine notion (Foster and Wass, 2012), and how organisational practices are formed by 'ableist' norms and assumptions that view disabled people as less productive (Campbell, 2008). Conceptually, the notion of ableism builds on the social model of disability, due to the socially constructed nature of disability (Jammaers et al. 2016). This view links to the theory of social construction of gender, race and class in organisations (Acker, 1990; Cockburn, 1991), that has provided valuable comprehension into how work is structured to replicate and reproduce the hegemony power of elite White, able-bodied man (Harlan and Roberts, 1998). In fact, work organisations are built on the principles of 'ableness', inevitably discounting individuals who are seen as not capable, and therefore, apparently incompetent. This study argues that Ackers (2006) analytical framework of inequality regimes, previously only been used to identify gender, race or class inequalities, should include disability inequality as a dimension to indicate that social barriers and disability discrimination are constructed by ableist recruitment processes.

The unique contribution provided by this paper comes from the way it attempts to synthesis ideas and different theoretical approaches from across disciplines including organisational, management and disability studies. This study has adopted a qualitative research approach involving semi-structured interviews with employers, disabled jobseeker and their employment advisors. The main intention of this paper is to indicate that employers should not use disability as implicit selection criteria during recruitment processes, because it inevitably ignores that a diverse group of people are able to do a job.

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### **Activating the “inactive” - employment policies for disabled people in a comparative view**

**Regina Konle-Seidl, Rauch Angela**

Across the OECD on average 14 per cent of the working-age population classify themselves as disabled. People with disabilities are often considered as particularly disadvantaged especially in the labour market. The majority of handicapped people are non-employed or “inactive” regarding their labour market status. Policy choices have played a major role in the rise in disability benefit rolls in many European welfare states but also in the US. In recent years a greater awareness arose that people with disabilities are able and willing to work and “disability” should be transformed into “ability”. In this context it has been increasingly recognized that protecting the economic security of people with disabilities might best be done by keeping them in the labour market. Moreover, the latent and manifest functions of participating in working life (Jahoda) enables disabled people to create and maintain social contacts in a wider social environment. This view is also reflected in the 2008 UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The countries having ratified the Convention are committed to enable people with disabilities to work in an open, inclusive and accessible labour market that will ensure sustainable and secure livelihoods. Germany has been an exception to the international trend as the rates of disability benefit recipients have been comparatively low over decades and across business cycles. A major reason for this diverging development is the long-standing principle of “rehabilitation instead of retirement” structuring disability policies in the German context for several decades now. The principle implies, on the one side, that labour market entry and retention of disabled person in employment is supported through employment programmes. On the other side, the definition of “work ability” is broad and gatekeeping to disability benefits is tight. In our



descriptive and comparative paper we analyse the pathways into employment, unemployment or invalidity benefits of people with health problems in selected European countries. We analyse the factors explaining the divergent trend in Germany and discuss whether policymakers in other countries might benefit from German experiences to transform disability benefit schemes into activating labour market programmes.

### **Session: Precarious work around the world**

#### **Precarity as labour exploitation: the limits of job formalisation in the sugarcane plantations of Northeast Brazil**

**Allan Souza Queiroz**

This paper explores the links between precarity and labour exploitation in the context of the rising job formalisation in the sugarcane plantations of Northeast Brazil. Drawing on interviews with sugarcane cutters, it examines the despotic and coercive forms of labour control put to use by employers by means of threats, law violations, abuses, penalties, harassment and wage cuts. Our findings illustrate that while the apparent consent to labour exploitation may be explained by workers seeking the securities and protections of a formal employment relationship, workers are also engaging in everyday forms of resistance, discontent, contestation and solidarities to cope with precarious jobs and secure their well-being. It thus argues that these often hidden, individual forms of workers' agency disclose a criticism to the precarity of formal jobs in Brazil. This paper concludes that contrary to standard assumptions on formal employment enhancing fairness and dignity at work, especially in the context of peripheral capitalism where workers' voice has been largely ignored, job formalisation has been insufficient to protect workers from precarity understood as exploitation.

#### **“Without schedule”. Intensification and flexibilization of the production facing the crisis of resources in the fishing sector. (Mar del Plata, Argentina.1990-2010)**

**Romina Cutuli**

In the Mar del Plata city during the 1990 decade the employment crisis came together with one critical situation in fishing sector resources. That was product of policies that



enabled overexploitation and the incorporation of fleets with greater capture capacity and without ground processing. It affected with particular intensity to the main resource of the local fishing industry: the hake hubbsi.. The work was transformed in a variable of privileged adjustment from local businesses, in order to preserve its already hit profitability.

In this scene the labor protections were in fact and of right dissolved by the proliferation of the informal employment contracts and the appropriation of legal forms destined to elude the obligations of employers. The production process, associated with the availability of the resource, deepened its irregularity characteristics and downloaded on the workers the costs of unproductive times under precarious forms of contracting. The cycles of availability- abundance- scarcity conditioned increasingly work and not work times in the sector. The transit between underemployment, overemployment and unemployment marked the work trajectory of a growing number of workers. In this regard, the fishing processor industry exposed with greater intensity some qualities that were delineating to the job market as a whole.

The piece rate sharpened the intensity of work in association with the reduction about size of the hake hubbsi. To the workers they continued to pay by volume of processed fish, which translated into lower salaries since the sizes were reduced, because process equal volume took more time. It added, clear, to the decline of the available resource for processing. The payment for production volume exposed to the workers to an intra class dispute for access to the resource to process, that translated in salary. At the same time, the risks of accidents and chronic diseases grew to the rhythm of the intensity of work in correlation with a destined regulation to diminish the legal protections to the health of workers. The Law of the Risks for Work (1995) limited the possibilities of economic repair in the face of deteriorating health and accidents on occasion of work.

In this paper we will address this process through an ethnographic record and of judicial judgments from local labor courts. The experiences of deterioration of the salary condition identify themselves with a certain ecological awareness acquired to subsequently facing the impossibility to enforce labor rights enshrined in the collective bargaining agreement of 1975. In the labor justice is expressed an ambivalence between the validation and the questioning of this violations. While it proliferates the media spectre of the trial industry throughout these decades, the workers see plummeting its possibilities of economic repair to deal with unjustified dismissal for pregnancy and maternity, the irregularity in the contractual forms, among other insults to the rights of the workers identified along this research.



## Flexicurity in labor markets in the Middle East and North Africa: a comparison between Tunisia and Lebanon

Sari Madi

After the wave of independence of the 1940s and 1950s, each country followed a development model that lasted until the 1980s. Oil crises, a collapse of the Soviet Union and a rise of globalization affected then the political vision of social protection. Reforms were initiated under the influence of the Washington Consensus (Williamson, 1990), and development strategies pursued, such as Import substitution industrialization and a planned economy, were at the center of criticism.

Most developing countries have embarked on the path of reform, but the extent and direction vary from country to country, depending on several determinants (economic performance, organizational legacy, etc.). In this research, I am interested in understanding the reforms of labor laws in Tunisia (reforms of 1994, 1996 and Social Contract of 2013 when the unemployment insurance where introduced) and in Lebanon (reform of 2000). More specifically, this project aims to understand the factors that contributed to the reforms of labor laws' flexicurity. *Flexicurity* refers to the different configurations of flexibility (introduction of atypical contracts, reduction of redundancy payments, etc.) and job security (redundancy conditions, employment regulations, etc.). The project seeks to identify the role played by key actors (trade unions, employers' associations, bureaucracy, international organizations, etc.) in terms of reforms in the two countries under study.

The divergence between the types of welfare state has been associated with the role played by the labor movement (Esping-Anderson, 1990), non-state providers (Wood and Gough, 2006; Cammett and Maclean, 2014), cultural diversity (Gough and Abu Sharkh, 2010), colonialism and independence (Cammett, 2014), emergency events such as war, crisis or other (Castles, 2010) and religion (Kersbergen, 1995). However, this research is based on a theoretical approach linking the welfare regime and the production regime (Haggard and Kaufman, 2008), which argues that those regimes are integrated into each other and mutually support each other (p.104). The labor market and social policies conform to not create perverse incentives.

Given that *flexicurity* reforms shapes the labor market, the approach connecting welfare state and production systems is better suited to our research. This approach underlines how this system influences the industrial relations system: national political economy and existing social policies influence the composition of the labor force, the organization of relations between actors and the results of the labor market (Hamann and Kelly, 2008: 135). For example, the welfare state / production nexus examines how industrialization



strategies and institutions have shaped patterns of social protection and employment in the two countries under study. Thus, it is possible to explore the link between the welfare state / production nexus and the inclusion of *flexicurity* in labor legislations.

To guide the analysis, I outline assumptions from three approaches explaining institutional change; an approach explaining the process of change (Pierson, 1996; Thelen, 1999; Ebbenghaus, 2005), an approach explaining the dynamics of change (Evans, 1995; Korpi, 2006), and an approach focusing on the transfer of public policies between countries (Dolowitz and Marsh, 1996; Béland, 2007).

Our study uses both types of methodologies, qualitative and quantitative. The qualitative analysis identifies the position, and analyzes the influence of key actors on the content of the reform. The quantitative methodology attempts to understand the impact on the labor market (on formal and informal employment and unemployment). This mixed methodology allows us to examine existing government policies to draw conclusions and act better in a region that has undergone a period of transition marked by economic liberalization.

## **Session: Work and global capital**

### **Offshore service industry: their implications on work. Business services and film production service in Argentina**

**Andrea Del Bono, María Noel Bulloni**

The outsourcing and offshoring strategies are a nodal part of contemporary global restructuring. Today these strategies profoundly cross all economic sectors, especially the increasingly large sector of services.

Since the beginning of this century the global outsourcing of services has continued to expand with dizzying dynamism. By using the global value chain approach, some analysts propose to reflect on how to leverage the opportunities of emerging countries to insert them successfully in this process. These opportunities are linked, in their terms, with the process of firm 'upgrading' as well as with increasing jobs with good skill levels. From this perspective it has been observed that while Latin American participation in these global services chains is small compared to the world average, some of its countries like Argentina behave a notable dynamism in many activities services linked to offshoring.

In a critical dialogue with this approach, in this paper we focus the analysis on service activities heavily influenced by these processes in Argentina in the last decade: the



provision of business services and audiovisual production services. We address the outsourcing and offshoring strategies deployed in each of these sectors, the forms of integration of local companies into global service chains and the implications of these processes on employment conditions and working regulations.

Regarding this last dimension, central in the analysis, the analyzed period (2003-2015) allows us to demonstrate the ambivalences, risks and potentialities of this development strategy. From our perspective, the new organizational forms of transnational capitalism, ultimately, promote and deepen deregulation and job insecurity present in the domestic sphere. However, although they are probably the most determinant, they are not the only factors that influence the work configurations in each place. The analysis presented allow us to evidence how in some circumstances referred strategies articulate with deregulation and worsening working conditions, while others are linked with their opposite tendencies

## **Making the case for variegated capitalism in labour process analysis and political economy of work**

**Paul Brook, Christina Purcell**

Despite a broad-based consensus on the conceptual inadequacy of the varieties of capitalism (VoC) (Hall and Soskice, 2001) for comparative political economy of work (e.g. Frege and Kelly, 2013; Heyes et al., 2014; Milner, 2015), especially from the perspective of labour process analysis (Smith and Thompson, 2009; Vidal and Hauptmeier, 2014). For these critics, especially those looking to develop labour process analysis at the level of political economy (Smith and Thompson, 2009), VoC puts far too much analytic emphasis on the variety of path-dependent national economies and too little on the commonalities and tendencies emanating from global capitalism (Thompson, 2010). Instead, they advocate an approach that seeks to capture the dynamic interaction between global politico-economic forces and existing local-regional institutions to explain (e.g. Vidal and Hauptmeier, 2014). For labour process analysis one of the most fruitful sources of engagement with global political economy in recent times has been in the mapping and analysis of global value chains (Newsome et al., 2015), which has evoked an extensive range of work that necessitates trying to address the connectivity problem between labour process analysis at the point of production and the broader political economy. Equally, another field of work that seeks to fix the connection is the literature on the impact of financialisation on labour and the workplace (e.g. Cushen and Thompson, 2016). Despite this endeavour in both fields there has been limited progress in both fields. Yet in the shadows of the comparatively narrower field of study into the rise of temporary



agency labour markets, nationally and internationally (Brook and Purcell, 2017) the variegated capitalism approach (Peck and Theodore, 2007) has emerged as arguably the predominant analytic paradigm, particularly among labour geographers (see Coe et al., 2010; Jordhuis-Lier et al., 2015; Theodore, 2016). Compared to the functionalism of VoC's mono-scalar path-dependency analysis, variegated capitalism offers a dynamic account of the complex interrelationship between domestic and international politico-economic phenomena that combine to shape uneven employment conditions and labour markets across national, local and sectoral contexts. It commences from the foundational understanding that the variable characteristics of global capitalism are the product of the uneven but combined development (see Davidson, 2017) of national and sectoral institutional conditions, not least those pertaining to the specificities of labour markets and differing labour process regimes. As such, variegated capitalism employs a multi-scalar, contingent understanding of institutional change (Zhang and Peck, 2016) that allows it to capture the dynamic and complex connections between the local labour process at the local point of production and wider developments in the international political economy. The conceptual development of variegated capitalism with labour process analysis has largely stayed within the confines of labour geography (see Theodore, 2016) with very few exceptions (e.g. Brook and Purcell, 2017; Coe 2015). This is despite its conceptual compatibility with labour process analysis in stressing the complex, dynamic and contingent nature of change at the micro, meso and macro levels of work and employment in global capitalism; and its utility in mapping, comparing and explaining work and employment in a myriad of forms and places, including under financialised capital, in GVCs, through digital platforms and many other manifestations of labour in the global economy. In line with Atzeni's (2014) call to develop interdisciplinary perspectives on the challenges facing workers and labour in a globalised economy, we argue for bringing variegated capitalism into the mainstream of debates on the future direction of labour process analysis. At a minimum it will strengthen the theoretical resources at our disposal to address the connectivity problem; and is likely to provide a substantive theoretical basis for honing our analyses of contemporary work, employment and labour.

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### **Labour Regimes and the Labour Problem in Asia**

**Stephane Le Queux, Fang Lee Cooke, Anne Cox**

Our presentation is about work, employment and labour relations in the seven East/South-East Asian countries of Taiwan, the Philippines, Vietnam, Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia, and Singapore, and in China. Following an account of the key features of the labour problem in each country, including the converging industrial relations of China and Vietnam, we conclude that the interface between industrial democracy and economic development remains a useful heuristic for understanding labour in the region (Deyo 1981; Leggett 1999).

We draw on a special issue of the *Chronique Internationale de l'IRES* (Delahaie and Le Queux 2016) [published July 2017], including updates. Our reports on Indonesia (minimum



wage fixing) and Thailand (labour exclusion) touch upon decent work in low-wage economies; the one on the Philippines exposes the rise of precarious employment, on Singapore tripartite policies directed to the Singaporean 'core' workforce, and on Taiwan the claims for distributive justice. The latter two address the challenges and contradictions of maintaining a productivity agenda under corporatist regimes. Our report on Malaysia is about the fate of migrant workers at the edge of 'modern slavery' and our comparative analysis of China and Vietnam focuses on the nature and modality of industrial disputes and how these come to challenge established Communist labour institutions, with special attention given to 'wildcat' strikes, particularly in Vietnam.

Our meta-analysis supports the view that states play a dominant role in the 'pacification' of industrial relations, with capital 'accumulation' being the primary motive (Ford and Gillan 2016). International pressures and social clauses in trade agreement yield some advance, but commitment to the enforcement of workers' rights remains problematic. Working conditions are largely poor across the region and except for incorporated labour institutions, as in Singapore, organised labour is on the retreat, although less so in Indonesia. However, the cases of China and Vietnam suggest that rapid industrialisation, intense social change and ineffective formal trade unions leads to the formation of unofficial worker representatives who fight for employee rights and distributive justice.

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## Migrant Workers

### Session Migrants working conditions



## International students work experience in irregular works in London

**Emine Acar**

Economic growth in the developing world has created a new middle class (Brooks and Waters, 2013) for whom it is a source of pride to send children overseas to study. However, while new middle class families are able to provide the necessary funds for the successful processing of visa application requests, and while they can often pay for the first term fee and the first few months of expenses to support establishing life in the host country, international students often need to look for work to survive in their new environment (Baas, 2010a). According to UKCISA reports on university and college level international students published in 2004 and 2006, nearly a quarter of the students confirmed that they did not have enough money because UK living costs were high and exchange rates were unfavorable (Forbes-Mewett et al. 2009).

Many international students have visas that allow part-time work. However, not all international students hold a work permit in the UK, and sometimes a legal work permit does not provide eligibility to work enough hours to cover the expenses. As a result, students who cannot find legal work or who wish to work more than what the legal limit allows tend to turn to other forms of work, i.e. irregular work, to deal with the country's high cost of living. Forbes-Mewett et al. (2009) reported that some students end up working on a full-time basis even when their visa conditions do not allow it. Consequently, international students often get exposed to low-skilled irregular work without any guarantee of representation, are often compelled to perform menial tasks and need to fulfil employer demands for long hours work with no paid holiday entitlement as well as work performed during unsociable hours. In some cases, international students who engage in irregular work may be unfairly dismissed and yet are not able to enjoy any legal redress. The result is that students who operate in irregular work contexts often become vulnerable and at the mercy of employers who utilize their cheaply supplied labour to the maximum extent for saving costs (Forbes-Mewett et al., 2009).

Semi-structured interviews conducted with South Asian and Turkish international students who hold/held jobs in irregular work contexts. Data collected through the use of personal networks and the snowball sampling method. The first few interviews were conducted through a personal network, from which further participants found.



## **Labour-migratory trajectories among Senegalese in Argentina.**

**Luz Espiro**

Since the mid-1990s Argentina has become a destination for the new flux of African migrations -especially the Sub-Saharan ones-, a phenomena known as south-south migrations. Senegalese group is the most numerous among them, and has suffered a process of hyper-visibility in the local context because of the conjunction of their black phenotype, exposed in long working days of street vending, and the historical negation of Africans in the hegemonic idea of Argentinian nation.

This abstract proposes an approach for the analysis of the heterogeneity among the Senegalese migration in Argentina focusing in diversity of labour-migratory trajectories based on four different migrant's cases in La Plata's city, as paradigmatic of the possibilities that Senegalese finds here for reaching the aims of their migratory projects. All of them started in the same way: which is selling *bijouterie* on street, the dominant practice among them all over the country. However, in the search of social mobility, each of them ended -so far- in different forms of commerce -more or less "regular", and even one has explored the formal building sector, a new entire labour market niche for these migrants here, that emerged as "a way out of streets", in a context of deepening conflicts with local council for the urban space. All of these paths are configured and configure ways of being and belonging.

An intersectional perspective becomes crucial to understand the structuration's processes of these trajectories, which requires to considerate variables such as transnationalism, social class, gender, religion, social representation and migratory laws. This proposal framed under my ongoing PhD research, consisting in a visual ethnography of Senegalese migration in La Plata and Puerto Madryn with focus in labour processes.

**NAFTA's southern frontier: Central American transborder migrant workers in Mexico**



**Pablo Mateo**

The number of Central American migrant workers in Chiapas, Mexico's southernmost State, has increased substantially over the last decade. Beyond the official Census figures, which report 21,000 Guatemalans resident in Mexico in the 2010 Census, there is a much larger and growing population of transborder temporal workers that cross every month, week or even daily the Guatemalan- Mexican border to work in Mexico. This collective includes either workers with temporary work documents, residents, citizens and undocumented migrants. This paper presents the preliminary results of a project aimed to understand the volume and key characteristics of the transborder labor market in Southern Mexico, through the analysis of secondary data from surveys together with in-depth interviews carried out in Chiapas and Guatemala. We focus on the analysis of the main factors that make this population extremely vulnerable and make recommendations for Mexican migration and labor public policy, with implications for the whole North America - Central America migration and labor systems.

**Session: Migrant workers' strategies**

**'I always go with my compañeros': Social Networks Among Borderlands Migrant Agricultural Workers**

**Kathleen Griesbach**

Migrant agricultural workers face periods of acute economic insecurity. Many travel long distances to isolated regions to work in crops in the U.S. heartland and might not receive a paycheck until several weeks into the season. Prior research has documented the importance of social networks in determining what jobs migrants obtain and their subsequent earnings (e.g. Aguilera and Massey 2003), and the important intermediary role played by farm labor contractors, who generally recruit, transport, house and pay workers (Griffith and Kissam 1995, Rothenberg 1998). However, what role do social networks play in migrant agricultural workers' survival while in regions of work? García (2008) and others identify social and physical isolation, distance from families, irregular and uncertain work hours and the fast pace and exhausting nature of work as significant situational factors impacting mostly unauthorized migrant agricultural workers in Pennsylvania. Similarly, Balderrama and Molina II (2009) find that the short-term nature of work, dependence on farm labor contractors for continued employment and housing, and unauthorized status together prevent the North Carolina workers in their study from developing meaningful horizontal ties for long-term solidarity and resource sharing. This



subsequently thwarts workers from overcoming their depressed working conditions and social and cultural isolation. However, research has not investigated how the content and character of social networks might differ for long-term migrant workers with legal status, many of whom have been migrating seasonally to work in particular crops for years or decades.

This paper explores social networks of Texas-Mexico borderlands-based agricultural workers. Respondents work in corn detasseling in the U.S. Midwest and in other crops around the country. Using data from in-depth interviews and follow-up discussions with 20 male workers, all legal permanent residents or U.S. citizens, I find that workers use social networks at recruitment, in transit, and most significantly while residing in temporary lodging in work states. Workers report maintaining both short- and long-term connections with *compañeros* to determine what jobs to take and how to get there, in accordance with the existing literature. However, contrary to prior literature my data indicates that workers draw on horizontal ties in sustained ways while in states of employment. Respondents describe pooling resources and sharing household tasks for self-preservation in difficult situations. The data suggests that by forming and sustaining close horizontal ties with their colleagues, respondents fulfill both the practical and social functions of kinship while in states of employment. In the masculine social environment where workers temporarily dwell, men collectively shoulder the tasks of self-reproduction, often using creative methods to survive and satisfy their needs in the face of isolation and hardship. This research adds to the existing literature: first, it highlights the experiences of borderlands-based migrant workers with legal status, addressing a gap in the literature. Second, it illuminates how workers who shoulder risks embedded in the agricultural industry rely on social networks not just to obtain work, but to sustain themselves during the labor process, temporarily suspending gender norms in the process.

### **Organizing Against Disposability: Latinx Immigrant Workers in the Pacific Northwest**

**Lola Loustaunau**

Precariousness has been at the center of the literature discussing working conditions for the past three decades. The ongoing collective effort to not only theorize but also provide detailed information regarding the particularities of work arrangements that can be characterized as precarious is vast (Campbell and Price 2016; Carré 2000; Carré and Heintz 2009; Kalleberg 2000, 2009, 2011; Smith 1997; Standing 2014; Vosko 2006). Scholars have also focused on immigrant workers and their efforts to collectively



organize (Bronfenbrenner 1998; Fine 2015; Gordon 2005; Milkman 2011; Milkman and Ott 2014)

This paper will contribute to this effort by exploring the working conditions that non-English speaking Latinx workers faced at an industrial bakery in the Pacific Northwest. I will look into the workers collective organizing efforts to change their working conditions. This led to a unionization attempt with a formal vote, filing a class action lawsuit after the vote was lost, and advocating for legislation change at the state level. Critically analyzing this experience sheds light on the challenges and particularities of organizing precarious immigrant workers. Combining this case with literature devoted to immigrant workers' organizing, this paper will also provide tentative path to answer how a multilingual, multiethnic workforce with diverse legal statuses can be successfully organized.

Using a Grounded Theory approach (Charmaz 2014), I draw from 15 in-depth interviews with Latinx workers, union organizers and lawyers, as well as participant observation in workers' group meetings and house visits with union organizers, all of which was conducted between the Summer of 2016 and the Winter of 2017. Additionally, to triangulate my empirical sources, I collected and analyzed the following written sources: news media articles, Occupation Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) reports, information presented in the lawsuit and other documents provided by the workers, which included internal posters and information used by management at the bakery.

In the current political climate, it is more pressing than ever that labor scholars turn their attention to workers confronting intersections of precarity through their collective action. The case study analyzed in this research is a step in that direction.

**Migration and Precarious Work: Community Basis of Informal Textile Workshops in Argentina**

**María José Magliano, María Victoria Perissinotti**



The aim of this paper is to analyze the economic potential of community resources to the development of labor insertions of migrant population in Argentina distinguished by precariousness and uncertainty. In particular, we focus on informal textile workshops; one of the main contributors in Peruvian migrant's insertion in the labor market in Argentina.

Contemporary migration to this country has been marked by a mobility of workforce that arrived especially from South American countries (mainly Paraguay, Bolivia and Peru). In Argentina textile industry, turned into a «migration labor activity» during the last decades, has become a paradigm of labor informalization and exploitation. The intersection between nationality, ethnicity and class shapes and segments labor markets according to industry strategies aimed at outsourcing certain productive processes (Caro et.al, 2015:1607). The findings that we present in this paper are principally based on an ethnographic fieldwork we conducted between 2012 and 2015 in peripheral neighborhoods in the city of Córdoba (Argentina), composed of Peruvian migrants who have moved to the city during the last 15 years.

The close relationship between peripheral neighborhoods and informal textile workshops introduces the community dimension – understood as the «practical capacity of diverse human communities to cooperate between them» (Gutiérrez Aguilar, 2008: 35) – as an important element to recognize the complexity involved in this productive process. Community bonds and practices are connected to singular ways of living in those peripheral areas and, at the same time, are central to the production and maintenance of modes of intensive labor exploitation.

In our analysis, informalization reintroduces the category of community as a central resource that enables family and labor reproduction. Moreover, it is the same informalization that allows the reproduction of labor as well as the delegation of costs to the community. At the same time, community practices also work as a way of competition and dispute among migrants based on the resources obtained from community mobilization but used subsequently by textile workshops for their own profit. These practices explain how the current restructuration of the labor market has delegated some of its function into the community.

As part of an economic global system reproduced in a particular localization, the community dimension not only expresses modes of social exploitation but also self-management capacities of people who live in the margins of the cities. Our premise is that community resources and practices become a useful alternative to manage the daily reproduction of migrant population who reside within peripheral urban areas and have precarious jobs. Those community resources and practices are important in order to



assure migrant livelihood, but also to maintain the particular and submerged way of production that involves informal textile workshops.

### **Au Pairs at work in Australia: temporary migration, gender and identity.**

**Robyn Mayes**

Increasing numbers of families in Britain and Europe are turning to au pairs to provide a range of domestic services, often in support of the 'host mother's' pursuit of paid employment. According to the Cultural Au Pair Association of Australia (CAPAA) au pair agencies in Australia are unable to meet the rising demand. The increasing use of au pairs on the part of middle-class Australian families is enabled through the Working Holiday Maker visa program. Under this program people between 18 and 30 years of age from designated countries visit Australia for 12 months and support themselves through short-term employment. Not surprisingly, this visa is criticised for providing a 'back door' supply of low paid workers to support the Australian economy. Au Pairs entering Australia under this visa tend to come from the UK, Taiwan, Germany, South Korea and France. Au pair work is seen to be a matter of cultural exchange, as opposed to employment: au pairs receive 'free' accommodation and meals along with 'pocket money.' The rapidly growing inclusion of au pairs as part of the dynamics and experience of family life and domestic labour in Australia enacts the emergence of a new underclass of live-in, low-paid domestic workers which sits uncomfortably with a national mythology constructed around a 'class-less' society.

This paper presents a discourse analysis of the contradictory construction of the identity of the 'au pair' in Australia as both domestic worker and 'big sister'. It does so through examination of the online narratives delineating the au pair 'experience' as presented by the CAAPA, and leading Australian au pair agencies. Using a class-lens and drawing on the literature around work identities, the paper explores a number of contradictions in the management of au pair work. It reveals significant tensions including around the role of the 'host mother' as employer/boss, the au pair as worker/family member, and the fraught reconfiguration of the private space of the family home as place of work.

In doing so, this paper extends the to-date emergent literature examining au pair work, and which tends to focus on labour conditions and motives. More broadly, it contributes to understandings of the ongoing gendered and classed divisions informing the undervalued work of social reproduction. It highlights this work, not least in terms of the figure of the 'big sister,' as an important dimension of contemporary global care chains.



## **Session: Migration Regulation**

### **The H2-A Program as Recruitment and Disciplining Tool for Baja's Mexican Indigenous Farmworkers in the United States**

**Christian Zloliniski**

This paper examines the recruitment of indigenous farm laborers from Baja as temporal H-2A workers in the United States. In light of tight border enforcement of the US-Mexico border, many growers in the United States increasingly rely on H2-A workers to fill their labor needs. I discuss the growth of this program in the San Quintin Valley in Baja California, one of the major agro-export enclaves in northern Mexico. I focus on the mechanisms used by US companies to recruit in this region, the role social media play in the process, and workers' own assessment about their experiences in this program. The growth of temporal workers in the fresh-produce industry speaks of a transnational production and labor regime characterized by flows of capital, goods, and labor across the Mexico-US border. This labor regime reflects a similar trend with the growth of export agriculture in other countries in Latin America.

## **Rural labor market in Mexico**

**Mariana Salazar**

There are diverse types of workers in the agricultural sector in Mexico, Armando Bartra (1976) differentiates the agricultural day laborers from the peasants from the relationship between their salaried work and their work as a producer, that is, defines the agricultural laborer as of its peasant origin. The agricultural day laborer is that salaried worker who has not totally disengaged from the means of life that he owns, this leads him to sell his labor force, below its value, since his reproduction does not only depend on his salary obtained but also of what he produces as a peasant. The confluence of both agricultural laborers (not detached from the land) and agricultural proletarians (disconnected from the land) results in low wages, since they are determined from the average needs of the workers, who are mostly agricultural laborers who they only require the income necessary to obtain subsistence. The tendency that was generated from 1994 is towards the proletarianization of the agricultural day laborers, that is to say, that these abandon their lands and completely dissociate themselves from producing their own land, therefore, being salaried, a paradigmatic example of this situation are the "Day laborers" from San

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Quintín, Baja California, who formed a colony of migrants from Oaxaca who stayed to live in Baja California because it assured them of a "semi-permanent" job.

## **The Multiplication of Precariousness: Migrants and Refugees in Germany**

**Neva Loew, Mario Neumann**

Precariousness is not solely linked to a work contract and working conditions. It is also (and mainly) linked to a general living situation. Precariousness has become a major sign of neoliberal societies' subjectivation and is linked to a specific way of governmentality - a governmentality which produces uncertainty in a systematic way.

Therefore migrants in Germany are touched by precariousness in multiple ways: through their legal situation concerning their residence permit, their social rights and their working conditions. These interlinked mechanisms are presented in three groups of migrants that face precariousness in diverging ways. Illegal migrants, refugees with a valid asylum status and migrants from within Europe experience neoliberal mechanisms within Germany differently. We will show that the ways of governing migration in Germany is recurrently producing different legal arrangements with similar effects: The multiplication of precarity towards migrants.

We suggest conceptualizing the expansion of precarity in Germany by analyzing the situation of these three migrants groups. By reflecting their legal, political and social situation we will show how the architecture of migration politics can be defined (1). We will then address the question if the "existential" situation of precariousness is – seen from the perspective of collective political action and compared to traditional forms of social struggles – only an obstacle or also a force to develop new political forms. How do these experiences shape their struggles and forms of organization (2)? Labor unions and social movements are confronted with the fragmentation of interests and struggles of

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precarious groups. What are the answers and relations of these actors towards migrant struggles (3)?



## Skills at work

### Session: Skills at work I

**De-specialization trend in Vocational Education and Training: labour process changes and the new international division of labour as determinations of technical secondary school reforms since 1970s.**

**Dana Hirsch**

Changes in labour processes since the 1970s and the development of a new international division of labour, had its correlate in the debates about which productive attributes were demanded by the new job profiles and how the educational system should change with it. In particular, curricular debates and educational reform processes around VET (vocational education and training) took place in different national spaces, mainly from the 1980s and 1990s. As a result, this track of secondary school tended to become less specialized. We can identify three trends in technical-oriented secondary school changes that led to a more de-specialized, with greater integration of contents and more flexible curriculum design.

1) De-specialized curricular structure: the increase of general knowledge and the delay of the specialization starting point is a trend in all secondary school tracks since mid 20th century, but in VET, the debate took place around the change from "mono-professional" curricular designs to "professional families" based one, in order to form broader professional profiles with the ability to assume broader labour roles.

2) Competency-based curricular approach: the bibliography had general agreement in the need for VET to train in more general competences instead of qualifications associated with specific job tasks; this meant leaving behind several conceptions (training based on disciplines, theoretical knowledge that is practically applied in the workspace and skills addition) and moving forward the integration of knowledge, skills and attitudes in order to solve problematic situations in changing contexts; curricular design organized around "problems" and "projects" were common didactic proposals.



3) Flexible curricular structure: curricular design changes introduced the possibility of diversifying educational paths; this could mean regional or institutional differences in the curricula, the possibility that each student chose his own combination of subjects, leading to different training paths or even the possibility that this path could be completed in different public and private institutions.

This dissertation pursues two objectives. First, to explain the social need of these curricular proposals for VET, looking for its foundations in the labour process transformations and the productive attributes that it demands. An analysis of VET's and labour process characteristics before 1970s will be held, in order to understand the underlying determination of de-specialized workforce education. Second, to identify differences in the way these reforms were implemented by several countries, developing a materialist explanation of the difference in these trends' progress. This means that automation and informatization progress in production, communication and transport will be taken into account for the explanation, as well as the place that the countries occupy in the new international division of labour that this progress enables. In particular, how dependent their productive processes are on manual and other kind of human-skilled intervention. The focus will be on de-specialized workforce education as a general trend in capitalism that does not unfold in a direct way

## **Deskilling of the cleaning work labour process: intersection between class and gender**

**Giorgio Boccardo, Cristóbal Moya, Nicolas Ratto y Felipe Ruiz**

The objective of this paper is to describe the deskilling of the labour process of outsourced cleaning work in an university based on mechanisms where workers' social class and gender intersect. Drawing upon results of a mixed-methods research design, we propose that the intersection between class and gender sheds light on why some women cope with cleaning work (deskilled) while having the necessary skills to perform it.

On the one hand, results are based on review and analysis of institutional documents, as well as 23 in-depth interviews to key actors involved in the administrative and organizational management of outsourced cleaning work in the university. On the other hand, a survey was applied to a probabilistic sample of the outsourced cleaning personnel of 263 cases.

The social trajectory of female workers displays how they incorporate social structures ("habitus") during their experience in working class homes and as women, which also qualifies them as apt workers for cleaning tasks. Specifically, emotional skills linked to "servility", as well as characteristics associated with being a housewife are required in



cleaning tasks in the university. These "feminine" and "popular" class skills are fundamental for carrying out the cleaning work labour process (and are valued by employers), however being naturalized (invisible work) as they are not rewarded in remunerations.

In this case, the deskilling occurs when the employer (or the main company) does not recognize the skills that these workers (invisible) require in order to adequately develop their work. This implies both knowing how to handle the negative image associated with cleaning work (annoying smells, humiliations, nonrecognition) and how to properly clean the dependencies of the university, without being perceived by the rest and avoiding to hamper the daily processes of the organization.

## **Labour process and schooling: an approach to the debate on the relation between technical change and skills.**

### **Victoria Rio**

The question about skill requirements and skill formation and, particularly, its changes related to material transformations of the labour process has been an issue of debate in labour studies literature. One of the key works that intended to shed light on the matter has been Braverman's thesis about the deskilling of work as an inherent tendency under capitalism, mainly due to the progressively increasing subdivision and specialization of tasks and the control of the process in hands of management. Linked to this thesis, evidence on the increasing of schooling and the labour market demand for higher education credentials is often understood as a degradation of both schooling and, as a consequence, credentials.

Since then, and within the revolutionary material transformations of work related to the increasingly automatization of the labour process and the development of a new international division of labour, a line of research has focused on the question about effects of technical change in skill requirement, its formation and also its management.



This led to the development of multiple works that intended to show a general upgrade effect on skills due to the need of more intellectual capacities. Although many of these works have differences among them and do not necessary belong to the same theoretical framework, one of the conclusions in which they tend to converge is that technological change demands progressively more qualified and educated workforce.

The discussion generally tends to place both positions as opposite. However, a third type of recent works have made effort on showing how both deskilling and upskilling take place as an effect of the development of productive forces, not as a matter of coexistence but as the dialectical form in which this movement unfolds.

In the framework of this third group of works, this dissertation seeks to address the question of the effects of the material transformations of work on the labour force skills, focusing especially on the issue about the extension of schooling and the labour market increasingly demand for higher education credentials. The analysis will focus, on the one hand, on the general determinations of schooling on the production of productive attributes of the labour force. Secondly, on the historical determinations of labour process transformations on education and schooling. Finally and most important, the main part of the dissertation will focus on the case of one automotive company in Argentina in the context of a productive transformation. By the analysis of workstations, tasks and skills involved within different aspects of the changes in the labour process, effort will be made on understanding the determinations of technical change in the demand for a workforce with more years of schooling. The hypothesis that guides the analysis is that as development of material transformations of the labour process has a deskilling effect on manual and generally intuitive skills (or as it is put it in some research, tacit knowledge) often produced through experience, it requires an increasingly set of capacities which tend to be produced exclusively in the process of schooling.

## **Session: Skills at work II**

**The limits of higher education as a site of skill development, the cases of software engineers, laboratory scientists, financial analysts and press officers.**

### **Gerbrand Tholen**

Higher education (HE) performs a range of roles within society. Preparing individuals for work is widely understood to be a key function. Many believe that HE's vast expansion in the last decades is a direct result of a growing demand for university-educated workers. Employers want a well-trained and qualified labour force to serve what is deemed a knowledge-based economy. HE, it follows, has a central role in the skill formation of the



modern workplace. Although few would expect the skills demanded in the labour process to be developed in higher education exclusively, there exists an assumption that the core skills of those working in graduate occupations are predominantly developed at university. Yet existing studies show this is not necessarily the case. Specifically, HE will have different roles to play as sites of work skill development for different occupations. This paper investigates this occupational heterogeneity and outlines constraints of HE as a site of skill development. It draws on four occupational case studies on the work of laboratory-based scientists, software engineers, financial analysts and press officers, using interview data with workers, employers and stakeholders in these four occupations. The paper shows that not only do graduate roles not necessarily rely strongly on HE for skill development, clear limits prevent it from doing so.

**Disciplines and areas in lower secondary. Exploring the correspondence between changes in the materiality of labour and the transformation of secondary school**

**Luisa Iñigo**

The global trend towards the extension of the educational attainment of the labour force expresses itself quantitatively in data series on average years of schooling. According to Lee and Lee (2016), the average years of schooling for the global population between ages 15 and 64 increased from about 1,4 years in 1910 to 3,2 years in 1950 and 8,4 years in 2010 (Lee and Lee, 2016: 33). A great part of this extension was due to the expansion of secondary school attendance, which accelerated in the early 20th century in the U.S.A., in the post-WWII period in Europe and in the late 20th century in Latin America and parts of Asia. Such expansion was simultaneous with a transformation of secondary school as to 1) its division into two, relatively different sub-levels (the *basic* cycle –usually named as lower secondary, which tends to be compulsory– and the *higher* cycle, known as upper secondary), specially since the 1960s (Benavot, 2006) and 2) the reduction of differences between formative programs (i.e., the preponderance of comprehensive over specialized secondary school, especially in the basic cycle) (Benavot, 2006; Acosta, 2011), as well as the deferment of the starting point of vocational education (Callaloids *et al.*, 2004). In relation to this, curricular organization in lowers secondary tends to include basic subjects, mostly compulsory, with little or none elective subjects or credits. Added to this, many countries introduce curricular contents related to the development of transversal competences at this stage of secondary school(Callaloids *et al.*, 2004). In addition, evidence shows that many countries organice lower secondary contents into integrated subjects or areas.



Much has been written about changes in secondary schooling through the 20th century, from an educational policy point and pedagogical point of view. However, the analysis of secondary school transformation in the light of changes in labour processes has been a much less common approach. Assuming school as one of the major devices through which productive attributes of workers are produced (Hirsch and Iñigo, 2007; Carcacha, et. al., 2016.) and taking into account the transformations in the materiality of labour processes that have occurred as from mid-20th century (Balconi, 2002; Iñigo Carrera, 2013 [2003]; Starosta, 2016), this paper aims at re-examining changes in secondary school curricula in the light of those material mutations. Emphasis will be placed on analysing structure and curricular changes in compulsory secondary school -particularly, in lower secondary- as well as on enriching that analysis in light of the debates about school curricula and its relation with the development of cognitive capacities. We expect this approach will imply a contribution to answering the question on which productive attributes are produced through a secondary school that has been transformed in the ways described.

## **Learning attitudes and emotions to work: vocational training in the area of aesthetics**

### **Millenaar Veronica**

This study come up with the main objective to analyse and discuss the role of vocational training in the area of the aesthetic sector, as a key component in the deployment of the labour force, that reinforces and develops learnings in line with demands of the workplace, at the same time it reproduces social and gender inequalities.

In recent years, Argentina has carried out a restructuring process where professional profiles in part of the service sector where discussed and agreed between Trade Unions, business sector and the State. This process has evidenced an effort to make major adjustments between educational proposals and the demands for different skills of the labour market, which led to propose technical and codified knowledge within the curriculum content, as well as a large set of “soft skills”, oriented to develop certain intangible knowledge, attitudes and emotions that are required at the workplace. In this sense, this study aims at seeking the way in which curriculum design, within vocational training, incorporates in its educational proposal a set of dispositions to develop a particular sensibility and the capacity for emotional labour. These learnings are considered a key to facilitate deployment among vulnerable young people. At the same time, this study discuss that such predispositions are also a labour disciplining strategy that guarantee the acceptance of flexibilization and informality labour conditions among workers, in a a strongly gender-stereotyped occupation.

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This article therefore represents a contribution to understanding the process of learning in VT, by offering a comparison of three different vocational courses (Professional make-up, hair dressing and body treatments). All those courses integrate the big area of aesthetics, with a considerable enlargement of its enrolment rate during the last decade. The aesthetic area has expanded considerably, meaning a sector with high labour demand. This research is based on a qualitative field work carried out in Ciudad de Buenos Aires, with in-depth insights into teaching and learning in three VT selected institutions. During year 2017, 7 In-depth interviews were carried out with Heads and teachers, and focus groups were organized with 38 male and female students at the three VT institutions. In addition, in-depth interviews were also made with employers of the aesthetic sector, and with state officials and policy-makers within Technical and Vocational Education and Training government areas. The study is part of the Youth, Education and Work Research Programme at CIS/IDES-CONICET.



## **Work and Labor Process Theories**

### **Session: Non-standard work and exploitation**

#### **Sweatshops dixit: Unfree labour and the accumulation dynamics of the clothing industry**

##### **Jeronimo Montero Bressan**

This presentation seeks to understand what does the return of small garment sweatshops to large cities in both core and peripheral economies mean for debates on unfree labour and capitalist accumulation. Having been left at the margins of this industry during Fordism, ‘local sweatshops’ (as opposed to ‘international sweatshops’ [Montero Bressán and Arcos, 2017] are back since the late 1970s. In these, working conditions range from precarious employment to forced labour.

Since the crisis of Fordism, sweatshops have become crucial for the fashion industry worldwide. While awareness about large sweatshops in export processing zones is broad, little is known about small local sweatshops employing migrant labour and supplying cheap garment to fast-fashion branded retailers. Fear to delocalisation leads to low workers organisation in core economies, whereas the threat of cheap imported garments affecting local jobs is crucial for disciplining the labour force in peripheral economies. The ‘import’ of cheap labour into sweatshops located at arms-length distance from the stores rounds out a context in which formal workers are little more than a rarity, and are the worst paid of all industrial workers in several countries.

Through an analysis of the changes in the production and commercialisation of fashion clothing since the late 1970s, this presentation shows how the flourishing of forced labour during recent decades along the success of well-known branded manufacturers and retailers, suggests that, far from being a pre-capitalist reminiscence, unfree labour is not only compatible with capitalist accumulation, but it can also be critical for its survival. The



findings are based on over 11 years of research on local sweatshops in Prato (Italy) and mostly in Buenos Aires, as well as on a broad knowledge of secondary sources about other cases around the world.

## **Work unbounded?**

### **Rachel Cohen**

This paper explores intersecting dimensions of the work-life boundary, asks how these are changing and relates this to changes in employment relations and the increase in non-standard employment – self-employment, temporary and zero-hours contracts – and ‘non-employment’ relations (for instance, au-pairing or foster care).

Unbounded work is understood in comparison with ‘bounded’ work, rooted in masculine employment, an industrial landscape and strong trade unions’ moderating power. The (un)boundedness of work has varied historically, but also depending on the dimension considered. Dimensions include, among others:

- 1) **Temporality** – the temporal boundedness of work has often morphed into analysis of work duration (or ‘overwork’ (Schor 1992)). Temporal unboundedness, is however complex, encompassing duration, but also porosity, schedule and (control over) variability.
- 2) **Spatiality** – homeworking and mobile work disrupt spatial boundaries (Felstead et al., 2005), and have rapidly in the UK over the last 20 years. Analysis has, however, often focused on white collar activities (Cohen, 2010).
- 3) **Sociality** – unbounded sociality includes managerially enforced sociability (Bolton and Houlihan, 2009); friendships (or love) at work (Cowan and Horan, 2014; Pettinger, 2005); incorporation of personal life activity within work times/spaces (Rose, 2013) and work-structures rooted in personal relations.

The paper suggests a relationship between particular occupations, unboundedness and the growth in non-standard employment relations. Investigation of this relationship



reveals the rise of new forms of extractive behaviour and modes of spatio-temporal organisation and control, as well as new social inequalities. The paper considers the implications of these changes for LPT.

The paper draws on published research and the authors' quantitative analysis of the UK Labour Force Survey and other existing data.

## **Notes on twenty-first century informality and the reserve army of labour**

**Ruth Felder, Viviana Patroni**

Over the last four decades, the global transformation of capitalism imposed new conditions on labor. While in some areas of the world there was an exponential growth of waged workers, in others, economic restructuring decimated economic activities that had previously supported well-paid and protected jobs. Whether unemployed workers are reabsorbed under informal or precarious conditions, or as formal workers subjected to harsher market discipline, an increasing number of workers throughout the world now lack some of the protections historically associated with standard employment. Moreover, for an equally large and in many countries growing number of workers, waged labour has become an increasingly elusive reality.

It is in this context that notions of the informal sector and non-standard employment that had historically characterized work in the Global South acquire renewed relevance. In our presentation we will critically analyze historical debates about the articulation between various spheres of economic activity and the workers within them. We will pay special attention to the idea of the reserve army of labour as a conceptual tool to draw connections between workers in the informal sector, the heterogeneity of the working class and capital accumulation. We will argue that while the concept might be useful in understanding the disciplining role of the growing number of workers that have been made redundant for employers, it might not be equally productive to frame the problem of those workers who do not find a way back into waged work and for whom an unwaged life is the present and future reality under existing capital accumulation strategies. Unwaged, however, does not imply marginality to accumulation. On the contrary, there are particular mechanisms through which production and reproduction of waged and unwaged workers in the informal economy are articulated to the core of capital accumulation.

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## **Session: Care, worth and the value of work**

### **Time-work and time-robbed institutions. The take-over effect of work**

**Adrian Madden, Graham Symon**

Most research treats time as little more than epiphenomenal to social change, a chronological register on a wall or a smartphone app, that helps us make sequential sense of the world. Arguably, every social and economic revolution has been about time directly, or has had deep implications for the way we think about it. Where the first agricultural revolution introduced social rhythms and rituals dependent on seemingly regular annual or seasonal cycles, the invention of the clock produced the reality of global synchronisation though longitude. The French Revolution led to infamous efforts to standardise time, followed more successfully by the scientific revolution embodied by Taylorism and the imperative to commodify time. The compression of time through technological revolution and globalisation has again radically changed how we think about time, prompting some to celebrate the emergence of '24/7 capitalism' through the confluence of global supply, demand and constant production. Others suggest we now live in 'liquid times' (Bauman 2000), characterised by discourses of acceleration, flexibility and immediacy (Virilio, 2006), such that many work processes now occur at speeds and intensities that are beyond the capacities of individual consciousness (Urry and Johnson, 2005), often dissimulating the profound implications of these temporal changes for the social institution of work and the wellbeing of the worker (Hardt and Negri, 2000). The structure of work has changed profoundly, arguably more so than at any time in the course of human history. Where once the control and commodification of time provided the basis of organisation, now the nature of time itself has been altered – first compressed, then intensified and now stripped away - in a festival of flexibility.

Many extol the virtues of this temporal revolution - boundary-less work, the end of traditional careers, the flexible worker, but denying the temporal casualties of these portentions, manifest in a tacitly associated body of workers linked by the paradoxical



manner in which work-time is compressed but *time-work* is all consuming. *Time-work* means labour that is not economically valued but essential to reproducing the semblances of institutional norms of continuity, stability and work coherence, but at the workers' expense, reflecting changes in the wage relation and the socially necessary time needed to sustain a living. It demands new but very cost-effective temporal norms and disciplines - self-discipline, self-regulation – but by workers themselves. If, as Sharma (2015: 178) claims, 'power coalesces temporally' then we are required to think about time differently, not as a resource but as a power relation, a form of temporal capital to which people have differentiated access on the basis of class and gender. It raises fundamental questions about the ethics of modern work and the effect of time-robbed institutions on social wellbeing, the impacts of living and working in multiple temporalities, navigating increasingly faint work-life boundaries, and what this means for those who lack temporal capital. Do we have a new temporal class? This paper is an attempt to explore this temporal landscape.

## **Precarious Care: Labour Process, Care Work and Gender in the Context of Late Neoliberalism**

**Donna Baines**

Though precarious work is a relatively new phenomenon in the neoliberalizing global North, it has long existed in the global South. Similarly, while precarious work is a relatively new phenomenon in the core economy, increasingly impacting previously secure, well paid male job categories, gender segmentation of the labour market has meant that female-dominated sectors have consistently featured employment that is insecure, low wage and uncertain. These dynamics are particularly at play in care work, or employment aimed at supporting those with physical and emotional needs that cannot or are not met in the private realm of the family. Drawing on international qualitative case study data in the form of interviews, observations and document reviews, this paper provides an comparative analysis of the highly feminized non-government, non-profit social services sector in one country from the global South (South Africa) and two from the global North (Canada and Australia). Though differences existed among the three countries studied, commonalities were more striking.

The case study sites in all three countries were characterized by unstable and precarious funding, the expectation that workers would undertake unpaid hours of care work in addition to their paid hours, and service users that were increasingly impoverished and marginalised within the growing class chasm in the larger neoliberal context. Additional commonalities included: a heavy to exclusive reliance on precarious forms of



employment; a predominantly female labour force; intense workloads; poor wages and conditions; and a high commitment to the work and to service users. The paper explores the tensions between these aspects of care work and seeks to theorize the ways that the gendered commitment to care, prevalent among the workers in all three countries, is both a pathway through which control and power is transferred to management, as well as a major source of resistance within the Labour Process. Feminist Political Economy will also be used to clarify how larger institutions of the economic and political systems help shape policy regimes and the interactions of actors at the level of social life, particularly production (paid work) and reproduction (unpaid care work) (Peterson and Runyan 2009; Vosko 2002).

## **Social organization of care as a driver of precarious situations of care workers in home-based elder care**

**Majda Hrženjak**

Based on policy analysis and individual semi-structured interviews with care workers in different working arrangements, the author analyses the precarisation of work in home-based elder care in Slovenia, a post-socialist, European Union country characterized by a rapidly ageing population and delays in adapting the long-term care system to this new social risk. The employment and quasi-employment positions which co-exist and compete in the home-based elder care can be sorted along two continuums: between public and market service, and between formal and informal work. The author proceeds from the thesis that working conditions in home-based care differ significantly according to the position of the care worker on these two continuums, i.e. being employed as a care worker in public services, being self-employed, working in informal care markets, holding the status of a family assistant, or being simply an informal family carer. The analysis shows that the precarity of work is more severe in market and informal care, while formalization and socialization of care in public services bring about less precarious working conditions. However, even in the context of public services the working conditions are deteriorating. This study provides a concrete example of how, the state with its social policies that structure the social organization of elderly care, establishes the conditions for precarious situations of care workers in home based care.

## **Exploring the care penalties of the Argentinean parental leave on LGBTQI parents**

**Lucía Cirmi Obón**

This paper analyses how the care penalties embedded in the current Argentinean parental leave design affect LGBTQI families.



Departing from the theoretical framework of the feminist economics on childcare, it uses Nancy Folbre's concept of "care penalty" to measure the unbalances that parental leave design creates within couples that become parents. It builds the figure of a leave "kite" to shows the interrelation between the gender norms, the parental leave design and the different care penalties it creates at households and at labour market sphere. Relations are based on previous empirical research, usually focused on heterosexual couples becoming parents in the context of the Global North.

The research contrasts those relations portrayed in the kite at a local level. For that purpose, it uses national surveys data and a self-made online exploratory snowballed survey among LGBTQI families. Many Argentinean LGBTQI organizations participated actively in the survey towards producing data in this uncovered issue. Survey asked them about care burden, leave take-up and labour participation before and after the arrival of their first child.

Findings showed that Argentinean parental leave, with its gendered and heteronormative design, deepens gender norms and gender inequalities. It reproduces those unbalances on LGBTQI couples by the time it forces them to take the same binary distribution of days (90 days for "maternity" versus 2 days of leave for partner). Members of the surveyed LGBTQI couples who took the longer leave tend to carry a higher "care penalty" after that: they become the main responsible for the child during the first 3 years, they spent more time on unpaid care work and show less and weaker labour participation than the parents who just took a few days. However, compared with heterosexual couples in Argentina (based on national household survey results), the inequalities in the distribution of care penalties in LGBTQI couples are smaller and more flexible through time.

Inequalities in labour income among the surveyed do not look to be related to the leave take-up. Moreover, they seem to respond more strongly to gender stereotypes and statistical discrimination, since the gap between surveyed lesbians and gays income is pretty similar to the average gender gap in the country.

The research offers an original approach to parental leave analysis, looking at a Global South case and breaking the usual heteronormative framework used for unpaid care work studies. Data contributes to visualize the links between the household division of work and labour market inequalities, beyond the family's gender composition.

Currently, in Argentina, the parliament started to discuss and reformulate again the National Labour Act for private sector workers. This includes a minor change in the



parental leave design. The research offers data that might be useful for that debate as well.

## **Session: Conceptualisations of labour**

### **Digital economy, distraction, and the formation of the “mindful self” at work**

**Friedericke Hardering, Greta Wagner**

Background: Within a few years, the digital transformation has changed the world of work fundamentally (Huws 2014). Besides creating new jobs and enhancing productivity and well-being, the digital economy also exposes workers to risks of low wages, job uncertainty or unemployment. Additionally, recent research has linked the use of digital media at work or at home with lower attention, concentration, performance, and productivity. Consequently, solutions are developed to limit the distraction by digital media in order to reduce stress for employees and increase productivity. The control of one's own attention and increase of mindfulness at work are regarded as ideal solution to limit negative effects of the digital economy. More and more companies, such as Google, Intel or General Mills, are offering mindfulness trainings to their employees and a large number of self-help literature on mindfulness and the detachment of work has appeared in the last few years. We argue, that this constitutes a new model of worker subjectivity that highlights personal skills of attention control, mindfulness and work-nonwork boundary management (Hardering and Wagner 2018). Building on theories of Boltanski and Chiapello (2003), Foucault (2007; 2010) and Brockling (2016), our contribution aims at showing how various discourses within the digital economy shape a new type of subjectivity, the mindful self.

Methods: To understand the sources of the mindful self, we analyze two discourses within the self-help literature: The discourse on mindfulness at work and the discourse on detachment of work. We use discourse analysis as a research method and ask 1) how the invocations of mindful self are made, 2) and by what technologies the mindful self is established. Finally, we ask about the paradoxical effects of this new ideal self.

Findings: We show that in self-help literature the mindful self is described as ideal form of worker subjectivity that is able to limit the negative effects of digitalized work processes.



The mindful self has abilities of dealing with stress by using clear boundaries between work and nonwork and by using techniques of mindfulness. Moreover, the mindful self can make the transition between states of highest concentration during work and a radical mental detachment from work in work-free times. It also provides efficient boundary management at the transitions of work and life and knows the importance of one's own mental self-care.

Discussion: Based on the analysis of self-help literature, we show that mindfulness is not only seen as a means of stress management, but in particular as a means to increase efficiency. The increase in mindfulness programs paradoxically contributes to the maintenance of the unhealthy and distracting work system because organizations do not change their performance policies and therefore do not fight the cause of stress. The invocation as a mindful self thus challenges individuals to solve structural deficiencies by optimizing their own abilities.

## **Material and immaterial labor in the early video game industry**

### **Maximiliano Tagliapietra**

The aim of this work is to explore an industry scarcely addressed in the past by sociology and social sciences in general. Our intention is to reconstruct the first years of the beginning of the video game industry, from 1970 to 1983 in the United States, from the perspective of the Marxist theory of value (Marx, 2009, 2015).

From its origin, the video game industry was framed in the global capitalist competition to produce and accumulate value, and as such it determines part of the social construction of reality, as an arm of the social division of labour and as a commodity (and value) production process. Today what concerns us is the fact that "... virtual play trains flexible personalities for flexible jobs, shapes subjects for militarized markets, and makes becoming a neoliberal subject fun" (Dyer-Whiteford and de Peuter, 2009: 29-30), and our work its meant to take the first steps in to questioning that aspect of the video game industry.

To accomplish this we will consider the following questions: what capitals constituted the video game industry in the West between 1970-1983 and how were they related? More specifically in the United States, the birth place of the industry. What was the form that the relationship between labor (variable capital) and capital (constant capital) took in the industry? Paying special attention to the difference between manual or material labour, responsible for the valuation of videogames and consoles as physical commodities (consoles, cartridges, joysticks), and intellectual or immaterial labour, responsible for the



valorization of the videogame as a virtual commodity and as intellectual property (software code, the design of microprocessors inside consoles and computers, artistic design).

The division between industrial capitalism (Fordism/Taylorism) and post-industrial capitalism (post-fordism/post-taylorism) and between material labor and immaterial or cognitive labor is essential to our analysis. These notions will be addressed from authors such as Carlo Vercellone (2011), Marcela Zangaro (2013, 2016) Pablo Miguez (2010, 2016) and Nick Dyer-Whiteford and Greig de Peuter (2009).

## **Platform Labour at Global Margins: Agency and Autonomy of Workers in the Global Gig Economy**

**Mohammad Amir Anwar, Mark Graham**

There have been numerous efforts by scholars working in the fields of economic geography, political economy, sociology, etc., to bring back the role of labour as an active agent of change in the world economy rather than a victim of capital's restructuring. Andrew Herod's appeal for a conceptualisation of labour as actors and not as reactors in the capitalist mode of production (Herod, 1997, 2001) served as an important call to think about labour agency from a variety of perspectives in the global economic system, whereby labour agency produces and reproduces labour, shapes the geography of capitalism and in turn fashions transformative outcomes for workers (Carswell and De Neve, 2013; Coe, 2013; Coe and Hess, 2013; Coe and Jordhus-Lier, 2011; Cumbers et al., 2010; Featherstone and Griffin, 2016; Rogaly, 2009). Many scholars argue that labour agency enables workers to achieve positive outcomes such as improvement in the livelihoods (higher wages, flexibility, autonomy, moving up the job ladder, etc.), social reproduction and social relations (escaping the constraints of class, caste, gender, etc., and avoid discrimination and exploitation from historically entrenched rural relations) (Carswell and De Neve, 2013; Cumbers et al., 2010, 2008; Lund-Thomsen and Coe, 2015). However, much of this has been informed from the perspective of labour in classical firm/factory-based settings. With the emergence of digital platform-based work that is highly commoditised and geographically less sticky than old forms of economic activities (Graham and Anwar, 2018), there is a need to rethink labour agency and its impact on the well-being of workers in the contemporary information economy.

We conducted sixty-five interviews with platform workers in five different countries in Africa on one of the world's biggest digital job platforms. We selected our participants to represent a diversity of experience. Our interviews were primarily geared to understand



the nature and types of work done by workers on platforms, income, interaction with clients and platforms and strategies used to get more work, stay competitive and demand higher wages. The resultant discussion with participants also included the implications of digital work on workers' lives and livelihoods, meanings and expectations they attach to digital work and challenges faced by workers.

In this paper, we provide a theoretically informed account of labour agency in platform-based work to document new sets of agency strategies/practices which could be understood as reworking, resilience, resistance (Katz, 2004) and 'reverse engineering' by platform workers. We highlight how platform workers exert these agency practices both "on" and "off" the digital work platforms. Building upon Coe and Jordhus-Lier's (2011) understanding of a 'variegated landscape for agency potential' across different sectors, we show different levels of agency among different platform workers, how agency is shaped by their positions in the economic networks/value chains of platform work and also by their social and cultural landscape in which they are embedded. Through insights gained from job quality literature, we develop a heuristic framework to show a variety of agency practices and how these practices impact on both the autonomy and bargaining power of workers on platforms. We argue that labour agency is key for greater autonomy at work and bargaining power and also demonstrate how the lack of collective bargaining on platforms is a major challenge that can further curtail the exercise and potential of agency by workers.

## **Session: Class and the Labor Process**

### **A perfect match? Young blue-collar workers class origin and the exigencies of work**

**Carina Altreiter, Jörg Flecke**

In Labour Process Analysis, workers' subjectivity is being addressed in various ways. One aspect involves workers' ingenuity and subjective contributions at work. Another one relates to workers' resistance, misbehaviour and acquiescence within the structured antagonism between management and labour. In this context, the concept of class is important as it denotes a social identity that involves shared experiences, interests, loyalties and values (Marks/Thompson 2010).

Our paper takes up some of the debates on class and the labour process but does so from a particular perspective. Informed by Bourdieu's theory it highlights the formation of subjectivity through the social origin of class positions. This means that we are less concerned with the impact of working conditions on workers' class consciousness and the dynamics of control and resistance. Rather, we are addressing the external factors of



workplace dynamics in the sense of prior orientations to work (Goldthorpe/Lockwood 1968) or the workers' habitus (Bourdieu 1987) more widely. The focus is on the fit between workers' subjectivity as shaped by their class origin on the one hand and, on the other, the exigencies of work and the social relations in the workplace. In other words, we look at the formation of the concrete subject in order to understand how workers refer to their work.

The paper draws on a study of young blue-collar workers in manufacturing, aged between 20 and 34 years old, to explore how classed perceptions and meanings of work structure their practices at the work place. Based on 20 problem-centered interviews conducted in different regions and industrial sectors in Austria between 2014 and 2016 the paper shows how growing up in the working class the young workers develop specific dispositions (or habitus) regarding work, which is, among other things, based on the deployment of the body and manual labour.

These dispositions, expressed in practices, expectations and aspirations, lay the ground for workers to feel at home at working-class jobs, similar to what Paul Willis found in his study in the 1970ies. Apart from social class, gender plays a major role in structuring these matches as women still have to struggle for acceptance in typically male dominated manual labour jobs. Yet, while this homology is crucial for workers feeling of belonging, it also constrains efforts of change and therefore contributes to perpetuating class relations. Overall, the paper contributes not only to bringing in the subject, it also addresses the often neglected topic of specific formations of subjectivity in the context of social class

## **The persistent relevance of the working class in Chile: new developments from class analysis and the labor process theory**

**Lucas Cifuentes, Pablo Pérez**

For decades, Chilean scholars claimed that number of people employed in working class occupations would inevitably shrink. According to them, the growth of the service and non-manual sectors, as well as private sector employment, brought about not only the decline of the traditional blue-collar working class, but also the expansion of "middle-class" occupations (León & Martínez, 1987, 2007; Ruiz and Boccardo, 2015). In emphasizing the effects of the structural transformation that accompanied the development of free market economics, scholars argued for the consolidation of a new middle-class society in which traditional patterns of working class identities and organization would play—both in Chile and other Latin American countries—a marginal role (Franco et al., 2011; Franco & León, 2010; Hopenhayn, 2010; Espinoza, Barozet, & Méndez 2013; Ruiz and Boccardo, 2015). While these scholars have not aimed to test the



main hypothesis of the labor process theory, some of them have certainly suggested that the employees working in these “middle-class” activities differ from the traditional, manufacturing workers in the way they are subjected to different employment dynamics. They have contended, for example, that middle-class employees enjoy not only higher salaries and wages than “traditional” (blue-collar) workers, but also higher skill levels (León & Martínez, 1987, 2007; Ruiz and Boccardo, 2015). In noting the difference in skills, these researchers have essentially reproduced traditional sociological accounts according to which middle-class employees are more likely to occupy managerial roles as well as enjoy higher degrees of autonomy and control over the labor process (cf. Lockwood, 1989 [1958]; DeFrozo, 1973; Poulantzas, 1975; Goldthorpe, 1982).

This “middle-class” argument has been recently called into question from different perspectives. Recent investigations have contended the changes in the Chilean class structure do not seem to suggest the growth, let alone the consolidation, of middle-class positions. According to these investigations, these changes indicate the persistence of “traditional” patterns of class inequality defined, among other things, by the predominance of working class positions (Gayo, Mendez & Teitelboim, 2016; Perez Ahumada, *Forthcoming*). In line with this, recent research has also demonstrated that working in non-manual or service occupations does not produce “middle-class” identities and interests, i.e. identities and interests that differ from those upheld by manual, blue-collar workers (Perez Ahumada, 2017).

This paper aims to contribute to this emerging literature by drawing upon insights from the labor process theory (LPT) (cf. Braverman, 1974; Burawoy, 1979; Thompson, 1982; Newsome et al., 2015; Thompson & Smith, 2017). Through quantitative evidence (regression models predicting workers’ perceptions of control over the labor process), we test the main hypothesis of the “middle-class argument”. More specifically, we examine whether working in the “middle-class sector” (i.e. in non-manual, service, and private-sector occupations) leads to higher perceptions of control over the labor process. In an attempt to overcome the divide between class analysis and the Labor Process Theory (Carter, 1995), we also use quantitative methods to test whether workers’ class position—i.e. their location in a managerial/supervisory, expert or unskilled working-class position—shapes their perceptions of control over the labor process. In doing so, we also examine whether the effects of class position differ across economic sectors. This quantitative analysis is supplemented by a qualitative study based on interviews with more than 150 workers employed in different sectors of the economy (manufacturing, agro-industrial activities, mining, retail store, banking, clerical jobs in public sector, among others).

Based on this evidence, we show that the labor process in sectors usually described as the core of the Chilean “middle class” (for example, banking, retail store, and clerical activities in the public sector) is not substantially different, in terms of workers’ perceptions of the



relations of supervision and managerial control they are subjected to, from traditional “working class” activities (e.g. forestry, agro-industrial, long-shore and port activities). In this sense, our results contradict the basic arguments of the “middle-class thesis”. The findings also suggest, again in contrast to this thesis, that working in the private sector leads to *weaker* perceptions of control over the labor process. Something similar occurs when we analyze the impact of class position. In line with the main hypothesis of class analysis (Crompton, 1993; Wright, 1997), workers’ class location does generate significant variations in workers’ perceptions of the control over the labor process. Yet, in contrast to the middle-class hypothesis, such an impact does not substantially change when we add an interaction term to measure whether the effect of class differ across economic sectors.

The results of this study allow us to present new evidence to explain why the growth of the service and non-manual sectors should not be interpreted as the structural basis of the alleged expansion of the middle class. They also allow us to bridge the gap between class analysis and the labor process theory (cf. Carter, 1995) by presenting findings on the case of Chile.

## **Class and the labour process debate revisited**

**Paul Thompson, Chris Smith**

This year’s conference theme – class and the labour process – implicitly assumes some gap or level of discontinuity with issues and traditional themes dealt with in labour process analysis (LPA). The paper outlined here evaluates how the mainstream labour process tradition has engaged with class and explores what can be done to address some of the challenges for a labour analysis and politics. We argue that LPA does have a class analysis, but one that is a ‘local’ rather than universal or expansive one. Capital and labour are central categories, concepts and actors, but what LPA has tended to reject is what might be called ‘conveyor belt’ assumptions that posit a direct and teleological relationship between social relations at work, class formation and struggle. For example, labour process concepts and research strongly informed the extensive class debates in the 1970s debates and beyond. Within orthodox Marxism, class is defined by relations of production. Class position is always important as capital pulls new groups into waged labour positions/ industrialises new sectors, as we saw in earlier debates about the ‘new working class’ or recent debates about ‘creative class’. Yet these debates illuminated little about real labour struggles and largely faded away.

The other ‘conveyor belt’ idea that LPA reacted against was the ‘gravedigger thesis’. Deriving from an orthodox Marxist legacy, the thesis postulates that the proletariat would be compelled to challenge and transform class society by virtue of its objective location in



the system of production, becoming both the leading and universal liberating class. The working class was never a universal liberating agent, but under Fordism and earlier there was a more organic connection between informal struggles at work, collective labour action and formal labour politics. In contemporary political economy in advanced capitalist economies such organic links have been weakened, broken or fragmented. Links between labour conditions at work and in the market and labour politics in society have become far more contingent and complex. The left (in all its variants) in advanced capitalist countries has largely lost the battle to articulate and 'represent the 'labour interest'.

That does not mean that a radical politics of work and class is dead or out-of-date. The paper goes on to rethinking some key concepts and connections. First it deals with labour in the market, in particular by critically examining the precarity thesis. Guy Standing rejects ownership/control definitions of class for a status divide between those with and without employment security. Precariousness is part of being worker historically, except for a brief period (50s-70s) in advanced economies, but Standing's core thesis is under-conceptualised and over-sold. Second, we look at labour in the workplace. Many mainstream and radical perspectives now no longer see the workplace as a central or contested terrain. For example, in recent accounts from Mason (2016) and Srnicek and Williams (2015) the working class (in both developed and developing economies) is presented as fragmented, divided and in thrall to consumption and debt, whilst the labour movement is largely defeated, demoralised and sclerotic. There is an increasing emphasis on a post-work politics whose central demand is a universal basic income. We seek to locate a space for an understanding of the capacity for self-organisation and resistance in the workplace, and the development of a more specific and distinctive 'politics of production' (Thompson and Smith 2017). This requires accepting and embracing greater diversity in the form and content of labour agency. Labour scholars need to make and seek practical and conceptual connections between different types and levels of struggle without losing sight of the distinctiveness and legitimacy of each.

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## **Working lives and the labour process**

### **Session: Dealing with precarity I**

#### **Deal with precarious situations. The case of young retail workers**

**Francisco Favieri**

This work refers to the partial results of a doctoral thesis (funded by CONICET) whose general objective is analyse the strategies and actions that retail workers in micro and small enterprises display to deal with situations of precariousness in their jobs. It is proposed, from a “travel” through their work trajectories -in relation to the characteristics of their work and the multiple situations of conflict that go through them- the reconstruction of struggle itineraries based on their experiences, meanings, interests, reflections and practices.

In order to reconstruct these experiences, were interviewed about the current work situation, the previous work and its future prospects. During the conversation, relationships are recovered around: family, friends, co-workers, employers and customers, users or consumers of the service. Emphasis is placed on the investigation of conflict situations, that is when actions and strategies that shape and define the relationships that - from the moment "break", moment-problem (milestone, before and after) - will be configured, in different levels of abstraction, ruptures and continuities in the alternatives that define “the space of the possible”.



The supposed guide of the research highlights that, in precarious and fragmented work contexts, it is possible to configure meanings that would allow an identity of common interests, based on reflections, thoughts, actions and similar practices, possibly of an alternative type to the already developed by the organized workers' movement, but that, despite not being coordinated collectively, remain invisible. This would constitute a contribution of great importance for the rapprochement of alternative reflections, as “the space of the possible” and “thought for the action” that would enrich the union of the sector and the search for successful strategies to finish situations of precarious work.

Although there is a strong tolerance or resistance to various situations of precariousness, it is observed in the interviews, that as work experience increases, better strategies to cope with the daily work. In the face of a conflict, the union or the “subsecretary of labour” is resorted to (but in the last instance), first an instance of dialogue is used, usually individual (worker / employer).

The results can be variable, in fact, many of them fail, but what makes them “follow” at work has a strong link with their family realities. When the work affects negatively affective-family (situations because of work, the young workers cannot attend transcendent family events) like birthdays or illness situations, marks a before and after, in relation to all those situations of precariousness before “bearable”. - and that axis is what makes the difference. From there, the “strategies” are modified and what was previously normal, is now unjust or “more unjust”. There are limits in labour relations, who previously did not appear and there is a greater predisposition to make claims collectively, or at least, some more solidarity among the co-workers. Regarding the deployment of collective actions, they are almost non-existent, as is the formal presence of the union in these spaces, which is presented as something distant, although eventually effective at the time of filing an individual claim.

These partial results (up to now in 20 in-depth interviews) show an important fragmentation of the formal ways of collective action in precarious environments in the micro and small business. What does not mean that at micro-group levels do not establish or lead to improvements in the terms of negotiation or new fighting strategies in their current or future workplaces.

**“It goes in one hand and out of the other – At the minute I’m just having to survive”. In-Work Poverty and Low-Paid Multiple Employment**

**Jo McBride, Andrew Smith**



Brief outline It is a common misapprehension that people in the UK who are ‘in poverty’ are only those who are unemployed and receiving welfare benefits. Indeed, recently there has been an increase of people who are often referred to as being in ‘in-work poverty’ (IWP). Whilst many correlate IWP with low-paid work, a recent in-depth study of in-work poverty in the UK, (Hick and Lanau 2017) makes it clear that the correlation between ‘low pay’ and ‘in-work poverty’ is far from straightforward (also see Bennett, 2014, Marx and Nolan, 2012). They note how IWP occurs when the total of a working household’s net income is not enough to meet their needs (2017:5). However, although important, we note that in most of these studies, when ‘job quantity’ is mentioned, it is based on the labour market participation of all members in one household – not on one member of a household involved in multiple employment as in our study. Furthermore most of the academic literature on IWP is based on comparative statistics across the EU and is mainly quantitative (see for example Maitre et al 2011, and Fraser et al 2011). Whilst these figures highlighting the rising scale of people in poverty are acknowledged as providing a significant, if concerning insight into the scale of the problem, we would suggest that the ‘voices’ of these people are missing. What they are experiencing, why they feel they are in work poverty, how this is affecting themselves, their family, their lives. This is the purpose of our study. Methodology Drawn from a qualitative study of 50 interviews with low-paid workers engaged in multiple employment, this data subset comprises detailed interviews with workers we identified were ‘in-work poverty’ and others through ‘self definition’ (also see Shildrick et al. 2012 and Garthwaite 2016). These workers’ jobs include: cleaning, security, retail, administration, social services and education, and they are employed in 2, 3, 4, 5 and even 7 different jobs. Yet, many are still struggling to survive. We also conducted interviews with food bank organisers (2), trade union officials (9) and 6 employers. Key findings All of the workers we interviewed are engaged in multiple employment because they are struggling to make ends meet. The data highlighted many significant issues with low-pay, limited working hours, underemployment and constrained employment opportunities combining to generate severe financial complexities and challenges. Despite a rise in the UK National Living Wage, many found their working hours were cut by their employer due to the rise and were therefore worse off. Some interviewed feel vulnerable and highly stressed about cuts, including benefits, and some make use of foodbanks. Others receive financial support from family and relatives. These all raise issues in relations to the current ‘make work pay’ agenda whereby successive UK governments have viewed (and continue to view) employment as the best route out of low-pay/poverty. References Bennett, F. (2014) The ‘living wage’, low pay and in work poverty: Rethinking the Relationships. *Critical Social Policy*, 34, 1 pp 46-65 Fraser, N., Gutierrez, R., and Pena-Casas, R (2011) *Working Poverty in Europe: A comparative approach*. Palgrave Macmillan. Garthwaite, K. (2016) *Hunger pains: inside foodbank Britain*, Bristol: Policy Press. Hick, R and Lanau, A. (2017) *In-Work Poverty in the UK: Problem, policy analysis and platform for action. Final Report*. Cardiff University. Joseph



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## **„Just Trying to Keep My Customers Satisfied“?: Time Struggle and the Managerial Role of Customers in Adjunct Academic and Platform Delivery Work**

**Kathleen Griesbach**

How do contingent workers confront different tempos of uncertainty in work and earnings? What role do “customers” play in these experiences?

Beginning in the 1970s, global economic changes have facilitated an increase in precarious work, with employers shifting risk onto workers across different sectors (Smith 1998, Kalleberg 2009). This has corresponded with an increase in service work in the global North. Evidence suggests that contingent workers, who lack a fixed employer and long-term position, experience time differently than “standard” workers. Without a permanent employer sheltering them from the market, these workers may experience a blurring between “work” and “free” time (Barley and Kunda 2004) as the risks they have acquired under flexible capitalism force them to be constantly prepared for the unexpected (Snyder 2016).

Departing from foundational insights on how workers become alienated (Braverman 1974) and how the self is constituted through work (Burawoy 1979), labor process scholars have explored how customers mediate service employment relationships (Leidner 1993, Sherman 2007, Sallaz 2009). In games that displace worker conflict from employers, obscuring exploitation and generating consent to the conditions of capitalism (Burawoy 1979), customers can play a key role. Yet labor process theory has focused little on contingent work and temporal experience; scholarship might explore how workers in both “new” and “old” contingent occupations experience uncertainty and what role customers play across contexts.



This paper uses data from 20 semi-structured interviews with adjunct university instructors and platform delivery workers in New York City, data from the author's ongoing dissertation research. I examine workers' reflections on unstable schedules and analyze the role of the "customer" (the student and the delivery recipient, respectively). I identify a dual role for the customer in each kind of work: on the one hand exercising disciplinary control through ratings and evaluations, and on the other playing a social part in labor processes marked by spatial and structural isolation. Further, both adjunct instructors and platform delivery workers experience time struggles connected to uncertain future earnings and a drive to work as much as possible. Many adjuncts strive to produce their own work to improve their status in academia (the long game), while platform delivery workers seek to maximize deliveries and therefore earnings in the face of unpredictability (playing to win). Customers can work both with and against workers in these efforts. This paper contributes to the literature on contingent work and the labor process by examining temporal experiences of contingency and unpacking the role of customers in workers' experiences.

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**Session: Dealing with Precarity II**



## **Managing the Precarious Workplace: Wages, hegemony, and the minimum wage in U.S. Restaurant**

Marcel Knudsen

The factory floors that motivated early studies of the labor process have declined in advanced capitalist economies. Instead, the simultaneous re-emergence of traditional service industries and flexible employment relations pose challenges for understanding labor control. How do owners and managers in small, less formalized firms manage workers and the labor process? What tools do they have at their disposal for controlling workers, and what are the consequences for the quality of jobs?

This paper examines how firms manage workers in the restaurant industry, one of the largest sites of precarious work in the U.S. It draws on 90 interviews with owners, managers, and workers to determine managerial practices with reference to a policy shift—city minimum wage increases in Chicago and Oakland. Building on the insight that firms place considerable emphasis on maintaining wage hierarchies and other social structures of the workplace, the paper explores how employers in this low-wage industry retain and motivate workers. It finds that despite the low wages in the industry, owners and managers emphasized the importance of skilled, efficient labor. Despite lacking the resources of larger employers, owners and managers developed strategies for motivating workers and creating symbolic rewards for hard work.

Two forms of control and motivation are examined. Firstly, owners and managers establish internal hierarchies of worth, skill, and wages that differentiate among workers. These hierarchies are rooted in the authority of management to evaluate workers and reward workers as deserved. Secondly, raises reflect relations of reciprocity between owners and workers. They establish that workers will also benefit from the firm's success in raises or job security—an important consideration given the instability of the restaurant industry. While these forms of control often operate in conjunction with market behavior, the study demonstrates that owners and managers structure evaluations and raises in ways that reinforce their authority and importance in the workplace. These approaches make use of racialized and gendered notions of workers. Thus, the paper shows how the social meanings of wages can be used as a form of managerial control in small, less formalized firms.

These findings show that hegemonic forms of control are widespread in the U.S. restaurant industry. While precarity bolsters the effectiveness of coercive, “despotic” workplace regimes, I argue that the limited resources of small businesses produce a reliance on autonomous worker effort. In many cases, firms have more to gain from



motivating and retaining workers than from cutting labor costs and punishing deviance. In addition, the lack of bureaucratic distance between workers and management reinforces hegemonic approaches to control. The paper discusses the potential of these mechanisms for understanding other peripheral industries in the U.S. and the Global South.

### **Towards political disenchantment and populism? Consequences of precarious working and living conditions in the case of young Germans**

Alexandra Seehaus, Vera Trappmann, Jule-Marie Lorenzen, Denis Neuman

Our contribution broaches the issue of young people's living and working conditions, who are confronted with prolonged times for studies and vocational training as well as tendencies of labour market flexibilisation and destandardisation of employment. While having to cope with these developments, young people are also increasingly and disproportionately often affected by precarious or insecure working conditions as atypical employment, low pay and fixed-term contracts. Transitions between these forms are not only becoming more common but also more precarious as failure can lead to disintegration and denial of social and material recognition – thus, threatening to cause social descent.

In this context we ask how young people deal with their experiences and present their different ways to cope with precarity. In particular, we are interested in the consequences of political working and living conditions on political participation and opinion formation of young people. Though holding political attitudes and expressing various forms of criticism we find strong scepticism or indifference towards party politics as well as little interest in political engagement. Given the rising right-wing populism and ongoing debates about migration policies in the public debate we inquire on the relation between experiences of uncertainty and lacking control over one's one life course and the construction of a threat from the outside.

Our material drawing on every day life experiences and political attitudes of our interviewees shows that social boundaries drawn in reference to right-wing populism relate to questions of distributive justice and recognition in the context of precarious working and living conditions.

The empirical basis of our contribution consists of a survey with 1000 young people below the age of 30 years and 60 narrative-biographical interviews with the same age group conducted by the „Prewrite“ project, which examines in how far precarious working and



living conditions influence emerging forms of social, class and political consciousness in a German-Polish comparative perspective.

### **Young workers in flexible capitalism: a Brazilian experience**

Fernando Ramalho Martins, Daniel Wintersberger, Aline Suelen Pires

In this paper we discuss the relation between the new pattern of work and employment relations of flexible capitalism and the new generation of workers, showing how the young labour force has played a central role in the introduction of a new model of workforce control. We argue that, in the context of a neoliberal agenda, a variable that has contributed to strengthen Capital over Labour following the deregulation and liberalisation of labour markets is the use of young workers, giving way to new patterns of labour relations. With reference to the Brazilian context, we argue that the features and expectations of the younger generation of workers have been an underpinning factor in the implementation of a new managerial approach to labour utilisation.

We propose that there is a match between the new organizational discourse (and practice) and the expectations of the young labour force. The new model, connected with the so-called flexible capitalism, is characterized by flexibility for capital and labour, and insecurity and uncertainty especially for the latter. From an individualistic and immediate point of view these new patterns might seem attractive and seductive; however, when one takes into account the big picture (i.e. when one considers the labour relations, labour rights, wages and benefits) this impression can be misleading.

We will illustrate the arguments presented with data collected in the Brazilian low cost aviation sector. Drawing on interview and survey data from workers employed by low cost airlines (including supply firms thereof), we discuss the interplay between flexible working arrangements (transient employment), flexible working practices (primarily centred around functional flexibility) and the attitudes of young workers, defined for the purpose of this study as those under the age of 35. By examining worker attitudes in a Brazilian sector (low cost aviation) that is known for making intensive use of a young labour force to implement new patterns of work and employment relations, we illustrate our argument that young worker attitudes and an unitarist ideology are particularly congruent with the new forms of work organisation centred around functional flexibility and subsequent worker buy in to managerial prerogative, as pursued by low cost airlines in this study. The data presented in the third part of this paper draws on data from 52 semi-structured interviews, two focus groups and a follow up questionnaire (128 responses) with aviation workers at major airports in São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro in 2012.



We aim to problematize the conceive of flexibilisation (whether based on numerical, spatial or temporal flexibility) as a volitive or strategic action to achieve greater diversity in organizations. Alternatively, it should be seen more as a structural demand (aiming to guarantee the extended reproduction of capital) than as a strategic choice (aiming to bring a better work-life balance, for instance). Understanding flexibility in a broad sense (not focusing in one or other particular form of its manifestation, i.e. numerical, contractual or functional one), we highlight how a particular category of workers might be used to implement a new model of work and employment relation more tuned to demands of our economic system (and not the other way around!). In sum, with this paper, we hope to contribute to the understanding of the complex relations between generational issues and structural economic demands.

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## **Session The making and remaking of collective identities**

**Individual worker reflections on involvement in a high profile strike: the BA dispute 2009-2011**

**Iona byford, Robert Byford**



The BA cabin crew dispute was one of the longest and most high profile in recent industrial relations history. It was also one of the most contentious with legal challenges with regard to balloting irregularities, allegations of harassment and bullying, the threat of union busting and the suspension of employees and union representatives (Ewing 2011). Cabin crew also faced government opposition, the mainly right wing media and pilot colleagues, some of whom volunteered to perform cabin crew jobs during the strike periods (Taylor and Moore 2015). The dispute included twenty two strike days.

The purpose of this research was to gain an inside view of the emotional experience of participating in such a high profile industrial dispute. Given ongoing declining UK strike frequency particularly in the private sector this may be a one-off experience in a whole working life. Strikes are most often reported in statistical terms, for the number of working days lost, stoppages and workers involved by, industry, region, cause, size and duration (ONS 2017). Godard (2011:299) argues that quantitative methodologies are of 'limited value in terms of looking at the more subtle and hidden manifestations of conflict, hence a qualitative lens provides some much needed subjective detail from an individual perspective and shows a more emotionally intelligent approach to understanding the deeper response and reflection on conflict at work. The research will also add to debates around Mobilisation Theory (Kelly 1998) by adding an emotional dimension.

Strike literature has as its focus one of four issues, causation, variation (countries and sectors), trends over time and the relationship between strikes and other forms of collective and individual protest (Hodder, Williams, Kelly and McCarthy 2017:165). Other concerns are aspects of the law, such as injunctions (Gall 2017; Ewing 2011; Prassl 2011); the impact of social media (Upchurch and Grassman 2016); and the processes of collectivism and mobilisation (Taylor and Moore 2015). There are a smaller number of articles on strikes which are more individually and personally focussed (McBride, Stirling and Winter 2013). Much debate in this area was published between the 1970's and 1980's when strikes were more prevalent (Gennard and Lasko 1975). This literature tends to also focus on specific strikes eg. Pilkingtons (Lane and Roberts 1971); Fine Tubes (Beck 1974) and the miners' strike (Spence and Stephenson 2007). Individual data was also heavily relied upon in an account of how much money striking workers have to live on (Gennard and Lasko 1975). These experiences needs updating.

This is an empirical and qualitative paper based on 35 semi-structured interviews, one to three years after the strike (2013-2014) with long serving members (15-40 years' service) of the cabin crew community. Interviews were conducted in workers homes, at the workplace and in public cafes and restaurants. Interviews were between 1-2 hours in duration. Interviews were analysed using the 'ladder of emotions' connected to mobilising (Woods et al 2012). The findings show that participation was an emotional experience, leading to a change in attitude towards the employer, the union, and colleagues.



**“We’re knackered and fed up”: attitudes towards work and trade union membership of junior NHS doctors following the disputed imposition of a new contract**

**Nicholas Jephson, Hugh Cook, Andy Charlwood**

During the well-publicised strike action by junior doctors in the National Health Service (NHS) from December 2015-April 2016, it was claimed by trainee doctors’ groups that junior doctor morale was “desperately low with high levels of anxiety, stress and burnout”. Despite extensive action from the doctor’s trade union and professional association, the British Medical Association (BMA), the new contract for junior doctors was imposed by the Secretary of State for Health in July 2016 (Rimmer, 2017).

This paper discusses data from an ongoing longitudinal study of junior doctor morale and attitudes towards the doctor’s trade union. Twenty-five interviews were conducted with junior doctors during the period of industrial unrest November 2015-June 2016. Fifteen follow-up interviews were conducted from the same sample after the imposition of the new contract in September 2016, to gain a deeper understanding of how attitudes towards the work and trade union membership of junior doctors had changed since the imposition of the new contract.

Findings from analysis of interview data yielded initial resistance but ultimately resenting acceptance of the terms and conditions of the new contract. Data also produced concerning predictions regarding the future of NHS medicine. Interviewees highlighted key tensions between the normative occupational values of junior doctors and their work requirements under the new contract, and emphasized how anxiety around doctors’ decisions to withdraw labour were ultimately a principal factor in halting strike action in September 2016. These findings contribute to non-manual labour process debates by highlighting how workers are complicit in their own subordination through managerial and public evocations of the ‘values’ of NHS workers (Warhurst and Thompson, 1998), in this case principally surrounding patient safety. Further findings uncovered the degradation not only of junior doctors’ employment contracts, but of NHS medicine as a prestigious or even worthwhile career. Many interviewees possessed an openness or even willingness to relocate overseas to practice medicine in a more congenial climate, which



raises alarming concerns about future recruitment and retention problems for junior doctors in the National Health Service.

This paper contributes to labour process theory by offering a distinctive and contemporary re-telling of the labour process for junior NHS doctors, during a time of fierce discord with the ruling British government. It illustrates the degradation of work for NHS doctors in England in their own words. In exploring the working lives of junior doctors pre and post-imposition of the new contract, this paper offers insight into the effects of coercive control over the working conditions of public sector health professionals, and illuminates wider concerns about the point at which this degradation might result in major structural changes to the National Health Service.

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### **Biographies of kinship: the importance of the personal within the labour movement**

#### **Helen Blakely, Steve Davies**

Marshall's classic study of Labor in the South of the US, discusses the success of a strike by garment workers in the late thirties in Tennessee, affording significance to the fact the striking women workers obtained support from large numbers of members of the United



Mine Workers Union in the area. He noted that: “the workers in the garment plants were mostly women from the miners’ families” (Marshall, 1967:177). This points to, as Godard has argued in his comprehensive assessment of the literature on union formation, the importance of not abstracting: the decision to unionise from the institutional environment within which it is made, including not just the structure of the employment relation in law, but also the broader system of laws and norms that frame this relationship... differences in these environments have possible implications for the ability to generalise across nations. (Godard 2008: 380) In this vein, our paper draws on ongoing research to explore the ways in which family life and history, personal circumstances beyond the work place, impact on trade union activity. Arguing that geographical variations in collective understandings of the labour movement can be illuminated by examining the role of kinship, our interest lies in the ways in which accounts of family traditions are produced by activists to demonstrate and shore up a commitment to tradition. This paper stems from ongoing research on geographical variations in collective understandings of trade unionism in the UK (see Beynon et al, 2012), which considers why people join trade unions. It demonstrated the above average strength of trade union membership in Wales compared with other parts of the United Kingdom, with a significant rate of unionisation among women (Beynon et al 2012). This work confirmed the argument proposed by previous analyses that compositional effects are not sufficient to explain the extent of the variation, and contended that the geographical manifestations of social, cultural and political factors needs to be included in an explanation. Here, the industrial heritage of Wales is seen as an important factor as it relates to historically received collective understandings of trade union activism. This paper builds on this foundation with forty biographical interviews with people active within the trade union movement in South Wales. When positioning their current commitment to trade unions the people we met and spoke with often refer to their families, acknowledging their ancestral loyalties and inherited beliefs. Drawing on this work we propose that an exploration of the ways in which biographical trajectories cohere spatially and impact upon forms of social organisation could be helpfully developed in relation to trade union organisation.

## **Session: Work and urban vulnerability**

### **Double Precarity in the Face of Urban Transformation: Intersections of Employment and Housing Insecurities Among Doorkeepers in Istanbul**

**Ladin Bayurgil**



Doorkeepers, members of the probably most stigmatized occupational group in Turkey, are internal migrants and minimum-wage workers, yet unlike other members of the service employees, they live rent-free in the basement of buildings in upper middle income neighborhoods of Istanbul in return of their minimum-wage paying job serving as building superintendents. Doorkeepers provide security, cleaning and daily delivery services to their upper middle-income neighbors, with whom they share the same roof, building and neighborhood, and who are also their employers. With a new trend of urban transformation in Istanbul's upper-middle income neighborhoods that leads to replacement of doorkeepers' uncontracted precarious labor with privatized outsourced services, doorkeepers experience simultaneous job loss and involuntary displacement. Since doorkeepers' residence is attached to their labor, as a result of the urban transformation, doorkeepers shift to more precarious job lines and are displaced to the peripheries to the city. While doorkeepers seek work in construction, security guarding, taxi driving or food delivery, they can no longer afford to live in upper middle-income neighborhoods they used to live in rent-free, and thus the majority move out to the peripheries of the city, or back to their villages in rural Turkey. Thus, urban workers' shift to more precarious job lines illustrates multiple precarities cutting across different occupational sectors and the housing market in the city. Through an ethnographic examination of this invisible and puzzling occupational group, this research studies everyday experiences of double precarity in urban settings, i.e. intersecting labor market and housing market precarities. Although precarious employment and housing conditions are analyzed independently in work & occupations and urban literatures, rarely the relationship between two forms of precarities is studied. This research suggests that precarity should be studied more than a position in the labor market and hence it links precarious workers' everyday experiences to larger processes of precariousness in urban settings, as substandard housing conditions and housing insecurity are eminent problems in cities today due to increasing costs of housing, and number of foreclosures and evictions. This research argues that studying experiences of double precarity allows us to examine politics of non-production in a post-Fordist organization of labor, in which precarity is no longer an exception, but the contemporary regime in urban settings.

## **The precarious work of the Uber drivers: the vulnerabilities of the working class in Brazil and the need for a protection policy**

**Murilo Martins, Victor Hugo de Almeida**

The advent of the sharing economy enabled the emergence of new forms of work organization, in the context of the information society. The innovation provided by the Uber company in the field of urban mobility, it's one of the most famous examples of this phenomenon. Uber introduced a new logistic to a sector previously occupied by taxi drivers, modernizing it, and creating in the process a new working class, known as app-



based drivers. The labor relationship between drivers and Uber presents a high level of precariousness. While the Uber company considers itself a technology company, only an intermediary of services between drivers (or partners, as the company designates them) and passengers, stating that it does not employ any driver, these workers are left without legal protection, even though the work relationship presents indications of the existence of an employment relationship, by the Brazilian labor legislation. In this working relationship, the risks of the activity lay with the workers, favoring the exploitation of their labor force by the Uber company, in a clearly precarious and asymmetrical relationship. Therefore, as these workers have no legal protection, they do not have access to basic labor rights, such as minimum wage, paid overtime and limitation of their working hours. For these reasons, the objective of the ongoing study, which has the support of São Paulo Research Foundation - Grant #2017 / 04850-0, is to analyze the needs and vulnerabilities to which these workers are exposed, through a qualitative approach, using as methods of procedure, the bibliographical research and interviews with app-based drivers of the City of São Paulo. The aim is to point the most problematic points in this form of work, that needs to be addressed by regulatory policies that grant protection to the app-based drivers in Brazil, in attention to the fundamental rights of work and human dignity, as stated in the Brazilian Constitution of 1988. In the interviews performed so far, the most significant vulnerability found was the absence of a working hours control, that limits the maximum daily working hours of the Uber drivers. This could lead to risks to these workers health and to passengers' safety, since there are drivers working excessive daily hours, resulting in the consolidation of the precarious work scenario.

## **The frontline of street vending regulation in Belo Horizonte**

### **Tarcísio Perdigão Araújo Filho**

This paper aims to discuss how the control of practices in public spaces is elaborated in Belo Horizonte (state of Minas Gerais, Brazil), which is part of the urban surveillance. It is about a social control system which focuses on the regulation of street vendors activities, considered as one of the main "social problems" in a context of "urban order" promotion. This urban space govern system counts on outsourced low-wage employees - so called "assistants" (*auxiliares de fiscalização*) or "field agents" (*agentes de campo*) -



who work daily on city streets in direct contact with the street vendors (interacting with other people, like other professional groups) in different fronts of street vending regulation process. They are typical street-level bureaucrats doing the organization's "dirty work". This model of governing counts on the masculine disposition of these workers in the front to participate on the conflicts. There are two main complementary activities: the *plantões* (teams assigned for street monitoring) and the *Apoio* (teams assigned for the seizure of illegal items). In both categories, workers face situations of violent conflict and constant pressure. In general, the labor practices of these assistants anticipate the participation of their bosses: the city hall officers (*fiscais integrados*) and other authorities, reducing as an effect their workload in field. However, at the same time, these assistants actively participate of the situational production of references of differentiation (between formal /informal, bearable/unbearable) and social control as a whole. The research effort was to come up, in an interrelated manner, the various aspects that make up the street surveillance as a social construction. The research effort was to come up, in an interrelated manner, the various aspects that make up the street surveillance as a social construction. Therefore, I analyzed the strategic and managerial aspects enrolled in practical work of these agents in different working arrangements and environments, giving a focus on how the regulation is produced in a negotiated manner, although it is constantly rationalized as a tool for public space management. The research prioritized the data collection "from inside", from an relational and ethnographic point of view. Qualitative research techniques (interviews and observation) were operated in order to keep the subjects working practices as the main reference for descriptions and analyzes. By placing the focus on the continuities and discontinuities between the private life aspects and the work aspects, the analysis was enlarged from the reconstruction of trajectories of some of the research subjects, the assistants. Through this perspective, it was possible to work out with some different social aspects (such as class and gender) in order to observe, from the point of view of the assistants, and describe the labor practices that reveal the main basis and senses of this social and relational control. All this conjugated analysis dimensions demonstrate how this particular control is produced. The research was developed between 2013 and 2016, under the scope of the master's degree.

## **Session: The shaping of class boundaries**

**Labour precarization and class boundaries in physicians of General Medicine, under the pacemaker of Evidence-Based Medicine**

**Agostina Loreley Gieco**

The 36th International  
Labour Process Conference

## CLASS AND THE LABOUR PROCESS



There is a scattered literature about some aspects of the pauperization process of physicians (based on livelihoods and income as delimitation of fractions and class segments) and about precarization process of these professionals (related to material conditions of the work process such as: work environment, alienation, conditions of employment contract: pension system, provisional security, unstable and temporary forms of hiring, seniority and elements that establish a minimum remunerative amount, absences, substitutions and internship, conditions of designation, etc.). But in these theoretical contributions, the description of these dynamics and their movements (all of them of a quantitative nature) are not related to the processes of proletarianization (of a qualitative nature). The discussion about the definition of class boundaries and social position, and the processes of work's transformation forces us to take up the Braverman-Derber debate. According to them, salaried professionals lose power, but there isn't conclusive evidence to support the thesis of disqualification or taylorization, typical of the processes of proletarianization of industrial workers of the nineteenth century supported by Braverman and other Marxist theorists. That is why Derber postulates ideological proletarianization as a loss of control over the ends and uses of work, differentiating it from the technical proletarianization that supposes the loss of control over knowledge and technical decisions concerning work.

The professionals maintain their *craft skills* and their relative autonomy at work. However, the development of the trend of Evidence-Based Medicine that involves the construction of knowledge and application of medical practice through systematized guidelines for intervention (according to the standardized Clinical Epidemiology framework) forces to rethink the limits between these definitions, and their scope. All this in a process of increasing commercialization and the loss of social conquests linked to public health, which gradually submits services (not without contradictions) to an increasingly commercial logic, overlapping after the pretended public policies of primary health, thought from the international health organisms issued by international credit organizations.

In this context, it is worth asking: How is the control of the work process in its dimension of ideological and/or technical proletarianization? Do job precarization and the strategy of Evidence-Based Medicine constitute a process that benefits management, increases professional individualism and ideological proletarianization? All this embodied in a *specialization* like General Medicine, deepens the difference between these professionals and other workers in relation to ideological and technical proletarianization? How does Evidence-Based Medicine express tendencies to bureaucratization, and in what sense does it do so? Resorting to efficiency, or as a *pivot* for capitalist production?



### **Managing Portfolio Lives: Flexibility and Privilege Amongst Upscale Restaurant Workers in Los Angeles**

**Eli Wilson**

Precarious labor conditions would appear to make many frontline service jobs in the United States undesirable to most American workers. Yet these jobs might complement, rather than infringe upon, the broader lifestyles of those who choose to engage in them. Drawing on three years of ethnographic research with front of the house restaurant workers in Los Angeles, I show how young, middle-class workers navigate "portfolio lives"- flexible arrangements of labor and leisure that blur the boundaries between professional employment and recreational experiences within service and retail establishments. I show how these workers leverage both personal resources and workplace structures available to them to weave restaurant jobs within their larger web of activities. I discuss how these findings extend theories of portfolio careers and boundary-less employment to the urban U.S. service economy.

### **The proletarianisation of front line service management: an ethnography of retail managers**

**Martin James**

In a classic paper written within the labour process theory tradition (LPT), Armstrong (1983) asked whether a group of front-line managers (FLMs), factory supervisors, were members of the bourgeoisie or the proletariat. He argued that, despite some similarity of condition with workers, supervisors essentially carried out the functions of capital through the extraction of surplus value. The purpose of my research was to apply the same question to a very different role set and work domain: graduate managers in an "empowered" front-line service work setting. A further innovation was the explicit deployment of a critical realist analytical framework given its emphasis upon anteriority and deployment of a stratified ontology. These concepts complement the LPT analytical toolkit mobilised by Armstrong, whilst circumventing limitations imposed by 'flat' ontology approaches.

Whilst my case study utilises Armstrong's core methods of triangulated observations and interviews, it went a step further in terms of incorporating historical data about the organisation and industry. The research was also longitudinal by design, completed over three years by a researcher acting as participant observer. Such exposure proved instructive, in that it provided a unique opportunity to illustrate how past *and* present



forces and factors intersected to shape social relations at the point of production/consumption.

In actuality these graduate FLMs were highly constrained actors, preoccupied with operational mandates and control over the labour process. They were held responsible for the extraction of surplus value, even though their typical day was dominated by direct contributions to the production process. The power of senior management and its exercise of that power was key to making FLMs an essentially unauthoritative class of actors – albeit, one with significant bases of resistance relating to the social dynamics of “quality” service provision. Additional findings were that ‘management’ and ‘grad scheme’ labels as well as extra-ordinary perks relating to the product itself, served to obfuscate the proletarianized character of work. The contribution is to show how contradictions between resources and responsibilities rendered FLMs compromised actors. It also calls into question the legitimacy of portraying them as members of the managerial class.

## **Session: Intersections between formal and informal labour**

### **The production of shoes in Bogota, Colombia: Precarious lives, subjectivity and informality**

**Hernan Camilo Pulido Martinez, Alba Luz Giraldo Tamayo**

From the 50s onwards, the production of shoes in Bogota, Colombia has been strongly linked to diverse types of productive units. There are individual artisans, family units, small and medium companies that “feed” many production chains. These chains also comprise few national and multinational companies that distribute and export the manufactures produced. The formal and informal sectors are mixed along the production chains in a way that one supports the other. At the same time, the artisan and industrial ways of organizing work facilitate the flexible working conditions and very changeable organizations. Affective relationships dominate the administration of the work force, instead of impersonal bureaucratic structures. In this scenery, based on a multi-sited ethnographic study conducted in 7 production units, this paper examines different ways in which the constitution of workers as subjects take place in a network of emotional relationships. It is described how the international and national prescriptions about work are appropriated in the chain of production to compose different kinds of workers and very different forms of precarious lives. At the same time, it is consider how the formal and informal ways of organizing work open spaces to subjectivities and precarious ways of living that are not related to the typical individual or a collective subject, but a mixture



between the extremely discipline industrial worker and the post-employment entrepreneurial self that have to behave as free subject.

## **Workers and Households Facing Precariousness and Informality in the Argentinean Car Industry**

**Johanna Sittel, Stefan Schmalz, Natalia Berti, Luciana Buffalo**

After the Argentinean national car industry was dismantled during the military dictatorship (1976-1983) in times of the neoliberal Menem government (1989-1999) the sector was integrated into transnational production networks. Nowadays, some transnational companies (Volkswagen, Renault, Fiat, etc.) are dominating this industry, with high external dependency producing for both the Argentinian and the global market (Brazil, Europe, etc.). This restructuring has also affected labour relations. In highly flexibilised transnational production networks, OEMs and the supplier industry are using different forms of labour, with precarious and informal labour playing a crucial role, increasingly along the supplier structure. In our empirical study, we analyse these labour relations in the Argentinean car sector: Whereas in the OEMs and some first-tier suppliers apart from precarious jobs characterised by fix-termed contracts or agency work etc. there is a small core of rather secure and well paid jobs, in the second and third tier-suppliers precariousness, informality, underpay and low safety standards are omnipresent. We examine how (global) economic crises and (neoliberal) economic and social policy are impacting workers' life, thus, leading to recurrent waves of dismissals and informal practices. Drawing on biographical interviews, we observe a permanent instability which affects worker's employment biography and household's income by causing discontinuity. But the flexible and unstable structure is creating different subjective perceptions and survival strategies: While some workers subjectively feel precarious and suffer from stable insecurity and structural precariousness, others have arranged themselves with the permanent crisis situation and developed (household) strategies such as additional informal self-employed work in order to cope with economic uncertainties.

During an adequate conference session, we would like to present and discuss the phenomena and mechanisms mentioned above on the basis of empirical examples. Our data relies on extensive empirical fieldwork in Córdoba, Rosario and Buenos Aires, Argentina, between 2010 and 2016. The Argentinean-German research team conducted 106 interviews with workers, managers, trade unionists and experts in the framework of the joint project FlexTrans (Flexibility in Transnational Value Chains – Precariousness, Work and Territory in Germany and Argentina) and a Ph.D. dissertation on informal work in the Argentinean car industry. The research was funded by the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD).



## **Formal Business, Informal Work: Real Estate and the Labour Process in the Residential Real Estate Construction Industry in Mumbai, India**

**Rohan Dominic Mathews**

The construction industry, or rather the construction process is unique in that it deals with a production process which constantly moves. The finished product, whether a building or a road or a bridge or any other form of what is known as the 'built environment', goes through a specific production process employing labour supervised by experts such as engineers and architects. However, the labour process involved in constructing something includes a series of activities that can be broken down and divided into specific tasks. This means like many production processes; the final product is constituted by different constituent parts employing different kinds of labour. Whether it is the stage of building the foundation, or moving from the plinth level to the slab level, the roofing, the electrical works, woodwork and other similar activities. These activities entail a specific form of labour required, but, also the category of the helper, who forms the basic minimum of what a construction worker is, at least, in the case of India, and in the case of this paper, Mumbai. Now, this divisible work process uses all forms of informal work practices, wherein a lot of workers are not recognised by any state authorities, and are directly under the control of a labour contractor, who himself uses various subcontractors at different points for different tasks in the process of building. This extensive network of contracting and sub-contracting is the world within which the worker in construction is embroiled and its stability ensures a wage to reproduce him or herself. However, at the same time, the very space within which construction work takes place is owned and controlled by the builder-capitalist who is investing capital to produce a commodity to be sold in the real estate market. The real estate market, unlike the world of work, is a formal and recognised sector, which includes a plethora of intermediaries such as property dealers, real estate consultancies, marketing agencies, banks as well as the eventual customers who purchase these properties. The state, both in its role of the planner and regulator, as well as the 'welfare granting' benefactor is at the centre of this whole maze. The paper, using current fieldwork on the residential real estate sector in Mumbai, seeks to understand how is the labour process in construction integrated into the business process or in other words, how does the process of accumulation within real estate hinge on contracting and sub-contracting at different points of time. It seeks to raise the following questions to understand the location of labour and the labour process in the world of real estate: In what ways do workers in their daily involvement in the labour process affect the process of building? How do delays (time) in building affect the processes of accumulation and business profits? In what ways does the state, as a regulator of the urban expansion and planning, seek to regulate lives of the worker, while



at the same time assuming the role of 'supreme' regulator of all built environment in the city? Finally, what changes in practices can be seen with new regulations and a tendency to shift towards a regime that is more conducive to global investment flows?

## **Session: Flexibility and Digitalisation in different sectors**

### **Digitalizing Agile: Ambivalences in governing new forms of work**

**Manuel Nicklich, Stefan Sauer**

In the context of the “changing contours of work” (Sweet & Meiksins, 2017) within a “project society” (Lundin et al. 2015), the digital transformation and the rapid development of new technologies with its effects on work and employment belong to the central topics regarding the future of western societies (Brynjolfsson & McAfee, 2011, 2014; Evangelista et al., 2014; Frey & Osborne, 2013). Moreover, new organizational principles and techniques to organize and manage work such as the implementation of agile methods (Sauer, 2017) are a vital issue these days. In a positive interpretation of these aspects both are seen as promising, regarding both the self-management of work and its emancipative potential (Grantham, 2000). While the digital transformation potentially provides broad access to information for workers and a re-evaluation of work and distributed agency (Böhle & Huchler, 2016), agile work enables employees to make their own decisions in terms of work organizations and pace (Mann & Maurer, 2005). Thus, proponents argue that agile practices within an organization place “more emphasis on people factors in the project: amicability, talent, skill, and communication” (Cockburn & Highsmith, 2001: 131).

Usually, scholars analyze these aspects separated from each other (digital transformation much more frequently than agile practices). However, the interplay of these trends on a workplace level seems to be unexamined so far. This is surprising since the question of interconnectedness between technical and organizational change has been discussed for quite a while (Marglin, 1974; Pfeiffer & Suphan, 2015). Notwithstanding the issue of which of them determines the other, an interplay between these aspects can be observed. With reference to Max Weber, Edgell therefore highlights the historical change of organizing – and governing – work in the course of technical development. From pre-bureaucratic forms to the bureaucratic rational way, to post-bureaucratic forms, the governance of work develops towards a more democratic consensual deployment of authority (Edgell, 2012: 22). Within the post-bureaucratic organization – often initially made possible by digital tools (Grantham, 2000) – “authority is decentralized and democratized in a



flattened hierarchy characterized by a culture of empowerment and consensual dialogue” (Edgell, 2012: 22; see also Malone, 2004).

Taking these considerations into account, we want to examine the following research question: How does the interplay of digital transformation and agile practices affect the governance of work? Based on two explorative case studies of a software developing company with 35 qualitative interviews with employees working in agile teams, we try to capture the interconnectedness of digital tools and agile practices and its consequences on the workplace level.

Preliminary results show that digital tools have a rather ambivalent character in the context of agile work. For example, technology-driven transparency within work organization can be used control-orientated or empowerment-orientated. On the one hand these tools support the employees in their self-management of work, thereby strengthening their autonomy, but on the other hand they can also contribute to the establishment of a control-orientated transparency within agile work organization.

## **The social regulation of audiovisual work in Argentina. Trade union strategies in highly flexible production contexts.**

**María Bulloni, Gabriela Pontoni**

This paper analyzes some questions related to the organization of production and work regulation in three Argentinian important segments of audiovisual production: television, film and film advertising production. These are sectors with growing economic importance, historically penetrated by productive fragmentation strategies. More recently these strategies acquire a transnational character as a result of orientation towards international markets. With diverse degrees and hues, these strategies have contributed to the generalization of work instability and, consequently, to the flexibilization of some important aspects of work. This trend has been partially countered as a result of trade union action and the sign change that took the Argentinean labor policy between 2003 and 2015.

In this regard, it is observed in those years a shift in the institutional political framework of labor relations. In the 1990s, this framework was highly deregulating. Besides, in general terms -although with marked differences- the unions regained prominence, both at the institutional field and at the workplace. Those processes contributed decisively to the recovery of working conditions of an important part of the work force. In the audiovisual industry we have certainly observed some of these tendencies of union resurgence and



improvement of working conditions. These tendencies are articulated with other logics of highly flexible labor regulation derived from the organization of work.

In this paper, we study the externalization and labor politics which led to the current flexible forms of organization. After that, our proposal try to examine the conditions and labor regulations set up in each of these sectors, in a period that combined -with degrees and diverse nuances- economic growth and recovery of labor achievements. About the last dimension, our analysis focus on collective bargaining processes as a crystallization of power balance, articulated on industrial labor field, during this period. Trough this analysis, we try to understand the collective bargaining processes and contents by a comparative study between economics sectors. This strategy allows us to observe the progress and setbacks about labor regulations development on flexible productive contexts as those studied in this paper.

### **Working the gig economy: The use (or not) of digital platforms in photography**

**Paula McDonald, Robyn Mayes, Penny Williams**

An increasing number of workers around the world are thought to be deriving at least part of their income from work accessed through online digital platforms. Platforms operate on different scales but in general, they all connect individual workers, through intermediaries, with end-users who seek specific services. A growing body of grey and peer-reviewed literature has speculated about work trends in the gig economy and there is some emerging evidence of the motivations of digital workers to participate, and the costs and benefits of doing so (e.g., Graham, Hjorth & Lehdonvirta 2017). In contrast, there is very scant evidence of the extent to which, or how workers, operating within a particular occupational and/or industry environment, are being impacted by the gig economy.

Drawing on in-depth interviews with 46 photographers, this paper begins to redress this evidence gap through an exploration of the extent, nature and impact of platforms in the photography industry in Australia. Photographers are a specific, yet ideally placed group of workers to reveal how the contours of the gig economy are impacting work and workers. This is for three reasons. First, digitalplatforms such as Snappr, OneFlare and Imagebrief have proliferated in the industry, offering potential avenues of income generation, such as uploading images for royalty-free sale; responding to photo shoot briefs; and accessing booking services. Second, the photography industry is highly fragmented, even in the broader context of the 'creative sector'. It consists primarily of self-employed or freelance photographers operating micro-businesses, who often supplement their income with another job (IBISWorld 2017). Freelancers are often touted as the ideal new employee in



the gig economy (Kuhn 2016). Third, examining employment trends across an occupational field, rather than targeting a specific group of digital workers, allows for an examination of the motivations and experiences of those who engage with platforms, and also those who do not.

The study reports some unexpected findings. Although photographers have adapted in a range of innovative ways to social and cultural shifts resulting from technological advances, many actively resist platform work, citing either, or both, pragmatic and ideological reasons for doing so. In an effort to protect their professional identity, creative community and livelihood, photographers minimise or avoid participating in the plethora of digital platforms available. Contrary to extant literature on the benefits digital platforms offer gig workers (e.g., Minifie 2016), platforms are considered by photographers to undermine professionalism, limit creativity, and provide inflexible and inconsistent access to work. The experiences of photographers complicate our understanding of the motivations of gig economy workers and the benefits that digital platforms are thought to offer the self-employed and freelance (creative) worker.

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## Stream 1



## The changing time and space of productive and reproductive processes: implications for worker organization North and South

### Session 1

#### Bringing Labor Rights Home: Contradictions and Challenges in Regulating the Domestic Sphere

Katherine Maich, Center for Global Workers' Rights, Pennsylvania University

Domestic workers' struggles for labor rights—both historically and currently—draw attention to the private sphere of the home as an unregulated site of gendered and racialized labor that has often been overlooked across historical moments and economic configurations. The privacy of the home often masks the social relations of intimacy, power, love, and exploitation that take place inside of it, where domestic work remains socially necessary work within the global economy.

Through a global North/South comparison set in New York City and Lima, Peru, two large urban centers of migration with recent legislation for domestic workers, I focus on the home and show that in order to consider the home as a site of work, we must also understand it as a site of law. I ask, given the place of the home as constitutive of the private sphere, how do we regulate it as a workplace? How do we bring legislated labor protections into the home? And, once there, how do they shape the lives of the very domestic workers they were designed to protect?

Drawing from 10 months of ethnography in Lima and 8 months in New York City, 120 in-depth interviews, legislative transcripts, and demographic survey data, I show how progressive labor laws for domestic workers are stifled by historically-entrenched patterns of racialization and labor informality. I find that the Peruvian law extends to household workers only half of the labor protections afforded to other occupations, codifying preexisting inequalities and shaping a labor regime of *colonial domesticity* around body, space, and time inside Lima's contemporary homes. In New York City, the law grants negligible protections and deliberately eschews language around immigration, thus establishing a labor regime of *immigrant domesticity* instead of improving working conditions. These implications hold importance for our understanding of regulating informality in relationship to (new) sites of re/production.

**Paid domestic work: time, space and mutual intersubjectivity**

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**Karina Boggio, Lorena Funcasta, María Cantabrana, Virginia de León, Facultad de Psicología – Udelar, Uruguay**

The present paper explores and analyses mutuality in paid domestic work relationships. Since last century feminist activists and theorists contested the disposition to consider paid domestic work from work theoretical frameworks. Private and public domains, productive and reproductive processes needed to be discussed from a historical and present point of view, as Silvia Federici has done. Other authors made very important contributions like Arlie Hochschild, to consider some obvious but not visible aspects involved. The arguments introduced in *Time Bind*, the idea of the *second shift*, the *externalization* of domestic work, where very provocative and substantive contribution to research and debate. Paid domestic labor takes place within domestic space and time is connected to family life. Time and space of intimacy and mutual practices indicate the particular processes involved. This is crucial when caring is the main activity. It is also critical for live in domestic workers, who are mostly migrant women. Intersectional approach contributed to make visible the multiple dimensions that interact simultaneously in their experience: gender, class, ethnicity, and how they reinforce each other. During 2016 the Group Human mobilities, work and human rights developed a university extension project with Uruguayan domestic workers union: *Derechos y afectividad en el trabajo domestico asalariado*. One of the commitments in this project was to design a research project concerning *working and employment conditions, and health of domestic workers in Uruguay*. The research project (2017-2018) *Relaciones entre condiciones de trabajo, bienestar y trayectorias vitals en el servicio domestic en Uruguay* obtained the financial support of the Research and Development Programme (I+D) from the main scientific agency related to public University: Comisión Sectorial de Investigación Científica (CSIC, Udelar). It is being conducted from a combined methodological approach that includes qualitative and quantitative studies. The qualitative study has a biographical and narrative research approach. It is based on life histories of domestic workers in Uruguay. This paper is based on qualitative empirical data from this Research and Development Project, leaded by the authors, Principal investigator and members of the Research Group: Human mobilities, work and human rights, Faculty of Psychology, Universidad de la República (Udelar), Uruguay.

**Social policies and care work in Brazil: dynamics of politization and depoliticization in the global South**

**Isabel Georges, IRD, France**

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This paper aims to address the role of public policies on the organization of female care workers in the Global South, and more generally, on the dynamics of politicization/depoliticization. More precisely, based on empirical research about public health and social assistance policies in Brazil (São Paulo), realized by ethnographic incursions in the field and biographical interviews (about 100) with professionals along the *care* chains and “beneficiaries” of the public health system, but also of public assistance policies and Conditional Cash Transfer Programs, such as the *Bolsafamília*, from 2008 to 2013, we focus on the way these policies re-articulate on the one hand the general social and sexual (and racial) division of work, and on the other, how these policies instrumentalize the work of poor (ethnic) women in between the sphere of production and of reproduction (Georges, Santos, 2016). In the last part of the paper, we will try to show how public policies during the so-called “*lulist*” (Singer, Loureiro, 2016) period (2003 to 2016) lead by the integration of the social demand – such as the inscription of basic social rights in the new Constitution of 1988 and the creation public services such as family health care – to forms of institutionalisation of this demand and forms of depoliticization (Lautier, 2009; Destremau, Georges, 2017). Latin America has been considered for long, at least since the eighties, and in particular since the 1990, as a laboratory of a new generation of social policies, combining social protection and reduction of poverty (Lautier, 2012). In Brazil, born initially in the context of the “democratic opening” or a “comeback” of democracy, after the military dictatorship (1964-1985), and in the context of the new Constitution (1988), as a result of the demand for basic public services (health, education, social assistance) as well as, during the nineties, of the intervention of international institutions, such as the International Monetary Fund or the World Bank, on the economic politics of this country, these policies have been ambiguous. Indeed, if these institutions promoted the generalization of social policies such as Conditional Cash Transfer Programs - too apparent poverty having become incompatible with the image of democracy – they also constrained countries like Brazil to implement a reduction of “social costs” and “neoliberal” economic politics to reduce the external debt. However, if these ambiguities have led to what has been called the “*confluênciaperversa*” (Dagnino, 2006), these intrinsic contradictions, which led to a minimalistic implementation of these policies, have also contributed to discredit the compromise of governability, which characterized several Latin-American countries during this period, and indirectly to the Brazilian parliamentary blow of 2016. In this perspective, the example of the elementary recognition of the community work of female health workers, the creation of the Family Health Program and other social policies, and the subsequent use of this female workforce to implement a moral government of the private sphere of the poor is paradigmatic for the (perverse) alliance of extractive, neoliberal economic politics and State *care*, depoliticizing the poor.



## session 2

### **Contesting the Nature of Community Organisations: Hopes and Challenges for the Collective Mobilisation of Migrant Workers**

**Joyce Jiang, York University Marek Korczynski, Nottingham University**

This paper analyses the role of community organisations in the potential collective mobilisation of migrant workers. We argue that it is important to understand key differences among community organisations. To this end, we put forward an original two-by-two typology of community organisations (figure 1). We then present ethnographic case evidence of two community organisations which occupy different quadrants of this typology. The cases are Midwest European Communities Association in Somerset and Justice for Domestic Workers in London. We chart the key differing opportunities and challenges for the collective mobilisation of migrant workers in each case. We argue that the potential contribution of community organisations to collective mobilisation of migrant workers is likely to be stronger where community organisations are rooted in internal relationships and have a focus upon the status of their members as workers. Conversely, it is likely to be weaker where community organisations focus upon external legitimacy and have only a weak focus upon the status of their members as workers.

### **Development, Industrial Transformation and Internal Circular Migration of Labour in China. The Transforming of Migrant Workers and Working-Class Consciousness in China**

**Shuwan Zhang, Soas**

It is generally agreed that migrant workers have made a significant contribution to China's fast economic growth. Also, decades of rural-urban migration has greatly influenced the socio-economic transformation since 1978. One of the key institutional factors of the formation of so-called 'rural migrant workers' is *hukou* (household registration system) which divided residents into two categories entitled with clear distinguishing rights and welfare. The rural to urban migration has not significantly narrowed the urban-rural gap down, but somehow has strengthened the barriers between urban and rural areas and the barriers between urban residents and rural residents in the urban labour markets. The *hukou* system is de facto internal passport system that creates borders and boundaries for rural migrant workers to enter into formal and decent labour markets. The boarder forcefully shapes the formation of migrant working class and their working-class consciousness in urban areas.

During the past decades, the main direction of internal migration in China, especially in the aspects of employment, is from rural areas to urban areas, from agricultural



department to a manufacturing industry or tertiary industry. However, after decades of high-speed economic development, China now is standing at a turning point. As Chinese government states, China has entered a moderate-speed economic growth period, facing complex challenges. Therefore, industrial restructuring comes to the top priority. In addition, Chinese government encourages to cultivate and develop new economic growth points. Therefore, recently there is a new tendency that increasing number of migrant workers returning to their hometown or cities/towns nearby their hometowns. There are some possible factors driven migrant workers back to their hometowns. The global economic recession depressed the export-driven economy and brought huge pressures on China's industrial re-structure and relocation. It leads to the precipitation of large numbers of manufacturing industry workers. These workers either enter into fast-growing tertiary industry, or go back to factories near their hometown, or return to the agricultural department in new forms. Especially in recent years, the raising of 'entrepreneurial social atmosphere' spills over to rural areas in China. The study of 'entrepreneurs of return migrant workers' comes to the fore in the academic field. The real employment status of return migrant workers and the influences of return migration on labour markets are submerged by the tide of entrepreneurship.

Additionally, although 'the return of migrant workers' and 'entrepreneurs of return migrant workers' are hyped in media. In reality, the internal circular migration is more accurate to describe the living status of these migrant workers than returning migrant workers. Because the socio-economic development in their hometowns does not create enough good opportunities for these migrant workers. They move back-and-forth to find best options for themselves and their families. The spatial switching faced by circular migrant workers does not only mean the shifting of living and working location but also mean the transforming of production and reproduction process. During such process, they need to make great efforts to different atmospheres (rural society, pre-industrial society, industrialized society and post-industrial society, etc.), which in turn shapes the formation of their consciousness.

Therefore, this article will focus on the employment status of return migrant workers. And it will try to discuss the consequences of such return migration on social structure and labour market. More importantly, this article will try to answer several questions: What impacts of such internal circular migration have on the formation of migrant working class and the shaping of working-class consciousness? What is the strategy of migrant workers returning from urban areas to adapt new living and working environment?



## **EU freedom of movement as an exercise of labour mobility power: the case of Central Eastern European workers in the UK labour market**

Zinovijus Ciupijus, Leeds University

The significance of labour mobility power to the understanding of labour process was highlighted by Smith (2006): in the capitalist free market system, labour mobility allows workers to improve their labour market position and secure higher pay by changing jobs both in internal and external labour markets. Smith (2010) suggested that international labour migration is one of the manifestations of labour mobility power: workers from lower-income countries had been moving to high income countries in order to improve their personal and family levels of living. Central Eastern European (CEE) migration to the UK can be classified as an example of the transnational relocation based on mobile deployment of labour power: CEE workers would move to the UK because it would allow them to earn three or four times more than in the new EU member state from the former communist bloc (MacKenzie and Forde, 2009). Moreover, this form of labour power mobility has been taking place within the framework of EU freedom of movement: under this system, EU citizenship gave migrant workers greater flexibility in moving between jobs and using labour mobility in a strategic way (Alberti, 2012). In contrast to other regulatory frameworks, migrant workers could bypass the need to secure state-sanctioned or employer sponsored work permits: CEE and other EU migrants could enter, leave or come back to the UK labour market without UK employer sponsorship or special permits issued by the state. This paper draws on biographical interviews conducted with CEE migrants (15 Poles, 1 Latvian and 1 Slovak citizen) and uses the concept of labour mobility power in exploring post-enlargement and pre-Brexit CEE migration to the UK. Following Andrijasevic and Sacchetto (2016), the paper avoids treating intra-EU migration as a linear movement and as a single workplace experience. Instead it analyses the totality of the labour migration process by exploring how migrants use labour power from the point of departure of the country of origin, in the process of transnational relocation and the movement in the UK labour market itself. It reveals that migrants' mobility labour power is mediated by the reliance on family/kinship networks and functions within broader family dynamics (the quest for family re-union, the negotiations between partners, etc). EU freedom of movement enabled CEE workers to achieve higher levels of pay when compared to the sending countries and turns kinship networks into a principle resource of labour mobility. EU citizenship also enabled some of interviewed migrant workers to change jobs in the UK and seek superior labour market outcomes. The post-migration type of labour mobility took different forms depending on the level of education, previous work experience, gendered family dynamics and personal preferences. The paper ends with the tentative analysis of the implications of Brexit for CEE and other EU workers living in the UK: the extent to which the curtailment of EU freedom of movement by UK

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government would impact different groups of EU migrants and their mobility power is questioned and discussed.

**session 3**



### **Taking Time / Transaction Care in Nursing Homes**

**Tamara Daly and Donna Baines, York University, Canada**

Precarious employment has been shown to undermine but not prevent resistance (Lewchuck and Dassinger, 2016). How resistance is gendered and racialized is also important (Baines, 2016). For instance, with respect to care work, Baines and Daly (2015: 145) observe that female-associated forms of resistance may look significantly different from “large scale militant mobilizations often thought to be the pinnacle of resistance strategies”.

There is little doubt that the temporal dimension of care work is important, but it has received less concentrated attention than its affective one. Nonetheless, several authors have contributed to our understanding. Twigg (2006) notes that bodies are unpredictable in their demands, and thus perfect scheduling of this labour is quite difficult because people cannot wait to have their bodily needs addressed. Cohen (2011) argues that “co-presence” is an essential component when the object of the work is the physical manipulation of bodies, and that despite efforts to “lean” health care workforces, there are rigidities in the “ratio of workers to bodies worked-upon” that limit the ability of administrators or governments to cut labour or substitute technology for labour (e.g. adult diapers). Likewise, Davies (1994) argues that caring for people is not linear, continuous nor truly measurable; caring for someone requires a carer to be present when things need to be done, not when time allows. Care work, Davies argues, involves a tension between two types of time: process time and clock time. Process time is the discontinuous tempo of caring that occurs when care cannot be easily cordoned off into a compartmentalized task -- often signified by doing two things at once. Clock time refers to the commodified time associated with New Public management and lean workplaces, what Valerie Bryson (2007) refers to as the politics of time.

Linking the macro level to front-line care is important for understanding resistance. Taking time, for example, may be a form of resistance to uncaring systems; workplace subsidization may occur in leaned out environments characterized by too little staff (Baines 2006). In order to complete care work in the time allotted, Lopez (2007) argues that we must focus not only on how workers resist in forms that include “inventing new skills”, breaking “official rules” and enacting “deviant routines”, but also “outside of the labour process to understand the external pressures that impinge upon it” (2007, p. 228). How regulations structure time use at the front-lines in nursing homes differs across different international jurisdictions (Daly, Struthers et. al 2016), signifying the importance of politics.



In this paper, we raise the question of how nursing home care workers resist the politics of time. We draw on the findings of two ethnographic studies of nursing homes, one international (26 sites and 530 interviews) and one regional (7 sites and 203 interviews) to explore examples of the nuances involved in gendered resistance found in care work. We explore the uneasy tensions that arise from a transaction-based care imagined and articulated within regulatory approaches that espouse New Public Management.

## **Managing differences in segmented labour markets: Emerging spaces of work and their social relationships, an inquiry into logistics in France and Italy**

**Carlotta Benvegnù, Università degli Studi di Padova**

The process of internationalization of production - and thus the needs for supply chain integration – has produced a strong growth of logistics sector. Therefore, highly integrated logistics processes driven by “just-in-time production and distribution” contrast with fragmented layers of subcontracting, and the efforts to increase the faster and smoother movement of goods seem to have had a negative impact on working conditions and weakened the capacity of the unions, as many researches have underlined (Cowen, 2014; Bonacich Wilson 2008). However, during the last years the logistics sector has been the site of several struggles and strikes in many countries.

The paper, drawing on an ethnographic research inside two warehouses of the same multinational company in France (Paris) and in the North of Italy (Padua), as well as on a series of in-depth interviews with workers (30), will focus on the impact that different policies of recruitment and management of the workforce have on social and work experiences of local and migrants workers, as well as on unions strategies.

Since almost a decade, in Northern Italy migrant workers employed by a cooperative-system have organized - thanks to the support of rank-and-file unions - strikes and blockades, asking for, and often obtaining, better conditions of work, an improvement of workplace relations, the application of the collective bargaining agreement, and the right to unionize.

While in France traditional unions in the sector seem to be unable to adapt to the growing segmentation of the labour market as well as to the changes in labour identities, in Italy the process of unionisation within grassroots organisations relayed on social connections and especially on ethnic and community networks, that have been converted in an instrument for building information and solidarity between workers.



From this point of view, the Italian case - where connections between inside and outside the workplace are strong - highlight how the accumulation of power by workers unfolds “socially” and not just within the single workplace.

## **New Working Class Consciousness, Place and Precarity in China**

**Chris Smith, Royal Holloway, London, Pun Ngai, University of Hong Kong**

With the rise of a new working class in China, debates have used cohort analysis of industrial disputes to claim that the new generation of peasant-workers are now increasingly proletarianised through their class action. Concomitantly, their old ownership rights in the countryside have or are disappearing, making any return to petty-ownership status as farmers impossible. This double movement, dispossession of land rights and possession of industrial worker consciousness, has seen China change its class relations. A complication to this story is the construction of space in China, and disconnection between urbanisation and proletarianisation because of the hukou system of household registration and the one-party state seeking to monopolise control over all labour institutions. Space is contested in particular ways in China. A further complicating ingredient of this story is signified by Lee’s work (2016), which blends precarity of employment rights in the West with the idea of precarity of migrant workers in China. This suggests a class-based or structural basis to marginalisation and subordination of the new migrant working class. This paper explores the way space is politicised in China and debates around class for the new generation of migrant workers. Through an extensive literature review, we also look at the debate on precarity, which we consider confuses distinctions between status and class. Deconstructing the relationship between space, class and precarity, we offer more clarity on the language on class and place in China. Reference Lee, C.K., 2016. Precarization or Empowerment? Reflections on Recent Labor Unrest in China. *The Journal of Asian Studies*, 75(02), pp.317-333.



## Logistics workers - Labour market fragmentation and socio-cultural spaces

David gaborieau, Clément Barbier - Cécile Cuny, Paris-est university

Social sciences have a complex relationship with the working-class world, which arouses fantasies of disappearance as well as fantasies of resurgence. Though de-industrialization has not occurred, the transformations of western economies have led to displacements within this social group. These transformations created new working-class spaces, and suggest the need for a renewal of analysis frameworks. The worklog research program proposes to contribute to this renewal using an original approach at the intersection of sociology of work, sociology of lifestyles, and urban studies. Logistics is one of those areas of work that emerged from the restructuring of large groups and the globalization of trade. Although this sector accounts for a growing share of working-class employment, little is known about the universe that unfolds in warehouses, and even less about who the employees who handle the stored goods are.

We focus on retail's logistic workers that occupy an intermediate position between industry and services and represent more than 10 % of total worker's employment in france and germany. Their work consists in getting the goods into cities, which is a core function for urban lifestyle. Having identified this group, we intend to understand what it's social practices outside warehouses are. Observing their residential areas, consumption practices and leisure activities, we analyse how they create their own socio-cultural spaces and to what extend they are autonomous or open to other influences. We see connections with other social groups, including dominant social groups, as a part of identity-building processes. We want to show that logistics workers create forms of self-segregated in-groups that are both socially and spatially scattered. Our ambition is also to identify how similar social conditions and cultural circulations both generate cultural forms that make sense together across national borders and how those cultural forms can be considered as practices of resistance.

Empirical investigation is based on an ethnographic survey. Four samples with 20 employees each one (with a total of 80 employees) have been selected. They concern logistic parks and their workers in four cities (paris, orleans, frankfurt/main and kassel) for a visual and transnational ethnography in the world cities' backstage. The first original aspect of the study is to use workplaces as an empirical basis. Using this approach, we observe a limited group whose members share similar working conditions and we analyse how those conditions affect their consumption, residential practices, leisure activities and political commitment. The second original aspect is to



conduct our investigation into two "world cities" and their satellites. We will be able to identify and analyse connections between "centres" and "peripheries", at local to transnational levels. The third original aspect is to match up a classical ethnographic method including interviews and participant observation with a visual ethnographic method including image production and image collection (especially photographs). This approach aims to study the material and visual cultures of the workers' universes and to define what sort of visual references and categories of thinking and judging circulate among them and sometimes beyond them.

Our contribution will focus on the processes of labour market fragmentation in paris and frankfurt/main, in order to analyze them in a political and transnational perspective. Indeed, observing a labor market at this scale and in the context of "world cities" enlightens the internal divisions of the working class and the ways these divisions differ from one context to another. Depending on the types of goods, the urban contexts and the ways industrial relations are regulated at different levels (from the local to the european one), the difficulty of working conditions in the warehouses, the salaries and the social recognition of these positions are quite different. Permanent employment on positions that aren't seen as "true occupations" is considered in the light of what it can offer: considerable wage increases in frankfurt and an access to mortgage loan in paris. Such differences have a major impact on professional careers, occupational health and way of life in both countries. We consider those elements as a way to understand in the same time the weak involvement of logistics workers in unionism and the emerging new forms of political mobilization, especially in france.

**Seniority, wage and indebtedness patterns of poor chain workers in turkey: case o metal sector**

**Denizcankutlu, namik kemal university, labour economics and industrial relations**



department; F. Serkanöngel, gaziantepe university, management department

This study focuses on the seniority, wage and indebtedness patterns of unionised chain workers in Turkish metal sector who work at workplaces linked to global commodity chains on the basis of wage relation and indebtedness dynamics. The study is based on two conceptual backgrounds: global commodity chains and working poverty. Along with the organization of production on a global scale; the level of wages, working and living conditions of the chain workers involved in these production networks also differ depending on the position of the country in the international division of labour. In this process, Turkey has mainly specialized in the production of buyer-driven, low-tech consumption and intermediate goods and low-value-added labour intensive industries. However, there are such workplaces operating in capital and technology intensive production branches linked to producer-driven commodity chains in Turkey. The study, discusses the relationship between wages, income and livelihoods of unionized chain workers in the metal industry which mainly produce in such producer-driven commodity chains and investigates the workers' poverty levels and coping strategies with poverty. Working poverty is the poverty of working individuals in terms of disposable net income. Individual level based on the status of people in the workforce and collective level based on income levels of the household can be defined as two basic poverty scales. The study, evaluates the poverty of unionised chain workers based on this method.

The research is based on a survey completed with a total of 981 workers identified by systematic random sampling among 21,000 union members and semi-structured in-depth interviews, some of which are completed and intended to be done with 20 workers. It is observed a strong indebtedness tendency among poor chain metalworkers employed in a low-wage regime depends on wage difference per hour, which is based on seniority. Thus, it appears that there is a strong linkage between the regulation of the labour process on the basis of seniority and the reproduction of labour power in the metal sector. In the metal sector, the length of seniority and the duration of unionization of chain workers influence the main labour income in the positive direction. In terms of education level, graduating from a vocational school is a decisive element in the positive direction compared to other levels of education. Although the main labour income of women is less than that of men, women are far less likely experience poverty than single or married men in terms of household income. The main reason of this situation is the fact that 62 percent of men and only 15 percent of women live in a single income household. Workers who have experienced unemployment experience a greater risk of poverty. In terms of coping strategies with poverty, variables such as additional work, indebtedness, overtime



and participation in trade union struggles are the key elements. One of the main findings is the existence of a level of wages that does not get out of debt. The average amount of debt is 10 times the monthly household income. The main findings of the study are revealed by statistical comparison of poverty threshold data with gender, seniority, experience of unemployment and level of education.

## **The capitalist company as territory. Territorial control as form of labour process control**

**Domingo Pérez, Observatorio De Huelgas Laborales – Coes, Chile**

Traditionally, territoriality constitutes a socio-spatial power that is recognized as being lodged in a naturalized and paradigmatic way in the public space. However, the capitalist enterprise rooted in private property also constitutes a disputed territory between capital and labor, despite being invisible as such.

Three sources of literature share the theoretical absence of the company property as a territory: the labour process theory; the capital and labour geography; and management studies of territorial behavior. Faced with this gap in the studies of work, and as a further reflection from a postgraduate research thesis on the "capitalist labor territory", the present text offers a first synthesis of the theory of capitalist enterprise as a territory. The theory is explained by territorial control of the productive process between capital and labor, constituting the capitalist enterprise and its workplace as a territory also guaranteed by a counterpart state.

In effect, materializing and thus consolidating the elements of the burawoy theory, the worker experiences marginal territorial control in the work process. Worker uses spaces to carry out actions of self-expression, which reinforces the consent with exploitation and the illusion of territorial property. In this way, company property, like the entire production process, mixes and invisibilizes its character as a territory. However, the territorial control of the worker constitutes a risk that can be organized and project an antagonism when workers raise this control through internal or external safe spaces.

In this dynamic, the political and social value of private property at the level of the political economy is territorially reflected in the work regime of the company. As lefebvre argues, space constitutes a means of production as well as a political

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instrument. In effect, the value of private property at the societal level has repercussions on the fact that the critical initiatives of organized workers, such as the process of union creation or strike mobilization, acquire a rearguard and then develop regularly in safe spaces outside the company. This allows proposing the thesis of the construction of "union neighborhoods" as a union revitalization strategy, especially in front of production geographical fragmentation and loss of territorial control in the large industry phase. In this sense, it is proposed that the core thesis of marxism is that labor is losing power over labor territory as capital domination expands.

It is concluded that the territorial analysis of the productive process redefines the politicization in the literature of labour process theory by proposing the description and evidence of the capitalist company as a political fact disputed territorially by capital and labor force, this last one, unusually conscious, always under socio-spatial conditions that it has not chosen, and with a structural territoriality that is minimal but at the same time strategic, which has been expanded and raised even to antagonistic levels in history.

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## Stream 2

### The hidden places of Production. Class composition and Rural struggles in the Global South and North

#### session 1

**Territorialization capitalist the of coamo agroindustrial cooperativa**

**Raoni Azerêdo, Universidade Federal Do Rio Grande Do Norte**

**Pedro Ivanchristoffoli, Universidade Federal Do Rio Grande Do Norte**

This article analyzes the aggressive strategy of territorialization of the largest capitalist cooperative in latin america, the coamo agroindustrialcooperativa. The economic domain of the territories where it was established the increasing offensive exerted by this cooperative, from the beginning of the 1970s until the present moment, aimed at increasing economic efficiency under the capitalist view, through gains in scale and capillarity in the collection of grains (especially soybeans), resulting in the expropriation of peasants associated with this organization. This strategic delineation, permeated by contradictions, allowed coamo to become an important agent in the agribusiness power bloc at the state and national level

**Rediscovering a struggle for the commons: land problems in 21st century scotland**

Brian garvey, university of strathclyde

Scotland has the rather unenviable position of boasting the most concentrated private ownership of land anywhere in the world. It is a country of 5 million people,

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most of these squeezed into what land reformers have called the 'central reservation' of urban areas that constitute only 3% of the country's land use. That leaves a staggering 97% of the country classified as rural. Of the 12.3% of publicly owned land, most is devoted to strategic/commercial forestry ever since the second world war highlighted timber shortages in trench warfare. Of the remainder, 66 landowners own 25% of the land, half of the land is owned by 343 landowners.

This is a legacy of a 17th century parliamentary act, a rather cheap version of the english enclosures, and then by outright embezzlement by land owning classes who also made the law. The landless peasants of scotland had, as land historian andy wightman reminds us, 'no lawyers'. The crofters, however, a class of peasant who held land on an annual rental basis from landlords, organised their party in the 19th century to secure certain ancient land rights, reflecting a growing labour movement against the landed classes into the 20th century. An intriguing fertilisation of ideas between fishermen, class conscious urban based activists and disenfranchised rural inhabitants gave rise to land riots, rent strikes, political agitation, land raids. This, however, was all but extinguished by the second world war, and has never recovered.

However the tensions that existed between these parties have resonance in the renewed interest in community based land reform that are the focus of this study. The 2016 land reform act in scotland reflected growing community pressure for a redress of these historical wrongs. Its stuttering progress, however, bears the hallmarks of the challenges confronting the land leagues of the 19th century. Then, as now, the aspirations of activists seeking a radical nationalisation of land, and socialisation of property and return of commons are tempered by rural interests that are conditioned to seek no more than a 'fair' deal as tenants from land owners, the considerable power wielded by the landowners, and the within class divisions between urban and rural (often unemployed) workers. The absence of a broader, massive movement for land reform leaves its actual process in the hands of government ministers, market prices and reluctant landowners. Rather than draw conclusions, this paper seeks to present examples of recent community based land struggles in scotland to contribute to a discussion around a particular nexus of contradictions facing contemporary rural labour: those between the socialist/egalitarian aspirations of rural social movements activists versus the rentier economic relations of the land; the immaterial notion of autonomy versus the ongoing dependence on market for work and social reproduction; the alienation of urban working classes from the land and those that live beyond the reach of the city.



**session 2**

**Production and labour in the brazilian field: an analysis of data from the agricultural census 2006**

Marco Antonio Mitidiero Junior, Universidade Federal Da Paraíba

The present work has the objective of analyzing the data of the main statistical base on the brazilian rural space. The agricultural census of the brazilian institute of geography and statistics (ibge) is held every 10 years and collects data on several variables that involve agricultural production, income generation and labour in the field. The data of the last census reveal something remarkable in the agricultural history of a country of rural tradition, which is the productive and income-generating supremacy that small production has in brazil. This research frames these results in the context of the contradiction between this remarkable level of productivity by the peasant and the concentration of land and capital in the hands of the strata of large agribusiness. Not only is the supremacy evident in in the production of food (55.4% of the total value of livestock production, 49.7% of the total value of vegetable production) but also in the creation of work and and jobs. The data presents how small producers with up to 200 hectares of land account for 84.3% of the labor in the country's agriculture.

**Pesticides in the globalised brazilian agribusiness: seducing storytellers, viperish work , and parted peasantry.**

**Kendra Briken, University Of Strathclyde, Larissa Miesbombardi& Tito Maule (Usp, Brazil**

By the end of november 2017, the eu voted for yet another 5 years to allow eu farmers to use glyphosate on their lands. The media coverage focused on the question whether glyphosate would be cancerogenic or not. Lobby groups on both sides tried to convince politicians by pointing out the consequences for eu citizens and farmers, respectively.

The risk assessment in these debates stresses either the consequences for health and wellbeing of the consumers, or the economic losses for the farming industry. This familiar conflict of interests does however not take into account the consequences



decision making processes in the global north have for the global south. Glyphosate is an excellent example to discuss how the critiques of the agri-business in the global north tend to systematically exclude the role the global south plays in the capitalist mode of production and allows for ‚super-exploitation‘ of former colonies. Standard values for glyphosate differ dramatically between the eu and countries in the global south. This allows for cheap import prices for soy beans, coffee, and other products valued by their eu consumers either for their everyday consumption or as base material for biofuel or beef production.

In this collective paper, the authors attempt to bring together three different pieces of research informed by the sociology of work, human geography, and political sciences. Our aim is to focus on the brazilian agribusiness. From recent research by bombardi (2017) we have an exact mapping of how the use of pesticides leads to deadly working and living conditions. We will combine the data gathered in the atlas with chemical production plant sites, and base element suppliers in brazil; we will analyse how the agribusiness sells their produce using fables on how to improve people’s life while at the same time putting workers and peasantry under toxic pressures..

Our aim is to find out the spatial distribution of workers contributing to the value chain within the agribusiness, using the example of glyphosate. We will contribute to discussions on workers mobilisation and workers struggles in that we can show how and on which spatial level workers are parted across the land. Is there a shared space the so far parted peasantry shares? If so, how could this possibly inform local communities and activists?

## **Sugar cane and oil palm. Flexible crops and labor exploitation of rural youth in brazil and colombia**

Robinzon Piñeros Lizarazo, Fct/Unesp

In recent decades the territorial expansion of agrohidronegocio in latin america has enhanced by the export of agricultural commodities such as soybeans, bananas, flowers, sugar and palm oil, among others, as well, for the production of agrofuels extracted from sugarcane, soy and palm oil, among others. This phase is part to the restructuring of capital and agribusiness, which has deepened the mobility of the work of peasants, indigenous communities and people of african descent, who deprived of their land and / or territory, finding in rural salaries a possibility of subsistence with highly precarious working conditions.

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This paper presents an analysis of the young working class, understood between ages 18-29, and as a class intersectionality. The objective is to discuss the working conditions and the invisibility of these social subjects in latin america, which quantitatively stand out among the rural wage earners and qualitatively they are the focus of attention of the capital for their physical and social conditions to exploit in certain monocultures and agro industrial process.

To illustrate this reality, we will present aggregate quantitative data on rural workers and analyze the trajectories of young salaried workers in sugarcane in brazil and oil palm in colombia. The methodology is used based on the bibliographic and database review, interviews with young workers and other workers of the companies in the areas of the cases studied.

**session 3**

**The case of community supported agriculture: re-producing class and 'yuppie chow'**



or the production of resistance?

**David J Watson, Norwich Business School, University Of East Anglia, United Kingdom**

**Abstract:** local, organic food and some of the literature extolling its virtues has been criticized as appealing only to elites, offering considered and ethical consumption for mainly middle-class consumers with the time, resources and concern to make more responsible food choices (guthman, 2003; 2007; lockie, 2009; luetchford & pratt, 2011). As part of an alternative or local food system that stands in opposition to the capitalist food system (feagan, 2007; schermer, 2014), community food organizations (cfo) are often judged with the same yardstick. Empirical studies have shown that the demographic characteristics of cfo consumers often conform to this middle-class stereotype (for example, perez, allen & brown, 2003). However, cfos do not necessarily conform to this stereotype (dowler, kneafsey, cox & holloway, 2009). Furthermore they are not just spaces of consumption, but spaces of production that can bridge these two spheres which appear disconnected in the capitalist food system (goodman & dupuis, 2002), alienating both producer and consumer. In this paper i argue that claims of elitism and class privilege are an oversimplification of some realities of alternative food production (and consumption) and that avenues for changing the food system are not necessarily foreclosed on the basis of class. I draw on empirical data form two cfos in the uk, and the wider literature to address the following question:

To what extent does participation in cfos constitute middle-class privilege, and how does this relate to its ability to resist and transform the capitalist food system?

I utilise marx's conception of alienation to understand csa as a space that enables individuals to respond to the alienating tendencies of the wider food system, a system underpinned and defined by the logic of capital in the context of the uk. This analysis presents two key findings in relation to the above question. Firstly, these spaces are not just the preserve of the privileged, but are also open to others. Secondly and crucially, that although the extent to which cfos can resist and transform the capitalist food system is limited, they do not necessarily re-produce the relations of production that they purportedly stand in opposition to, as some have implied (for example, see guthman, 2008, p. 1171). The findings reinforce the need to read for difference, in order to develop a food politics of the possible (harris, 2009), whilst retaining a critical stance that supports this goal, rather than hindering it.



## Tracing the class relations in turkey's new cooperativism: a potential alternative to market relations?

Cagatayedgucansahin, Elifhacisalihoglu

Ordu university, turkey

the economic and social atmosphere of turkey started to change in favour of capital with emergence of neoliberal paradigm in the 1980s. Even though there are a number of dimensions of this process, some prominent dynamics are resembling other developing countries: rising unemployment led by privatizations, de-unionization, sub-contracted working, informal employment, and semi-proletarianization.

Turkey's agricultural policy was also affected by the neoliberal paradigm, and the number of people in agricultural activities has decreased year by year with agenda of eu common agricultural policy. By the year 2016, the gdp share of agricultural activities was 6.2%, and the people employed in agriculture sector decreased to 18% of total employment (from 35% in 2003). If we consider these basic statistics with the entities of huge monopolies like lipton co. (tea), ferrero co. (hazelnut), phillip morris co. (tobacco) which shape the agricultural sector in all means, both producers and workers in agriculture are sharing poverty. Indeed, most of the agricultural producers in today's turkey (tea, hazelnut, tobacco, and dairy producers) are disadvantaged suppliers of multinational or local monopolies, and these producers are about to lose complete control on production process. In fact, this situation leads to serious social unrests in late years.

In this study, we will focus on new cooperativism wave, and also organizing practices in agricultural sector, throughout different regions of turkey. In most of the cases these cooperative practices seen as the last opportunity in resistance against proletarianization. The working class' organizing practices in agricultural cooperatives are another important dimension of the question. These workers are part of production process in every phase: in the field, in the factory, or in the sales. Thus, the relationship between cooperative (producers) and workers is one of the most important axis of this study. In this study, we used qualitative research methods (a number of semi-structured in-depth interviews with producers and also workers, some of them completed/recorded in 2017 and some of the interviews will be



completed until february 2018). Fundamental question of the paper is as follows: are these agricultural cooperatives have a potential to be an alternative to market relations? Can we assess these cooperatives as prominent practices of a new model?

To answer these questions, firstly the paper is focusing on the organizing of production process of these cooperatives. There are two sides in the production process: villagers/farmers and workers (packing, transportation, and sales). Does the production process create a win-win situation for both sides? Because, the reasons and the economic atmosphere which push the producers to establish cooperatives is the same with the reasons which push workers to unionize. Therefore, whether the new cooperativism practices create a new way for workers or not is crucial. Otherwise these cooperatives will focus on protecting only producers' interests against market relations, in the meantime they will also establish relationships based on exploitation like ordinary companies with their workers. If this is the case, we cannot argue that these practices have a potential to be an alternative.

One another important point is the cooperatives positions' in their surrounding economic atmosphere. The following questions are extremely important as to whether we can argue that there is a potential to discuss about a model: are these cooperatives trying to establish a network with each other? (there are some supporting facts on this issue at different levels) are these cooperatives buying necessary inputs for production (fertilizer etc.) From other cooperatives or companies, and finally, are the products/outputs of cooperatives reach consumers via other cooperatives or companies? We will discuss the possibilities and limitations of the current agricultural cooperative practices in turkey, with an attempt to find answers to these questions.

## **Labour struggles within and without production: from value to valueless labour?**

Paul Stewart, Brian Garvey And Francis Viniciusportesvirginio,

University of strathclyde

Understandings of labour struggles in the global south have tended to be filtered



through formal channels of union activities (silver,) and specific nodes of conflict along value chains. While important we require a mapping that takes into account the line of un-official, often unrecorded sites of contestation. This paper will focus of the struggles around the boundaries of salaried and unsalaried labour in brazil in key sites (agro, industrial extraction and cultivation). When looking, for example, at just a bio-ethanol plant, this registers a relatively straightforward assessment of value added through labour and environmental progress through carbon emission reduction. However, it is precisely such a narrowness of definition that allows multi-nationals to successfully export and certify production while rendering unseen the massive dislocation of paid and unpaid labour, and significant long term environmental devastation. This paper will argue that a more adequate assessment of the value of multi-national activity here has to account of the hidden costs of production, unseen, literally, in the activity of mncs (stewart and garvey, 2016). Empirically, the paper will illustrate how both indigenous companies and mncs have managed to organise migrant and flexible labour on a scale that prevents the labour struggles of the auto and mining industries of the past from reemerging in labour relations more widely. (virginio, et al) thus, calls for attention to new forms of organising across a range of sectoral boundaries and social identities are prominently into focus. References silver, b (2003) forces of labor. Workers' movements and globalization since 1870. Stewart, p and garvey, b (2016) global value chains, organizations and industrial work, in edgell et al, the sage handbook of the sociology of work and employment. The sage handbook of the sociology of work and employment virginio, f, garvey, b and stewart, p (2017) the perforated borders of labour migration and the formal state: meta-state and para-state regulation employee relations vol 39, pp. 391-407, (2017)

## session 4

### **Labour analogous to slavery and the agribusiness in bahia in the 21st century**

**Aurelane Alves Santana, Ufs**

**Marco Antonio Mitidiero Junior, Universidade Federal Da Paraíba**

Contemporary slavery appears in society as the most depressing labor activity of the



21st century and must be understood in the light of the concentrating, excluding and violent movement of capitalist (re) production. In rural areas, the Brazilian model of agricultural modernization brought with the benefits of science, the intensification of the recreation of these anachronistic relations of work and, consequently, the increase of levels of precariousness of the workers. In this sense, based on data from the Pastoral Land Commission (CPT) about slave labor in Bahia (2003-2016), the objective was to understand the relationship between the occurrence of this social phenomenon and the progress of agribusiness in the state. The cases of labour analogous to slavery in Bahia are a reflection of the complexity of relationships that are formed from monoculture and consolidation of agriculture as an advanced capitalist activity. In the midst of the expansion of agribusiness, there is a widening of social inequalities, the prevalence of injustice and the reproduction of archaic forms of work, which aim, above all, to exploit and further precarious the working class in order to obtain greater profits by the capitalists. These are workers who are victims of a process of capital accumulation that is based on the concentration of land and the holding of the means of production in the hands of agricultural entrepreneurs, removing from the workers the possibilities of a decent reproduction of life by subordinating them to contemporary slavery. The analyzed numbers revealed a rather precarious panorama for the labor relations in the countryside of Bahia and are permeated by contradictions that aim at hiding the reality of this practice in the state and also in the country. The verification of the reduction in the number of cases of slave labor in recent years, for example, is far from signifying and indicating the end of contemporary slavery in Bahia, being directly related to the successive attacks on the working class by the government and the new strategies of concealment of this kind of crime for civil society. As a theoretical framework, we read authors as Marx (1964), Martins (1979), Silva (1981), Sutton (1994), Oliveira (2007);

## **What about sugar cane cutters? (in)sustainability, paulista agroindustrial complex and false green jobs**

Olivia Pasqualetto, University of São Paulo

From the perspective of creating sustainable strategies, green jobs are born, understood as forms of decent work dedicated to protect and restore continuously and efficiently the environment. However, although from appearing as a possible common response to environmental and social challenges, often the environmental aspect is superimposed on the social. Grounded on this perception, the objective of this study is to understand to what extent is the worker protection in green jobs, analyzing if this protection actually exists; how it is and if it is greater than the



protection afforded to workers in traditional and non-green sectors of the economy. To answer the questions proposed, it was assumed a qualitative approach, using as research methods: a literature review; documentary research and analysis of brazilian experience more potentially promoting green jobs, according to the international labor organization: the sugar cane plantation in the state of são paulo, the largest producer of sugarcane in brazil, intended to produce biofuel. Despite this potential, the sugarcane industry has been marked by the degrading conditions of work that subject the workers and the generation of environmental pollution to the region, given the large fires promoted in the sugarcane plantations to facilitate the manual cutting of sugarcane. This reality, however, has been (partially) modified: nowadays, more than 80% of its lands intended for sugar cane plantation are mechanized, which substantially reduced the practice of straw burning. This advance of mechanization in são paulo was strongly encouraged by the “protocolo agroambiental do setorsucroalcooleiro paulista” (“agro-environmental paulista sugarcane industry protocol”), whose purpose was the adoption of actions aimed at strengthening the sustainable development of sugarcane industry in the state of são paulo. However, despite the scope of promoting sustainability, and despite having protective environment provisions, the protocol was silent on the workers of this sector. Considering this context, it sought to contribute to the study of agroindustrial complex from a sociolaboral perspective, highlighting the importance of its social aspect, warning about the existence of false green jobs and reflecting on the omission and contempt of the agroindustrial protocol about workers' social protection, both in relation to the one who stays in manual cutting, as one who has been replaced by the machine.

## **Class culture, skills and work process: the case of agricultural machinery workers in Argentina and the united states**

Juan Manuel Villulla, CIEA (UBA) / CONICET

This writing explores the links between the kind of class identity of the workers and their role in a specific work process. With this perspective, we made a comparative approach in an international scale, studying the case of the agricultural machinery workers of the argentine pampas and the american midwest, at the beginning of the 21st century. From our theoretical stand point, the comprehension of the working-class subjectivity doesn't finish in the analysis of a practical function in an isolated productive process, and not even in the social conditions in which it is done. But it's

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not understood *without* attending to these factors either. Even though, this sets out the challenge of leaking these dimensions of the rest of the historical, cultural and political factors that take part of the most global working-class experience in a certain social formation.

As a response to these theoretical and methodological questions, we made an experiment applying the same questionnaire to the same kind of agricultural workers -who realize the same tasks to produce the same goods with identical technological resources and similar labour relations-, but socialized and inserted in very different social formations: Argentina and the united states. That is to say, we assumed that the "external" influences regarding the moment of production would be different, and that there would only remain constant a common work process where the tasks are done in a practically individual way (unlike the big industrial conglomerates), on the basis of certain skills (unlike the taylorist ideal of an exchangeable worker), and keeping high degrees of workers control on the pace, the way and the result of the tasks (unlike the fordist line of production).

What we observed was the emergency of a very similar class subjectivity, characterized by a marked individualism associated with: a) their daily isolation and with the scanty collective cooperation demanded by their tasks; b) the empowerment that they experience making the machines work for them, activating and controlling directly the forces of nature, without big social mediations to transform and domain the environment; and c) the feeling of personal accomplishment that they find in the result of their work, after concentrating almost the whole process of wealth creation in their individual hands. All that enables another common emergent: the subjective connection with the content of the work. In other words, they like to do it and do it as good as possible, feeling projected in the product of their work as a reflection of themselves. This way, so much for the individual control of the work process, as for their subjective connection with it, the agricultural workers find ways of withdraw from the double alienation of the waged condition -of expropriation and subordination-, building a class identity just slightly antagonistic in front of their employers, and with scanty bridges of affective solidarity regarding other kinds of rural and urban workers.



## Session 5

### **The everyday of labour: forms of resistance and subordination in four volvo plants across the global north and the global south**

**Nora Räthzel, Diana Mulinari, Aina Tollefsen,**

Umea University

Scholarship on transnational corporations in the global south tends to investigate forms of overexploitation such like work in the maquiladoras. For our research, we chose the swedish tnc volvo, one of the 100 largest tncs in the world, promoting itself and being described as a 'good employer'. We wanted to understand everyday working lives within what are considered 'normal' structures of capitalism.

We conducted 102 interviews with workers and managers in volvo plants in india, mexico, south africa, and sweden, spending up to two weeks at each plant. The majority of interviews (of between one and three hours) took place within the respective plants, some at workers' meetings. Most were one to one interviews, a few were focus group interviews.

Theoretically, our point of departure is marx' concept of work as the way in which humans develop who they are in alliance with extra-human nature. We see the labour process not only as a place in which products are produced but also one where workers are constituted and constitute themselves. To capture the subjectivity of workers we enter into a critical dialogue with the work of feminist and poststructuralist scholars in the area of labour and labour process theory (glucksmann, 1995 salzinger, 2003, knights 1990) who reconceptualise the concept of work.

We present the tnc from the standpoint of workers - a decisive perspective if we want to understand how social change happens or why it does not happen. We discuss how workers live their 'throwntogetherness' (massey, 2005) into one transnational corporation when the socio-economic and political conditions of their respective workplaces in the global north and south differ. How is transnational solidarity possible? How do workers relate to the company's branding as protector of labour



rights?

The pleasure of learning and knowing, the ability to contribute to a famous brand were common experiences among workers. But so were boredom, pain, and abandoned hopes. Most of the volvo workers wanted to do their job well *and* earn a good salary. Where the managers denied them this, through regimes of subordination including gender regimes, we found resistance, strikes, but also forms of identification with the company and resignation. Through all these differences we also found a common language of workers' pride, demand for respect, fair wages, as well as anxiety in the face of neoliberal transformations of work content and working conditions.

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## **Rethinking the work process. The brickwork workers in the need to improve their working conditions**

Federico Vocos, Universidad Nacional De La Plata

This presentation derives from ongoing research regarding the evolving development of Argentina's brick workers' union (uolra) since its intervention in december of 2012 by the ministry of labour employment and social security (mteyss). The uolra's intervention was a watershed, as formerly, the production of clay bricks was mostly an unknown activity, despite its relative importance in the construction sector value chain. For the purpose of this presentation we focus on examining how the production of artisanal bricks has traditionally been organized in Argentina, as well as in several countries of the region, and how traditional working conditions, process,



and context greatly impacts worker health.

A key element that distinguishes the intervention approach chosen by the uolra in the artisanal brick sector is the focus of its work programme on *worker dignity*. For this reason, the uolra focuses action not only on salaried workers, but also on small independent producers, promoting associative bonds amongst workers and in these productive units. This approach implies a profound renewal of trade union traditions by extending the field of representation, and at the same time implies the development of differentiated policies based on contractual relationships.

The uolra began an arduous organizational task in the sector, responding to severe working conditions prevailing at traditional kiln sites, in which workers -in addition to not being registered and facing discrimination due to their largely immigrant background-, are exposed to different occupational hazards and illnesses. Amongst these, injuries include those resulting from handling heavy loads and performing repetitive tasks and physical movements; while illnesses typically involve respiratory problems due to exposure to toxic gases from brick firing; skin conditions are also prevalent in the sector, due to the lack of worker safety considerations from exposure to biological hazards.

In this context, and considering the many difficulties faced by artisanal brick kiln workers, the uolra has begun to focus on the need to promote changes to the productive processes with a view to bring about improvements to working conditions. Through participation in international forums that promote technological reforms to brick production processes, mostly geared to achieve environmental and economic efficiency gains, the uolra has gained valuable training and experience and has subsequently developed local proposals to promote technological changes to existing production processes and technologies in Argentina and across the region, aimed at achieving environmental efficiency gains, as well as improvements to basic working conditions.

It is in this integral approach to addressing present problems of the artisanal brick production sector, that the uolra is proposing the creation brick kiln industrial parks, to be developed in partnership with select provinces and municipalities of Argentina.



**Work degradation in brazilian slaughterhouses: on the systemic antagonism between capital and workers' health**

**Fernando Heck, Antonio Thomaz Junior, Instituto Federal De Educação, Ciência E Tecnologia**

This paper aims to detail how slaughterhouse work is increasingly being based upon a degrading social relationship with negative health outcomes for workers. The working conditions imposed in slaughterhouses have resulted in growing physical and mental illness for workers. Such conditions are explored through an analysis of work in a factory operated by brazil foods (brf) in toledo, paran  state, brazil. Drawing upon interviews and documents provided by workers' organizations, our case study explores how work degradation serves as the central structuring element of the labor process in this plant. We also note that although there has emerged a collective organization of workers to confront these labor conditions, this has mainly occurred beyond the aegis of the official unions. This fact leads us to contemplate several important geographical issues, since the rise of collective worker action beyond the official union structures challenges the legal spatial order of how labor relations are supposed to work in brazil.

**session 6**

**Land energy, exploitation of labor and struggles indigenous to the territory in mexico**

Agustin avila, iesa-ufg/unich

The dynamics of capitalist growth in mexico has been causing a pressure on the rural areas as many peasants and indigenous people in mexico possess land in the places that have the potential of generating energy by the wind, the water and the monocultures. Many of the movements that are presented against the installation of wind farms, construction of dams and against the introduction of crops for biofuels, are fights against the processes of dispossession (harvey, 2004, 2007) that has to do with world energy demand, product of the capitalist restructuring of the world where the dynamics of economic liberalization and free trade are demanding increasingly greater quantity of raw materials and consumer goods at the cost of depriving land, resources and territories to many rural and indigenous communities. Thus the struggles against the domain agro-energy of the rural areas are part of the confrontation against the model extractive (gudynas, 2009) which is the pattern of



accumulation based on the overexploitation of natural resources, in large part, non-renewable resources, as well as the economic expansion toward places considered as unproductive. Together with this dynamic of subordination of the peasant territories to the logic of development of the energetic enterprises, there is also an unprecedented labor exploitation, as shown by the survey conducted by aon consultants and presented in march of this year in the congress on wind energy. It is noted that the majority of the workers in this industry lack a union that defends them and therefore of the economic and social rights.

**'The gaelic spring'- the grassroots irish language movement in the north of ireland as an expression of a bottom-up decolonization**

**Feargal Mac Ionnrachtaigh, Queen University Belfast**

This paper will briefly explore ireland's cultural colonisation as part of the wider british imperial project that ultimately led to the demise of the irish language as ireland's spoken language in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. The decline of the irish language, it will be argued, was dictated by the political, economic and cultural necessities of british imperialism in ireland. In the form of comparative analysis, this process will be framed into a wider understanding of cultural shift in colonial and neo-colonial contexts.

In the irish context, the consequences of colonisation will be seen to have inspired and shaped an ideology of decolonisation and resistance which has been a central motivating factor in the contemporary irish language revival movement.

Drawing from original primary source interview material, it will assess the co-operative social, cultural, educational and economic projects stemming from the predominantly working-class irish language movement in belfast from the late 1960s until the present as counter-hegemonic forms of community resistance which have successfully straddled the intersection between race and class.

In addition, it is argued that these forms of cultural revival correspond with frantz fanon's radical vision of decolonisation as integral to the wider struggle to establish national sovereignty which articulated a theoretical template that defined the ideological rationale of radical irish language activists in the highly charged period of irish history following the irish hunger strikes in the north of ireland of 1980-81.

In conclusion, this paper will analyse the current campaign for language rights in the



north, which has become central to the current political crisis having contributed to toppling the stormont power-sharing executive in january 2017. This campaign and many corresponding grassroots community projects have been led by a new generation of activists whose intense politicisation and radicalisation during the campaign has recast them in the classic mould of gramscian organic-intellectuals who 'elaborate, modify and disseminate' their 'class conception of the world' and give it homogeneity and awareness of its specific function and potential in economic, political and social fields (larrain 1979:84.)

In practical terms, these locally based activists have constructed what gramsci describes as 'earthworks and fortifications' within civil society that seeks to build counter hegemonic campaigning, organisations and projects that exemplify and embody the social forces that have the potential to exploit the contradictions that exist within modern society whilst simultaneously challenging continued british neo-colonial politico-economic hegemony in the north of ireland.

Horizontally organised, open and democratic, these modes of organisation have breathed fresh life into the belief that 'a better world is possible'. As a radical form of grassroots decolonisation, this contemporary language revival movement can arguably become a constituent element of a newly energised and transformational form of civic republicanism. Such a movement can inspire other excluded groups and dynamic rights-based campaigns by connecting issues and promoting intersectional alliances that yield more liberating future trajectories.

### **Stream 3**

#### **Breaking boundaries and opening new struggles:**



## **Linking class and labour process to development in the Global South**

### **Session 1**

**Disciplining women at the bottom of global value chains. Labour control and resistance within fields and households in senegalese export horticulture**

**Elena Baglioni, Queen Mary University, London**

This article examines labour control and labour resistance at the bottom of global value chains. Through a class relational approach to development and labour control regime analysis, it examines the labour process at the base of the senegalese-european horticultural value chain and its relations with rural households. Drawing from primary qualitative and quantitative data collected with women and men in the countryside of senegal, it analyses power relations within the workplace and households highlighting how labour control bestrides relations of production and reproduction. It argues that labour control beyond workplaces is crucial to supply cheap and disciplined female workers by showing how patriarchy, religion, and paternalism regulate a continuum of class relations between households, fields, and packaging centres. As women subordination is pervasive and multifaceted, forms of resistance *within* and *beyond* the labour process emerge. Finally, as women agency and collective action take different forms, and more or less clear manifestations, some ambiguous implication in terms of class struggle is advanced

**Local labour control regimes and class struggle among informal workers in south india**

**Jonathan Pattenden, University Of East Anglia**

india's 'classes of labour' mostly reproduce themselves through precarious, informal



labour in multiple locations. This paper focuses on labourers who work across the construction and agriculture sectors, and have relatively little structural and associational power. They are fragmented spatially, through the forms and terms of their employment, by gender and caste relations, and due to their uneven relations with the state. The paper uses the term 'local labour control regimes' (jonas 1996) to explain how the class relations that they experience are shaped by these patterns of accumulation and work, forms of social difference, and state mediation. It does so in order to improve understanding of how sustained gains in their material and political conditions might be achieved. Although unorganised, and despite their political strength being undermined by the broader neoliberal regime, informal indian workers show their agency in a variety of ways. Such counter-trends, in so far as they exist, take new spatial and temporal forms as a mobile, fragmented and unprotected workforce responds to the strictures of accumulation as best it can. Understanding how it does so requires mapping the interplay of 'agency' and patterns of control over labour across many scales - from the consciousness of the individual worker to the world-historical, and from actual to latent forms of action.

**Integrating theories on labor process and collective labor action: the case of pension-driven protests in china**

**Elaine Sio-leng Hui, Penn State University**

This article contends that the predominant sociological frameworks for analysing collective labour actions, such as the typologies of reactive versus proactive actions and defensive versus offensive actions (franzosi, 1995; stearns, 1974; tilly, 1975), are inadequate for understanding labour activism because they do not consider the key domains in which capitalism operates. Drawing upon the insights from labour process theories, this article proposes adding a conceptual distinction between production politics and global politics to the prevalent sociological approach (burawoy, 1979; edwards, 1986; webster, 1985). Capitalist production and reproduction are distinct from each other; thus, struggles associated with production politics and struggles associated with global politics should not be confused at the analytical level. This synthesised framework allows us to conceptualise workers' concerted actions as pertinent to either the sphere of production (i.e., related to production politics) or the sphere of reproduction (i.e., related to global politics). Within this broader division, labour collective actions can further be categorised as defensive/reactive or offensive/proactive.

Furthermore, taking pension-driven protests in china as an illustration, this paper



demonstrates how this synergised analytical framework contributes to a deeper understanding of labour protests. Instead of seeing chinese worker activism as experiencing a u-turn from defensive actions staged before the mid- and late 2000s (such as demanding legal minimum wages) to offensive actions carried out after the late 2000s (such as calling for fair wages beyond the legal standards) and then back to defensive protests staged in recent years (requesting the legal fulfilment of their pension rights), through this new framework, we can see that worker protests in china have moved from defensive to offensive actions associated with production politics and then shifted to defensive actions associated with global politics (demanding the fulfilment of pension rights).

This article elaborates on two pension-driven protests in pearl river delta, china that were widely reported in the media. They reflect the situations in two geographical areas (shenzhen and guangzhou) in two important industries in the prd (the electronics and bicycle industries). They have different sources of investment (japanese and taiwanese) and different sizes of workforce (around 100 and 6600 workers). Data were collected from april 2014 to december 2015. In total, 30 migrant workers and 5 labour ngo staff were interviewed for the two cases. In addition, for the first case study, participant observation was conducted at workers' meetings, protests and gatherings. The two case studies were also backed by archival research analysis of news reports, leaflets and letters produced by the workers, correspondence between the workers and their employers and online materials.

## session 2

### **Another form of “amusing ourselves to death”: experience, ideology and the labor control in the production of variety show in china**

**Wenjuanjia, Kaiouzhong, Shanghai University**

This article explores the labor process and new strategy of labor control in the chinese fast-rising new industry – the cultural and creative industry. Based on our intensive fieldwork at a tv show production company which locates in shanghai city, china, from the june 2015 to the feb 2016, this article depicts the everyday working



lives of intern labour and analyses how the management make the students involve into the unpaid and heavy work with enthusiasm and why they consent to their own exploitation.

The main findings of this article are that, compared with traditional industries, in the labor process of cultural and creative industry, the aim of the management is to make certain experience, and the labor control was based on several cultural facts – intimate relation, atmosphere, feeling, rather than organizational institutions. We focused on three mechanisms, by which the wonderful experience was made: firstly, with the mechanism of “relational work”(Zelizer, 2012), the management in the project team made friends with interns and pleased them, which made interns would like to follow after them; secondly, with the mechanism of “atmosphere creating”, the management made interns immerse in the sensory stimulation, and then transform the heavy labor to excited entertainment; thirdly, with the mechanism of “sublimation”(Zizek, 1989), the management made the entertainment labor detached from fun, which made interns felt they were closing to some noble longings. Finally, with these three mechanisms work together, intern workers worked for more than 60 hours a week with enthusiasm – sometimes they need to work for 30 hours continuously, in their three-months long project. And because of the making of a wonderful experience, the depressed work had been transformed to fantastic entertainment.

Through the case study of intern labour, our theoretical contribution is to point out another logic of ideological domination in the labor process. This kind of ideological domination is not like “Marx – Althusser” type, under which the management shaped a certain perception through the labor process, covered up real labor relations with a false consciousness. The logic of this ideological domination is similar to “Lacanian - Zizek” type: through certain experience, these intern labour trapped into the ideological fantasy, and they happily pursued the surplus-enjoyment in an ideological reality. Although few interns had challenged the labour control and even withdrawn from the project team, however, because of the lack of public discussion and the individual attribution tendency of other team members, it's impossible for them to overthrow the symbolic order.

When Neil Postman presented the point view of “amusing ourselves to death”, he had criticized the media culture which was constructed by the show business, however, he didn't refer to the entertainment labor hidden behind it. And we found interns in the TV show production company experienced another form of “amusing themselves to death” and devote themselves to their own exploitation.



## **Heterogeneous forms of informal work and productive chains. The case of the garment industry in Argentina**

**Andres Matta, Cristina Etchegorry; Cecilia Magnano; Carolina Orchasky; Nahuel Aranda; Universidad Nacional de Cordoba**

Different studies and scholars point out that capitalist development requires the existence of an "informal working class", but that class is not presented as a "sector" or segment isolated from its structure but rather as a continuum of economic relations of production and commercialization (bernstein, 2007; hussmans, 2005). This is particularly evident in developing countries in which a large part of economic activities are developed by small production units and "self employed" generating sophisticated networks of exploitation and self-exploitation relationships (davis, 2006).

One of the industries where this can be proven is the garment manufacturing industry. In Argentina this is one of the manufacturing activities that contributes most to the generation of total employment, although their working conditions are far from ideal (lieutier, 2010, ferrerira and schorr, 2013). The sector includes a significant share of non-salaried workers (32%) and unregistered employees (45.5%) (bertranou et al, 2013) with a low percentage of unionization of workers (around 17%) (matta and magnano , 2011).

The fragmentation, relocation and outsourcing of the different links of the production chain, which have particularly deteriorated the working conditions of garment workers, is not an exclusive problem for the country but a global phenomenon that is widely verified (anner et al, 2012; piore and schrank , 2006; o'rourke, 2011).

The seemingly paradoxical situation in Argentina is that the country was for a long time outside the global clothing value chains, not participating as an exporter of labor for large international commercial firms or as a big importer in part thanks to the macroeconomic policies carried out between 2003 and 2015 (matta et al, 2015), This paper presents the preliminary results of an empirical investigation carried out in the region of córdoba (Argentina), one of the three large conglomerates of the country where the industry is concentrated in which the objective will be:



- empirically demonstrate the grid structure assumed by the value chains at the local level and the way in which the relations between the formal and informal economies assume inter-firm relations of contracting and subcontracting
- identify the heterogeneous forms in which the "informal working class" is presented, from different forms of production and commercialization, as well as the connection and coexistence between different sociotechnical regimes (geels and schot, 2010).
- analyze the main limitations of recent industrial development policies to modify this structure of relationships

Although this is an investigation that appeals to methodological triangulation (fielding and schreler, 2001; moran-ellis et al, 2006) using mixed methods, a distinctive aspect of the study is that it has the results of in-depth interviews and a semi-structured survey of a representative sample of 257 formal and informal productive units that make up the sector in the region, from the largest companies to family and one-person enterprises or workers' cooperatives. The analysis of the data will include, among other techniques, the use of "social network analysis". "cluster analysis" and content analysis to achieve these objectives,

**Paid domestic work as a paradigmatic form of informal work. A comparison between Argentina, Chile and Paraguay's regulations.**

**Lorena Poblete, CIS-CONICET/IDES**

Lack of compliance tends to characterise domestic work because employers and workers conceive of it not as a labour relationship but as a form of personal 'assistance.' thus, the contemporary notion of domestic work is still based on the original servitude model that created this set of jobs. At the end of the nineteenth century, when Latin American societies started their demographic transitions, domestic work was the only available position on the labour market for unskilled women and patronage was the most common way of dealing with urban poverty. The state handed over children –particularly, young girls living on the street –to rich families, which sheltered them on the condition that they become servants. A similar



practice known as *criadazgo* continues in Paraguay today.

During the twentieth century, although domestic work changed due to increasing numbers of women on the labour market –especially in middle class jobs–, it continued to be women's work, a work without social value. Since domestic work was seen as a natural activity for women, domestic workers were viewed as family members and subject to the family's authority. Even today, the notion of labour –that is, a paid activity that provides access to labour and social rights– continues to be mixed with the traditional idea of service. The social inequality that led workers from poor sectors to seek work in wealthy households contributes to reaffirming this model. In this context, labour legislation is considered protection against discriminatory practices but not essential to the organisation or regulation of this kind of labour relations.

Thus, undeclared employment is the norm in this sector, which means that labour rights do not apply and workers have no access to social benefits. Given that the state has traditionally been unwilling or unable to ensure compliance with the law, informal arrangements govern this particular type of labour relation in most cases. Therefore, for the law to be implemented, employers and domestic workers have to engage in a contractual relationship.

In different ways, legislators from Argentina, Chile and Paraguay sought to change the cultural notion of domestic work in order to transform this familiar relationship based on care and trust into a contractual labour relation regulated by the law. As legislators reiterated several times during the congressional debates, the new laws needed to revolutionise social and cultural order. This was the ultimate challenge for regulatory reforms on domestic work legislation in these countries. Hence, the old question remains: how can laws change cultural norms and what legal resources are available to transform social practices? In particular, can the law transform labour practices like those associated with domestic work where the law is not acknowledged as the governing principle? Based on the analysis of legislations and congressional debates, this paper aims to understand how legislators of these three countries addressed to these issues.

**The politics of precarious hegemony in post-crisis Argentina: Precarious work and union strategies during the Kirchnerista era (and beyond)**



## Rodolfo Elbert

The neoliberal experiment in Argentina resulted in the deepest social and economic crisis in the history of the country. In terms of the industrial workplace, labor relations were shaped by rising unemployment, precarious and informal work in the framework of widespread flexibility agreements between companies and unions. After the disastrous crisis of 1998-2002, the country's economy started to grow as prices for its major exports began to rise. In the context of rapid growth, the *Kirchnerista* government was able to raise taxes on agricultural exports, stimulate job creation by expanding the domestic market, and support collective bargaining agreements for established labor unions. In terms of the occupational structure, this pattern of economic growth increased the relative weight of salaried industrial workers within the total workforce. What type of labor regime was established in the industrial workplace in Argentina during this phase of economic recovery? What is the relationship between this regime and the larger political and economic dynamics of development in post-crisis Argentina?

The hypothesis that I defend in this paper is that the industrial workplace in Argentina during this period was regulated by a "precarious hegemonic regime" (Braga, 2011) based on a combination of rising employment and salaries with a persistent working class fragmentation. In particular, I analyze the micro-politics of this fragmentation as expressed in the implementation of temporary contracts and subcontracting arrangements in three industrial firms located in the industrial belt of the Northern Gran Buenos Aires between 2005 and 2011. In the first part of the paper I analyze different strategies that workplace unions developed in order to confront precarious work and identify the variables that might explain the variation in union strategies as well as the outcomes of the different campaigns, which include the type of factory regime, the organizing logic of the union and the structural power of precarious workers. The systematic comparison of the cases and a detailed discussion of these variables aim to explain the paradox of a labor regime that combined higher salaries and rising employment with persistent precarious work arrangements. In particular, it seems that the presence of a bureaucratic union at the workplace was a condition for the stability of the precarious hegemonic regime based on a fragmented industrial citizenship. In the workplace, bureaucratic unions developed a strategy of *subordinated integration* that tolerated the activism of precarious workers to get higher salaries but did not challenge precarious arrangements. On the other hand, grassroots left-oriented unions supported workers organizing drives against work precarity which questioned the structural basis of the precarious hegemonic regime.

In the second part of the paper, I explore the implications of these cases to understand the relationship between state policies and economic development in

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Argentina during the Kirchner era and the recent neoliberal comeback in the country. First, I argue that in the post-crisis period the Argentine state tolerated precarious work arrangements in order to foster capital investments after the economic breakdown. Based on a revitalized union bureaucracy in the industrial workplace, Argentina's post-neoliberal political economy produced an unusually fragmented industrial citizenship which was only questioned by grassroots organizing drives and left oriented unions. Since 2015, Macri's government imposed a number of pro-market reforms, including massive layoffs from government agencies and cuts in important public utility subsidies, such as those that previously applied to electricity and water provision. The devaluation of the peso meant that most wages could not keep pace with inflation for ordinary consumer goods; leading (like in 2014) to a drastic increase in poverty. The industrial workplace is again under the pressure of rising unemployment and sector-based flexibility agreements. In this context of neoliberal counter-offensive, resistance to the coming neoliberal offensive needs to include the same grassroots unions that fought workplace precarity during the *Kirchnerista* government.

## session 3

### **Industrial zoning in india's 'corridors of development': towards a comparative labour regime analysis**

**Satoshi Miyamura, Soas London**

Industrial restructuring in india over recent decades has involved significant realignment in the geography of production as well as transformation in the labour process and work organisations. Ongoing debates on industrial development around the delhi-mumbai industrial corridor (dmic) and the golden quadrilateral projects highlight linkages between industry, finance and logistics, as well as their interplay with the state. What is less emphasised is that these corridor projects involve industrial areas with different patterns of labour deployment, control and relations of production. Drawing on fieldwork in regions of india with contrasting patterns of accumulation, and with particular emphasis on delhi, kolkata and mumbai, the three key industrial zones in the corridor projects, the paper examines the trajectories of



industrial restructuring and the responses by labour movements over the past two decades. It is hypothesised that diverse manifestations of the industrial restructuring process give rise to different evolution of labour (control) regimes, which in turn shape opportunities and constraints on labour's capacity to organise itself in specific ways, leading to possibilities and spaces for new forms of labour organisations and activism to emerge.

## **Neo-developmentalism, authoritarian neoliberalism and labour in the global south: lessons from the argentine and turkish experiences, 2001-2017**

Sumercan Bozkurt Gungen,

In 2001, both Argentina and turkey witnessed the most devastating economic crises in their recent histories. The post-2001 political-economic restructuring processes displayed important differences in these two countries, implying a neo-developmental orientation in the former and the entrenchment of the neoliberal agenda with increasingly authoritarian characteristics in the latter. In this paper, i explore how labour relations and labour policies have differently shaped these two post-crisis trajectories. I argue that the neo-developmental experience in Argentina was marked by 'disciplining by collective/institutional incorporation' of both the precarious and unionized segments of the labouring classes in the policy making processes. In contrast, the authoritarian neoliberal configuration in turkey was characterized by 'disciplining by unmediated/individual incorporation', which at the same time implied collective/institutional exclusion of the labouring classes from policy making processes. While the forms of disciplining

Labour, enabled different scales of capital to avoid giving major concessions to labour in turkey; both trade unions and the movement of the unemployed forced the governments and different fractions of capital to adopt more institutionalised forms of labour involvement in wage setting, labour policy making and distribution of public revenues in Argentina. Despite these important differences, the argentine and turkish experiences highlight in distinctive manners the importance of autonomous collective/democratic empowerment for a progressive and sustainable exit fromneoliberalism.

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## **Patrimonial relations or capitalist dynamics of control and contest? Case study of a state-owned joint venture firm in Saudi Arabia**

Ayman Adham, Anita Hammer, De Montfort University

This paper comes out of a broader research on understanding Saudi capitalism. We presented the theoretical framework with some initial empirical findings at last year's ILPC in Sheffield, 2017. This paper presents detailed empirical findings from one of the case studies. The research situates itself in recent scholarship that links the disciplines of political economy and labour process (e.g. Hauptmeier and Vidal; Newsome, Taylor, Bair and Rainnie, 2015; Smith, 2016).

Broadly, the research questions the ability of a post-varieties of capitalism (voc) framework, namely 'patrimonial capitalism' (Schlumberger, 2008) or more recently 'patrimonial market economy' (Buhr & Frankenberger, 2014) to comprehend the reality of capitalism in Saudi Arabia. Proponents of this model mainly draw on two theories, the rentier state (Mahdavy, 1970) and neo-patrimonialism (Eisenstadt, 1973). They argue that the patrimonial regime survives, and in some cases such as Saudi Arabia, succeeds in maintaining high growth rate, through operating a two highly informal coordination mechanisms: *coercion* and *co-optation*. While the incumbent regime represses any rivals through the threat of using force and conducting military actions as a last resort, it heavily relies on buying the loyalties of various actors through exclusive patronage to the elites and inclusive benefits to citizens; mainly through public employment, and relief from taxation.

We argue that while this post-voc framework is relevant to understanding societal dimensions, institutional structures and state-capital relations to an extent, it falls into the same trap as the original voc model of prioritising one actor in the political economy; in this case, the state rather than the firm. It focuses on the coherent patrimonial relations between social actors with limited space for contradictions of capitalism. A focus on the mechanisms of coercion and co-optation overlooks the



global dimension, the role of migrant labour and workplace dynamics of control and resistance that shape and structure state-capital-labour relations and Saudi capitalism.

Through a detailed case study of a state-owned joint venture (jv) firm (22 interviews with workers, supervisors and hr managers and through socialising with workers in 2016-17), the paper shows the contradictions of 'saudisation' as a co-optation mechanism at the workplace and the tensions that exist in the notorious sponsorship system known by 'kafala'. The state as an owner avoids its policy of saudisation introduced to solve unemployment among its citizens, which currently stands at 12.8% (Saudi Arabia. General Authority for Statistics, 2017). The saudisation quota policy is avoided by hiring contractors to provide temporary migrant labour who are absent from its official payroll. This outsourcing method does not only enable the firm to show compliance with the saudisation requirement but also ensures the supply of cheaper disposable workforce. A closer examination of the functioning of kafala and saudisation hints at dissatisfaction of Saudis and migrant manual workers at the workplace. Both avoid following regulations and share the workload informally to reduce effort. Resistance at its extreme is witnessed in the form of suicides of some migrant workers at the workplace.

In conclusion, the state does not and cannot follow its policies of saudisation in its own firm contradicting the patrimonial model of the supposed smooth functioning of processes of co-optation or coercion. The reliance on global labour questions a primary focus on societal dimensions of patrimonialism to the exclusion of global pressures. The picture at the Saudi workplace is not coherent, rather it is full of tensions and driven by capitalist logic.

#### **Session 4**

#### **"We fight against the union!" ethnography of labor relations in Mexican automotive industry**

**Paolo Marinaro, Universidad Nacional Autónoma De México, University Of California San Diego**

This presentation addresses issues related to workplace resistance, collective action and trade union practices taking place in the automotive industry in Mexico. I will focus on autoworkers' everyday lives in factories owned by Fiat-Chrysler Automobiles and Honda to point out strategies and discourses framing the recent wave of wildcat



strikes occurring in the mexican manufacturing industry. Based on ethnographic research, i will show how the experiences of conflict shape the construction of workers' political subjectivity and the relation with trade unions and the state.

The automotive industry has grown exponentially in mexico the last ten years, making it the third largest global exporter of cars. It provides more than one million jobs, of which 68% go to workers on the assembly line. Despite this extraordinary growth, actual wages have decreased consistently since the 1980s, classifying mexican salaries among the five lowest in the world in 2014. At the center of this increasing disparity, unions play a significant and controversial role. The rising rate of unionization that has accompanied industrial restructuring since late 1970s is the result of the adaptation of trade unions to corporate demands. Mexican scholars refer to these organizations as "employer protection unions." These organizations are known for colluding with corporations unconditionally, defending private investments from workers' demands, combatting legitimate independent unions and labor movements through illegal means, and engaging in corruption, intimidation, and other violent practices. The protection relation between corporations and unions is institutionalized by official labor boards through the recognition of "protection contracts" signed without the knowledge of the workers, typically before the inauguration of the factories.

Despite fierce repression, mexican auto workers organize in autonomous and clandestine movements to fight against employer protection unions and to resist precarious working conditions. Wildcat strikes are considered privileged instruments of struggle since they avoid the institutional protocol that gives control to the union and the labor board. To sustain the struggle beyond the stage of the wildcat strike the construction of international solidarity is a fundamental strategy. The participation of international unions and ngos guarantees certain protections against threats and aggressions, as well as empowers local movements, allowing workers to face transnational corporations in different regions and territorial scales.

The experience of mexican workers offers an opportunity to focus on the processes and conflicts through which workers' political subjectivity is constructed and deconstructed daily in extremely undemocratic contexts. These conflicts are emblematic of workers' reactions to the precariousness of working conditions in sectors that have traditionally been unionized and regulated by highly structured collective bargaining procedures. The case of mexican workers is particularly relevant, as it shows these processes in a moment of profound transformation, highlighting the strategies and discourses that underlie workers' appropriation of structural reforms

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and preside over the construction of antagonistic subjectivities in the context of the global supply chain

## **Industrial relocation and migrant labour resistance in southwestern china: the case of the 2015 cross-factory strike in chengdu's footwear industry**

**Daniel Fuchs, SOAS**

Over the last decade, china's evolving migrant labour regime has been distinguished by an increasing number of strikes and workers' protests. Research on the patterns of migrant labour resistance has so far, however, largely been confined to the developed coastal regions. Literature on the recent phenomenon of manufacturing capital relocation from coastal to inland areas and the concomitant geographical diversification of the chinese migrant labour regime is only beginning to emerge. Against this background, the paper provides an in-depth case study analysis of the collective strike action by approximately 2000 workers from more than ten different factories in the footwear industry cluster of chengdu in december 2015. It draws on 50 semi-structured interviews with workers, factory management staff, state officials, lawyers and academics conducted between 2016 and 2017. The paper increases our understanding of china's migrant labour regime beyond the traditional core regions of china's export-oriented industries in two ways. First, it demonstrates that the strike action reflects an ongoing crisis in the local footwear industry arising from a stalled process of industrial relocation and its declining competitiveness. This stands in contrast to the continued self-branding of "china's capital of women's shoes" in chengdu as the country's fourth most important footwear cluster. Second, it explains how new reproductive arrangements of migrant workers employed in physical proximity to their rural hometowns are shaping their class subjectivities and collective agency in face of this crisis.

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**When and what to do for triumph? Worker's strategies in the strikes and mobilization power against the firm in Chile.**

**Diego Velásquez, Domingo Pérez Valenzuela, Observatorio De Huelgas Laborales COES-UAH**

This research explores the relation between the tactical repertoire used by workers and its effect in the possibility to triumph in strikes in Chile. The labor conflict literature has scarcely studied the power of the strike in terms of the strategies and tactics of mobilization deployed by the workers to beat the counterpart. Rather, the analysis has focused on structural aspects of workers to determine their capacity to win. Within this framework, the duration of the strike -and its determinants- are a well-studied indicator of workers' ability to damage production, wherein shorter strikes tend to be more successful. However, this indicator has not been studied in relation to the complementary actions of mobilization, that is, according to the decision of the workers to deploy more or less disruptive tactics.

To explore the relation between the duration of the strikes and the tactical repertoires, we use the statistical database of Observatorio de Huelgas Laborales COES-UAH (labor strikes observatory) of Chile 2010-2016. This database registers the labor strikes through the protest event analysis methodology and includes many sociological variables as tactics and police presence. The analysis has two moments. In the first place, we use the latent class analysis (LCA) to detect the tactical repertoires present in the strikes in Chile by the combination of patterns of tactics in the events. Second, we explore the hazard function in relation to the strike ending by the event history analysis through the Cox regression and estimating the time in days. In this way, we evaluate the capacity of triumph of each tactical repertoire in different moments on the strike.

The results suggest that we are in the presence of a different kind of power considered by Olin Wright -associational and structural power. Rather, this is a power in movement or mobilization power. Specifically, the use of complementary tactics enhances the hazard of finishing the strike, but just in the first ten days of strikes. Then the workers



lose the control on the results and they should straggle back. Further, this suggest an employer strategy of wear down to the strikes avoiding make concessions and start the negotiations. Also, we found three classes of repertoires in the strikes: a group without complementary repertoire, content repertoire and transgressive repertoire. The use of a transgressive repertoire is more usefull in the first three of strikes, then are not significant differences with the content repertoire.

## Session 5

### **Somisa-Siderar san nicolas: a study from privatization to labor outsourcing (1990-2015).**

**Julia Strada, conicet - flacso**

This paper is part of a broader investigation that aims to analyze the business strategies in the Argentine steel industry and, on the other side, the resistance strategies of working class, from the last decade of the 1990s to recent years (1990-2015). In the framework of this general objective, the work aims to study the productive reconversion and labor outsourcing, according to the links between both phenomena and, at the same time, the impacts in the steelworkers' organization and living conditions. The considered case is the state-owned company Somisa, today Siderar, located in the city of San Nicolás, province of Buenos Aires, Argentina. The hypothesis indicates there is a particular link between the restructuring from the company between 1990 and 1991, privatization in 1992 and the expansion of labor outsourcing in the manufacturing plant. Methodology complements quantitative and qualitative strategies going from the realization of interviews with key informants to the work with databases provided by trade union sources.

### **Time & the sweatshop: the multiple 'circulations' & temporalities of exploitation**

**Alessandra Mezzadri**

Time is often a neglected aspect in studies of industrial development and work, often dominated by linear, modernising narratives celebrating the 'liberating nature' of industrial work vis-à-vis other (informal) activities. Aimed at debunking these narratives, this article explores time as a crucial category of analysis shaping the dynamics of exploitation. First, it develops a political economy of time building on Marxian thought and feminist insights on social reproduction, to discuss the productive and reproductive temporalities of exploitation. Secondly, it analyses how



these temporalities shape distinct forms of labour circulation characterising contemporary industrial work. Thirdly, the article illustrates these theoretical points in practice, by drawing on evidence from india's 'sweatshop regime'. It develops an analysis of forms of labour circulation across the sweatshop regime, and it illustrates their link to distinct temporalities of production and reproduction and their gendered features. Finally, through an analysis of twenty life histories of former women factory workers, the article stresses how garment work is merely a temporary moment in the life of the working poor. Post-work dynamics reveal that women re-enter informal occupations; leave industrial work with no savings and with high debt, and experience less time-pressures outside the factory. A time-based analysis of industrial work in global labour-intensive industries like garment suggests the presence of a revolving door between industrial and informal work in the lives of the working poor, while also disproving notions of industrial work as 'better' work in developing settings.

## **Single problem, multiple quests: coping and resistance strategies in the face of current precarity experiences, the case of turkey**

**Elifhacısalihođlu, trakya university**

This study examines coping and resistance strategies of the working class in turkey in the face of the current precarity process. Coping and resistance strategies in the face of precarity take place in two different forms: individual and collective forms. In this study, forms of struggle and resistance are analyzed by including these two tendencies.

Precarity has been discussed with an increasing interest in the scholarship in terms of naming the projection of contemporary socioeconomic processes on the working class. Beyond scholarly discussions, precarity has served as an impetus for defiance / resistance practices in the context of social movements, and constitutes the starting point of some of the demonstrations / social movements in practice. However, in turkey, the process of precarity has been discussed on very limited levels, and most of these discussions remain as the repetitions of the eurocentric literature. Studies analyzing the experiences of struggle and resistance of the working class by using information gathered directly from the working class itself in the face of current precarity process in turkey have not recieved the deserved interest,. Case studies so far conducted, however, still remain on individual levels.



This study questions the forms of survival, resistance and coping strategies of the working class in turkey in the face of current precarity experiences. In search for answers to this question, this study aims at filling the lacuna by making use of the information gathered from the experiences. The lacuna concerning qualitative researches necessitates such a study. For the purpose of giving an answer to this question, this study the data of a qualitative research carried out in 2014. In the research, 28 people from different positions in labour market in turkey are indepth interviewed. In addition to the interviews, by attending as a participant observerto the various meetings and demonstrations held by people in similar positions, more qualitative data has been gathered. After the completion of the research, by keeping contact with most of the interviewees between the years 2015-2016, not only the observation of the continuity of precarity has been made possible, but also the data of the case study has flourished. The findings gathered from indepth interviews, coping strategies, struggle and resistance practices in the current precarity process are all subsumed under two titles. In the first title, i.e. Individual struggle and resistance practices, additional job, working in the public sector, qualification, education and experience, establishing a trust-based relationship, having/running own business (entrepreneurship and workers' self-management) come to the forefront. Under the second title, i.e. Collective struggle and resistance practices, collective movement in the workplace, experience of demonstration and unionization, new organisation forms exist.



**Fair skies. Argentinian airport workers' union and the imagination of an alternative development**

**Sandra Wolanski, uba/unil**

Development is a notion that has long been the subject of anthropological studies, which have lengthily discussed its roots on a linear evolutionary conception and pointed out the relations of power that shape what is globally understood as 'development'. Showing that it is often contested and shaped from below, academics in the global south have long focused on the actions and initiatives of indigenous peoples, or rural communities. In this paper, i want to examine instead how trade unions in urban areas seek to influence and shape what is considered 'development', by discussing and mobilizing from the standpoint of their workplaces and the labor processes involved.

With this goal, this paper presents results from an ongoing post-doctoral research with the union of airport workers in Argentina – apa, asociación del personal aeronáutico. In the context of a progressive implementation of neoliberal reforms in the country, a politics of 'open skies' is being pushed forward, and new 'low-cost' airlines are pushing to enter the market. The courses of action in this scenario could be multiple, and apa -as well as the other airline workers' unions- are faced to dilemmas concerning the goals of union action. I show how today the union's action revolves around the idea of public (air) transportation as aa public service that reaches 'everyone' and thus constitutes a citizenship right, as opposed to a model centered on private gain. This stand is not only discursive, but concerns everyday negotiations of job positions, companies' investments, priviledged air routes and the introduction of new technologies at work. Furthermore, as opposed to a discourse that strongly insists on the need to “integrate to the world” in the terms of transnational companies -as an equivalent to development-, apa develops a strong course of action toward generating strong global airline and transportation workers' networks, centered on working conditions and workers' rights, but also in the services and conditions offered to passengers. As a whole, this paper seeks to shed light on the ways workers imagine and defend alternative models of development, linking everyday practices in the workplace to larger issues of equality, justice, public good, citizenship rights and globalization.

**From capitalist firms to worker cooperatives: democratizing the labour process and transforming communities via Argentina’s worker-recuperated enterprises**



**Marcelo Vieta, University of Toronto**

Argentina's worker-recuperated enterprises (*empresas recuperadas por sus trabajadores*, or erts) began to emerge as workers' bottom-up responses to the collapse of the country's neoliberal model during the years spanning the turn of the millennium. As business bankruptcies and unemployment rates soared to unprecedented levels during these years, more and more workers in a broad cross-section of Argentina's urban-based economy began to takeover and self-manage capitalist workplaces in crisis that had formerly employed them, reconstituting them as worker cooperatives. Today, almost 400 erts exist across the country involving almost 16,000 workers. And they continue to emerge in response to a new wave of anti-labour legislation, business closures, unemployment and precarity, and myriad other socio-economic challenges unleashed since early-2016 by the administration of Mauricio Macri (Ruggeri, 2016; Ruggeri & Vieta, 2015; Vieta, 2018). As a rejoinder to these challenges, erts have been practicing forms of *autogestión* (self-management) that both contest the neoliberal enclosures of life while prefiguring other, more directly-democratic and less exploitative economic arrangements grounded in redesigned labour processes and community-centred development. Argentina's erts have thus proven to be viable alternatives by workers themselves to macro- and micro-economic crises, anti-labour policies, and the worst effects of the neoliberal model on working people, inspiring other worker self-management projects in other parts of the world (Atzeni & Vieta, 2014; Vieta, Depedri, & Carrano, 2017; Vieta, 2018).

This paper summarizes research I have been conducting over the past decade with Argentina's erts (Vieta, 2010, 2013, 2014, 2018), soon to be published as a book in Brill's "historical materialism" series (Vieta, 2018). The paper assesses: (1) the political economic conditions and historical labour struggles out of which erts emerge; (2) their worker-protagonists' struggles to re-appropriate once privately owned capitalist firms, reconstruct them as worker cooperatives, and thereby democratize the labour process; and (3) how ert workers transform themselves (from managed employees to self-managed workers), their workplaces (from hierarchical organizations to democratically run worker cooperatives), and communities (from depleted neighbourhoods to self-provisioning localities).

The study deploys two complementary research approaches: a "political economy of the working class" stream rooted in class-struggle Marxist theory (Lebowitz, 2003; Marx, 1864/1978; McNally, 1993) and an extended case study stream (Burawoy, 1999). Extensive ethnographic observations in four illustrative ert case studies are complemented by semi-structured interviews with 60 ert protagonists. Guiding the



analysis are the conceptual tools offered by labour process theory (atzeni, 2010; burawoy, 1985; marx, 1867/1867) and social movement learning approaches (foley, 1999; hall & clover, 2005; livingstone & roth, 2001; overwein, 2000; schugurensky, 2000). The interviews include a series of embedded learning indicators that specifically gauge for changes in worker-members' subjectivities from having participated in workplace takeovers and the subsequent dynamics of self-managed labour processes that emerge in their new worker cooperatives. The paper's findings detail how ert workers: (1) acquire new job skills, learn new cooperative and collective values and practices, and personally and collectively transform from being involved in the ert; (2) democratize the labour process of once-capitalist firms; (3) incorporate egalitarian pay schemes and job sharing strategies; and (4) recuperate the social production of wealth by opening up shops to the community and engaging in community social and economic development "from below."

I conclude that Argentina's erts are promising and prefigurative alternative work organizations that sketch out how new worker subjectivities *and* workplaces can be created from out the shell of former capitalist workplaces. Erts, in short, delineate suggestive proposals for how workers themselves *can*—and *do*—re-conceptualize new forms of work organizations and community-focused social relations of production rooted in solidarity, collaborative information and resource exchange, and mutual aid rather than individualism, commodification, and competition.

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### **An ethnographic perspective on the forms of union organisation within popular economy in Buenos Aires, Argentina**

**Dolores Señorans, uba**

This paper presents results from my doctoral research on practices of militancy and collective organisation of life in *popular economy* experiences in the metropolitan area of buenos aires, Argentina. My work is part of a broader research project focused on the ethnographic study of the practices of collective organization that "popular sectors" carry out to ensure the production and reproduction of life, considering their relationship with varied modes of domination and government.

In this paper, i will focus on the ethnographic fieldwork carried out together with activists and workers of a cooperative formed by garment workers located in a municipality in the southern part of the province of buenos aires. The process of organisation of this cooperative took place in a popular neighbourhood created by a recent land occupation. A high percentage of migrant workers from bolivia and paraguay whose main occupation is the manufacturing of garment in their own homes reside in this neighbourhood.

The creation of this cooperative was driven by a movement that belongs to the confederation of workers of the popular economy (ctep), a union representing workers usually defined as "informal" or "precarious": garment workers, waste pickers, street vendors, among others. In this sense, the cooperative was formed as part of the construction of a union organisation that sought to generate decent work conditions and "rights" for garment workers. In Argentina, the garment manufacturing sector has been a paradigmatic case of the proliferation of illegal,



informal or even servile forms of labour in recent decades (gago, 2014). Numerous studies pointed out that since the 90s a process of "outsourcing" of production was triggered (d'ovidio, et al, 2007; aduriz, 2009; lieutier, 2010; salgado, 2015). This entailed the transfer of the manufacturing towards informal workshops with extremely precarious working conditions and numerous cases of human trafficking for labour exploitation have been found in workshops popularly known as "clandestine".

My research revealed that the construction of this cooperative and the union organisation of which it forms a part leaned on family relationships, migratory networks, and solidarity relationships built during the land occupation that gave birth to the neighbourhood. These relationships constituted a capital resource for the garment industry value chains, and also became the condition of possibility for the development of a collective project for the production of "rights". This paper draws on a series of recent studies that analysed the way in which the capitalist restructuring has generated a "multiplication of the proletariat" (denning, 2011; carbonella and kasmir, 2015) and proposed to reflect on their implications for the forms of labour organizing. I contend that the development of this particular form of union organisation among garment workers has politicised a comprehensive set of living conditions in urban contexts from which these workers experienced capital accumulation in everyday life thus articulating militancy, productive work, and the development of collective forms of reproduction of life such as care and the struggle for urban space.

## **Stream 4: Artificial Intelligence**

**Session 1, Thursday 22nd, 9.00-10.30**

**Employer control and working response in the age of the computerization: the case of companies of constant flow in Bolivia**

**Tania Aillón, IESE - UMSS**

The worldwide transformations of the work, in the last 40 years, have supposed

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fundamental changes in different dimensions. In this paper we focus on thinking over, the impact of the transformations in the social relations between the capital and work, on the scope and productive possibilities of automation in the computer age. It is a gateway to analyze one of the fundamental theses of the historical materialism: the contradiction between the social relations of production and the development of the work strengths, which in our research question is translated into value: How do transformations in the forms of management and control on the workers, in the age of the computer processes of work, impact on the productive efficiency in companies of constant flow?

To answer to our question, we use information obtained by means of ethnographic work in transnational companies in Bolivia, during approximately 3 years field work, in which semi-structured observation with the use of field diary was resorted to and the development of in-depth qualitative interviews with key informants. For the theoretical reflection of empirical material, this paper takes up the tradition of the Marxist contribution about the struggle between workers and employers for the control of the work process. In this way, recovers; on one hand, the contribution of authors such as Paul Edwards and Stephen Marglín of American radical current and; on the other hand, the contributions of authors such as Karel Kosic, j., Thompson, James Scott, Michel Certeau, William Rosberry, referred to the configuration of the response to domination by social groups and subaltern classes. Based on epistemological reflection, on the theoretical production of these authors, and in the light of our empirical reference, we discuss with the poststructuralist epistemology of major influence on the contemporary intellectual production of the sociology of work. This theoretical perspective, has as its main exponent, the clinical sociology, which postulates a dualistic understanding of the subject-worker, considering it as a target object, which can not affect. In its consideration, the workers are seen, eminently, as passive objects, victims of a perverse domination managerial ("colonization of the workers subjectivity" Blanchard, 1999, De Gaulejac, 2005, Lahera, 2206, Salmon 2007, among others). Our field results denied this objectified view of workers, showing, how their own answers (fitness, strength, struggle) to dominance, become not only channels of visualization of the contradiction, between the development of the productive forces and the relations of capitalist domination and exploitation, but also, in sign of their capabilities and possibilities of open alternatives to brake that control the development of the productive efficiency, constitutes employer control upon the work.



## Human-Computer Decision Making

Philip Garnett, University of York

The potential impact of advanced analytics, algorithms, and perhaps most importantly artificial intelligence (AI) on future employment is currently receiving a lot of attention. Particularly in the case of AIs replacing large numbers of low skilled jobs. However, the impact of advanced analytics, algorithms, and AI will not be limited to low skilled jobs. In fact it could be argued that many jobs have been feeling the impact of advanced analytics and AI for some time, and the changes the future will bring to all areas of employment will likely be significant.

Robert Harris in his novel, *The Fear Index*, paints a dystopian future where a rogue AI manipulates and kills employees of an advanced quantitative hedge fund, ultimately taking over the company and declaring that “in the future all companies will be alive”. Perhaps an extreme imagined future, but it does raise interesting questions about how we are going to work with our digital colleagues of the future. An equally dystopian alternative is of the inscrutable decision making machine that is blindly followed by the obedient human employee, “computer says no” (Carol Beer of BBC’s *Little Britain*).

The paper will explore the issues around working with computers in human-computer decision making processes, particularly their impact on front-line staff and middle management. Where the interaction between the human and computer is less of a (celebrated?) collaboration between domain expert and AI, and more of a sequence of steps where the human and AI respond to the inputs and outputs of the other. This situation presents a challenge for both human employee and manager. The employee cannot seek explanation for the decision of the AI, and therefore must choose whether or not the recommendation is followed. What consequence does this have for both the role of discretion in decision making, and the situation of responsibility? Similarly, how does one *manage* an AI? A manager is also unable to seek the bases of an algorithmic decision, and therefore if the responsibility ultimately lies with a human how do we consistently determine the best management response to when the AI is correctly or incorrectly ignored? The paper will also explore the future of management itself, as the proposal of some quantitative hedge funds to replace managers with AIs suggests that the role of manager is also not beyond the reach of



advance AI.

### **The Impact of AI and Robotics on Service and Knowledge Work: A Literature Review**

**Donald Hislop, Crispin Coombs, Sarah Barnard, Stanimira Taneva, Loughborough University Business School**

One of the most significant recent technological developments concerns the application of robotics and Artificial Intelligence (AI) to jobs that up to now have been considered safe from automation. Described as the second machine age, analysts and commentators have forecast mass unemployment from the robotisation of a wide range of predictable, repetitive job roles (Brynjolfsson & McAfee 2016). What sets this change apart from previous technological revolutions, such as the automation of factory work in the 19th century, is the potential of robotisation to affect dramatic changes to the demand for skill-intensive, knowledge-based workers (Loebbecke & Picot 2015). This 'robotification' has generated considerable debate regarding the strategic impacts that widespread adoption of robots and AI could have on the nature of work, the demand for workers and wider society. For example, there is considerable disagreement regarding the strategic impacts of the widespread implementation of robots and AI on global employment levels. With respect to Machine Learning (ML) and mobile robotics technologies, Frey & Osborne (2013) suggest 47% of jobs in the United States economy could be eliminated. The Bank of England suggested that up to 15 million jobs in the UK could be lost through the utilisation of advanced robotics and automation technologies, with those most likely to be affected undertaking administrative, clerical and production work (Elliott 2015). However, Arntz et al. (2016) caution that these dramatic predictions are derived from analyses which assume that that entire job roles will be automated. Taking a task-based rather than a job-based analysis to data on OECD economies, Arntz et al. (2016) found that only 9% of jobs were potentially automatable. Further, historical experience indicates that the extent to which technological developments substitute for labour, can be counterbalanced by the way in which such developments complement and augment labour, creating increased demand for labour in new ways (Autor 2015). A valuable source of guidance for understanding these developments is current academic knowledge. Indeed, there are a considerable number of robotics and AI related research contributions that consider the potential impacts of these new technologies. However, these contributions lie in a wide range of scholarly disciplines that draw on contrasting research paradigms, theories, methods and



perspectives. In an effort to make sense of the contemporary academic literature in this domain we examine the robotics and AI research relating to the automation of knowledge work that has been published between January 2011 and November 2016. Our occupational focus is on all forms of non-manual work, including white-collar office and administrative work, service work, and what can be labelled knowledge work. We exclude manufacturing work because automation is relatively mature in manufacturing contexts and the most significant developments associated with the work-related use of robotics and AI have been in occupations that have previously made little use of them (Brynjolfsson & McAfee 2011; Loebbecke & Picot 2015). This review provides several contributions to the literature. First, our review responds to calls to synthesise the current state of academic knowledge regarding robotisation of knowledge and service work across multiple disciplines (Loebbecke & Picot 2015). Second, from our sample analysis we identify that a large number of existing studies adopt proof of concept or experimental trial methods. We recommend that research is needed that investigates the workplace utilisation of these new technologies, to better understand the diverse impacts robotisation is having on work. Third, studies suggest that the social aspects of human-machine interaction are an important mediating factor for the successful realisation of the benefits from automation. We recommend that research is needed to better understand this relationship and its impact on the way in which automation technologies are utilised (Aleksander 2017).  
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**Stream 4: Session 2, Thursday 22nd, 13.30-15.00**

**Resisting AI: mapping early social conflict around AI**



**Juan Grigera, Universidad de Quilmes/Conicet**

The recent capitalist restructuring of services, in particular the impact of Artificial Intelligence poses a challenging set of questions for those studying labour processes. This paper focuses on the new forms of resistance and conflict emerging in different kinds of service work. The paper discusses the methodological significance of the almost absence of resistance to the rapidly growing field of technologies known as 'Artificial Intelligence'.

If AI has been able to transform and automate the work of travel agents, data analysts, truck drivers, lawyers, and is now threatening translators, managers, doctors, programmers, and security agents, among many others, then the question would be what are the forms of social protest against this. The evidence suggests both different reactions to this restructuring and puts a limit to the 'AI-Washing' discourse and the capitalist excitement over its effectiveness.

**The future of self- and other-tracking at work: Affect and unseen labour**

**PHOEBE MOORE, UNIVERSITY OF LEICESTER**

Employers and clients capture and use big data for what is called 'people analytics', reputation profiling, electronic performance management, platform/gig work interface management and indeed, surveillance. I ask: given all of these areas for capture, why not capture emotional and affective labour to assess its value, not to pay for it, but to determine workers' likelihood of collapse? Wellness programmes have now begun to include information about workers' daily steps, stairs climbed and sleep, and will soon be used to understand our states of 'well-being, mental health and financial wellness' (Kohll 2016). These are typical areas where unseen labour is captured in professional workplaces which are only somewhat less impacted by precarity (Moore, 2017). Digitalization of what I call 'unseen labour', however, is different from the measure of work by older forms of technologies such as seen in scientific management, where there was some attention paid to fatigue (but not joy or distress). Unseen labour produces an 'immaterial' form of value creation (Lazzarato 2014) through providing data that intends to reflect labour that was not consider possible for measure in the past. Measurement of productivity at work is now not limited to material outputs, but invades into subjectivities, affect and emotion (see Weeks,1998).



**Kohll, A. (2016) '8 Things you Need to Know about Employee Wellness Programs' *Forbes* 21/04/16**

**Online: <http://www.forbes.com/sites/alankohll/2016/04/21/8-things-you-need-to-know-about-employee-wellness-programs/#1ec78c4d610c> (accessed 20/02/17).**

**Lazzarato, M. (2014) *Signs and Machines: Capitalism and the Production of Subjectivity* (Semiotext(e)).**

**Moore, P. V. (2017) *The Quantified Self in Precarity: Work, Technology and What Counts* (Oxon: Routledge).**

**Weeks, K. (1998) *Constituting Feminist Subjects* (Ithaca NY: Cornell University Press).**

## **The Reorganisation of Processing in the Context of Automatisations and Artificial Intelligence - The Case of an Insurance Company**

**Johan Buchholz, TU München**

Automatisation changes the way in which service is conducted. This simple observation is the starting point of the here presented empirical case study: In 15 interviews with employees, the workers council and managers from different hierarchical levels, and additional ethnographic fieldwork in selected departments of an insurance company, I investigate the impact of the time-shifted implementation of new software technologies (including an artificial intelligence tool) to the service work process. This approach aims to address the following questions: To which extend are these technologies already used in daily work routines? What are the consequences for organisational structures and intra-organisational boundaries? And how does the work process change in the context of automatisations?

First empirical results show that simple customer inquiries are processed automatically by the systems in some departments, while more complex inquiries are handled by the employees - with the support of different software tools (e.g. the artificial intelligence analyses the content and linguistic behaviour, while improving its analysis in the course of time). The reasons for the implementation of technologies are - according to the management - an envisaged reduction of costs and a higher level of work quality. As a consequence, the rising degree of automatisations leads to

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more complex tasks on the one hand, as the simple and ease-to-solve problems are processed by the computer. On the other hand, the total amount of service work that needs to be done by the employees decreases, due to the rising share of inquiries that are processed by software systems. In some cases, the employees need to develop strategies to trick the system, as the rule-based software-systems do not allow certain procedures that comply with the rules but are not implemented yet.

The usage of these technologies leads to a shared vision of employees, the workers council and the management: the work content of the employees will change completely in the future from processing customer inquiries to a more consulting role.

The empirical data will be analysed with approaches from organisational theory, in order to understand the changing power relations and intra-organisational boundaries in the context of the technology implementation process. However, a theoretical explanation can be drawn through the adaption of labour process theory: The control over the work process and the results is transferred from the service employees to the actors capable of controlling the software tools. Furthermore, the rule-based handling of customer inquiries leads to the requirement of substantiation in case of exceptions, what increases the managements control capability with regard to the work process.

This contribution is work in progress: while the interviews have already been conducted, the ethnographic fieldwork will be completed in autumn 2017 and followed by an in-depth and systematic analysis.

## **Platform capitalism and online gig work: the labour process, resistance, and organising**

**Jamie Woodcock, Mark Graham, Goldsmiths, University of London**

When we use a product, a service, or even an algorithm that was brought into being with digital labour, there is no way to know whether an exhausted worker is behind it; whether they get laid off if they become sick or get pregnant; whether they are spending twenty hours a week just searching for work; how precarious their source of income is; or whether they are being paid an unfairly low wage. According to the World Bank, there are now 5 million digital workers that live all over the world: doing



work that is outsourced via platforms or apps in the ‘gig economy.’ Lacking the ability to collectively bargain, workers have little ability to negotiate wages or working conditions with their employers who are often on the other side of the world. As part of an ongoing research project, we have assessed work processes and conditions in three types of gig economy platforms differentiated by the type of work involved: crowdwork platforms (highly commodified work where clients never interact directly with workers, for example, Mechanical Turk or Crowdfunder), freelance platforms (platforms that facilitate a more direct relationship between client and worker, for example, Upwork or Freelancer), and location-based apps (i.e. apps requiring workers to be in a specific location, for example, Deliveroo, TaskRabbit, or Uber). The platforms present like digital black boxes, deliberately obscuring the labour processes involved. In order to address this, we have analysed the platforms ‘from below’, starting from the perspective of workers involved. This involved an ethnographic approach that develops the methodological tools and insights of sociology of work and labour geographies to refresh and updates these in an online context. Whereas traditionally researchers would be able to approach the factory gates (or office doors), these sites of encounter are now increasingly dispersed in an online space. The ease of starting work on these platforms – signified by their denotation as “gigs” – provides an opportunity to examine the labour process directly as an ethnographic participant. This initial round of data collection on each platform highlighted the keys issues and challenges that were further explored through two subsequent methods: online surveys and interviewing. To conclude, we outline a range of potential responses, including our own plans to develop a ‘Fairwork Foundation’: a project that sits at the intersections of strategies from worker/consumer alliances, and radical transparency.

## **Stream 5: Precarious Work in Comparative Perspective**

**Stream 5: Session 1: Wednesday 21st, 9.00-10.30**

**Innovative cooperation’s model in Europe: a solution to the growing uncertainty in the world of work**

**Francesca Martinelli, Doc Servizi**



The topic of the abstract is a study about an innovative cooperation's model that, born in Europe, is facing the growing uncertainty in the world of work. This study is the result of an ethnographic research of one year at Coopaname, a Parisian CAE, and a comparison with the Italian cooperative Doc Servizi. Main methods used in the research correspond to those of a qualitative research: texts analysis, participant observation, in-depth interview. The research has been held in the frame of a PhD from 2015 to 2017: some results have been already presented in the thesis, but the research is still in progress.

Considering that the image of a full time worker employed all life-long in the same enterprise is today constantly questioned by the socio-economic context, where new forms of precarious work are growing, Western Countries are facing some difficulties in shaping these new forms of work into their employment law, usually based on the classic employed work. In fact, if boundaries of employed work are clear, most of new activities belong to the "grey zone" of work. The "grey zone" gathers all the undefined self-employed work typologies, which belong neither to employed nor to fully independent work. Even if the "grey zone" is an undetermined zone in the employment law, it is not a "no-law" zone, but a zone where it is even possible to invent new rights and institutions. In fact, in the "grey zone" we also find experimentations of new forms of work, which answer to difficulties of the self-employed workers who are isolated and live uncertain employment situations.

In this frame, in France and in Italy we find very innovative experiences of cooperation born in the "grey zone". Particularly, the reference goes to the French model of Cooperatives of Activities and Employment (CAE) and the model created by the Italian cooperative Doc Servizi. These two models are alliances between workers and focus on some specific needs: sharing resources, giving a legal recognition to uncertain employment situations and giving the opportunity to cooperate. Both are an evolution of worker cooperative and offer to self-employed workers one way to obtain both the same rights as employees and autonomy in the management of their business. Actually, the cooperative hires the professional who becomes an employee and, moreover, the cooperative takes in charge the whole bureaucracy connected with his activity. As an employee, the worker is entitled to all the protections of employees and as an associate of a cooperative he is supported in developing his activity and has access to better work conditions.

Through these cooperatives, workers find a solution to their uncertain activities and, working together, obtain more control when they propose themselves in the market and can negotiate better work conditions too. In this way, this cooperative model



gives a concrete answer to the still actual plague of illegal labour and the difficulties in shaping the “grey zone” of work in the existing employment law.

### **Job Insecurity Among Young People in Europe: Between the Objective and Subjective Dimension**

**Valentina Goglio, Sonia Bertolini, University of Turin - Stanford University**

Against the background of a general expansion of precarious employment in Europe, the paper focuses on the how employment instability is perceived and lived by workers and how it affects the representation of their economic and social situation. Indeed, the subjective perception of job uncertainty is a key factor, even more than the objective perception, for defining opportunities and constraints within which individuals make their work and family decisions. The few studies that have addressed the issue have first of all revealed that the meaning and perception of insecurity depends on the type of welfare state regime and the national regulation of labour markets [Pochic, Paugam, and Selz 2003, 8]. So, both the local labour market conditions and the institutional environment play a strong role on the perception of work instability and representation of individuals that influences their choices.

In this framework, focusing on *young* people's perception of job instability is particularly important for the impact that it has on their transition to adulthood (housing independence, family formation, etc). Indeed, for young people in Europe, entry into the labour market mainly occurs through flexible contracts, which do not apply the protections of the insiders. In addition, those with temporary contracts have greater difficulty in going on to the protected segment of the labour market, and can fall into a situation of unprotected unemployment.

This study is based on cross-sectional data from the European Quality of Life Survey (EQLS, wave 2011), on a sample of young workers (aged 18-34) and adults (35-54) from 28 European Union Member States. Data are analyzed using logistic regression models.

The study has two main research questions:

- a) To what extent the spreading of subjective job insecurity (Anderson and Pontusson, 2007; Hipp 2016) varies in the 28 European countries according to:



- macro-level factors: welfare state regime
  - micro-level factors: age (young workers vs. adult workers) and other characteristics as the type of contract and the occupational class;
- b) Which is the relationship between the objective and subjective dimensions of insecurity? Namely, how subjectively insecure individuals feel, despite holding an objectively secure position and vice versa?

Preliminary findings have shown that temporary and agency contracts are associated with higher insecurity, while informal labour forms do not seem to be associated to higher insecurity than permanent positions. Southern-European and Post-socialist countries are the least protective against job insecurity, together with the Anglo-saxon cluster for adult workers (compared to the Scandinavian). On the contrary, the social-democratic cluster emerges as the least insecure in terms of re-employment, as well as the conservative cluster. As far as the cross between subjective and objective job insecurity, the analyses show that individuals who perceive job insecurity, despite being in an objectively insecure position are more often living in the Post-Socialist and Southern European clusters (as well as Anglo-Saxon for adults), being females, living in families with poor economic situation and working in the private sector. A further focus on the role played by the occupational class in the different welfare regimes will be developed for the conference paper.

### **Normalisation and resistance against precarity: Life strategies in the biographies of young workers in Poland and Germany**

**Alexandra Seehaus, Adam Mrozowicki, Vera Trappmann, Juliusz Gardawski, Agata Krasowska, Freie Universität Berlin**

The aim of the paper is to discuss the biographical conditions, properties and consequences of coping practices developed by young precarious workers in Poland and Germany in the contexts of two distinct political-economic regimes, the former representing a semi-peripheral embedded neoliberal economy and the latter the coordinated economy type.

Despite political-economic differences, in both countries young people tend to be systemically disadvantaged in terms of greater risk of poverty, temporary employment and unemployment than general population. Simultaneously, regardless the objective changes in life and labour market conditions, young people in both



countries tend to be satisfied with their lives and surprisingly optimistic about their future and rarely engage in conventional protests and collective actions. Exploring this potential paradox and the conditions under which we still find attempts to contest the impositions of precarisation, this paper is based on the results of ongoing research on young precarious workers within the NCN-DFG funded PREWORK project. The qualitative module contains 120 biographical narrative interviews with young people (18-30) in low-paid temporary jobs, low-paid open-ended contracts, traineeships and unemployed, differing from each other in terms of educational resources, sector and types of jobs performed, which are collected in economically diversified urban contexts in East and West Germany and Poland. The quantitative module is based on the representative CATI survey of young people in both countries (N=1000).

The first results of comparative analysis of the biographies collected will be presented in the form of a typology consisting of four types: precarious working-class type, precarious bureaucratic type, precarious creative type and precarious entrepreneurial type. These types are linked with diversified forms of mobilisation and demobilisation in both countries. It is concluded that inconsistencies and contradictions both at the level of economic consciousness and life strategies of workers present some space for resistance against the precarity. The latter is more present in Poland than in Germany in which the tendency of reproduction and normalisation of social order seem to prevail despite precarisation.

### **Stream 5: Session 2: Wednesday 21st, 11.00-12.30**

#### **Mediation or Transmission? Innovation, Institutions, and the Problem of Precarity**

**Nantina Vgontzas, New York University**

Why does precarity occur where and how it does? My project addresses this question by examining employment structures in a leading sector, ecommerce logistics. I locate the answer in the link between innovation and the work process, as mediated by market and institutional factors. I thus am testing my hypothesis through two comparisons, one at the macro level and the other at the micro. At the macro level, I am comparing the logic of capital intensification between production and distribution. Innovation in distribution, which does not transform products but simply circulates them, is narrower in scope than it is in production. Lower profit margins



lead competitors to start out with massive expansion plans rather than innovating as they grow. This expansion manifests in the rapid buildup of distribution networks, where warehouses are the key node. But because profit maximization occurs largely outside warehouse innovation, competitors are hesitant to absorb the costs of inflexible employment. Thus, at the micro level, I am examining the effect of this logic on labor intensification within ecommerce warehouses. Here the comparison is between the distribution networks of Amazon's two key markets, the United States and Europe. These cases differ in terms of not only institutional and legal frameworks but also organization among Amazon workers, which is absent in the United States while ranging in Europe from moderate in France and Poland to stronger in Germany. In holding the sector and company constant, this micro comparison thus couches varieties of precarity within the macro comparison. Ultimately through a triangulation of participant observations and interviews in multiple countries and a review of the industry literature, my research aims not only to test a particular claim about contemporary work but moreover to illustrate the benefit of examining it from a transnational perspective of capital accumulation, labor intensification and social organization.

### **The Gig is Up: Predatory Digital Labor Markets and the Marginalized Worker**

**Lauren Bridges, University of Pennsylvania**

Online Labor markets, also referred to as the 'gig economy,' have begun to provide on-going and secure sources of income for many people who are seeking job flexibility or may otherwise face barriers to work. However, a recent study by Pew (2016), exposes the structural divisions of this type of digital labor, based along racial, gendered, educational and social-class lines (Smith, 2016).

The Pew research also highlights that more than half of those who engage in digital labor have come to rely on these platforms as an "essential or important" source of income, with one third saying that gig work is essential to meeting their basic needs. While there has been much scholarship on the future of contingent work (Ross, 2009; Standing, 2011; Sennett, 1998; Scholz, 2013) and neoliberal exploitation of skimming the surplus value of labor (Terranova, 2000; Negri, 1991; Fuchs, 2013; Harvey, 2007) there has been little investigation into the systematic structural inequality inherent in digital labor markets which relies on contingent marginalized labor. Further, there is a growing difference between high-value, higher-skilled gig work and low-value, low-skilled gig work that often limits opportunities for career progression or economic



growth. How then, do these systems of dependency play out for different groups over the long-term?

As more jobs move online, disadvantaged groups are lured by the promise of flexibility and ease of access, however, these workers often become reliant on this type of work that has little social security, and limited opportunity for career development. The iLabor Project, a research group out of the University of Oxford, has recently developed an economic indicator called the Online Labor Index, which measures the number of projects and tasks across platforms in real time. Using this metric as the dependent variable tracked over time, this paper seeks to answer two guiding research questions: first, what is the ratio of high-value jobs held by marginalized groups, and has this ratio shifted over time? And second, how do opportunities for career progression and economic advancement differ based on racial, gendered, and class lines?

The paper uses a mixed methodology of the online labor index, world labor statistics on populations of flexible workers, tracked against longitudinal content analysis of high-value and low-value job ads that use coded language to recruit candidates based on race, gender and social-class. This paper expands on current debates about precarious and contingent labor in the digital economy using a neo-Marxian, feminist and critical race theoretical framework. The study aims to identify long-term effects of gig work on marginalized groups and highlight systematic predatory labor practices that renders already vulnerable groups reliant on this highly precarious contingent type of work with little room for growth.

The paper is in the initial stages of refining the methodology and will start collecting data over the next few months.

## **The Uberization of the Labor Market: A case study of Uber drivers in Monterrey, Mexico**

**Mariana Manriquez, University of Arizona**

Labor scholars have developed extensive literature, which documents the structural re-configurations of work in a post-Fordist economy. First, scholars note the



transition from a manufactory economy to a service-based economy. This transition implies a departure from physical labor to an emphasis on emotional/performative labor (Horshchild, 1983). Further, the organization of work in a service economy situates the consumer as a central subject to the labor process, sometimes acting as a secondary management figure (Fuller and Smith, 1991). Second, scholars note the continuous reduction of the corporate model, which secured state-driven workers' protection for a contracted business-labor bargain, thus weakening the relationship between work and security. The post Fordist economy is characterized by the transformation of the workforce into one of freelance, temporary workers and contractors who work outside the boundaries of traditional employment protections (Kallerberg, 2000).

Furthermore, Sociologists in the intersection of the sociology of work and sociology of culture have noted the emergence of discursive frameworks of freedom and entrepreneurship employed by popular business press and media representations that serve to legitimize and idealize precarious employment (Vallas and Prener, 2012; Alonso and Fernandez, 2013). The purpose of my research is two-fold. First, I wish to bridge the lack of dialogue between job structures and discursive/cultural developments. Looking at both currents simultaneously will help address the manner in which workers make sense of structural re-configurations of work. Second, both currents tend to remain within a macro analysis and thus fail to acknowledge how re-configurations of work transpire in everyday life. Methodologically, I situate myself within the extended case method (Burawoy, 1998; Sallaz, 2015). The ECM permits a fruitful synthesis that connects macro-structural configurations with micro-empirical realities. It does so by deploying participant observation to locate everyday life in its extra local and historical context.

Over a period of two months, I conducted ethnographic work of *Uber* drivers in the city of Monterrey, Mexico. I was able to ride along with 50 drivers and participate as a consumer in their everyday work, as well as generate semi-structured interview data. My research field is meaningful to theories of work re-configuration as the *Uber* model compromises a service work and operates outside of employment protection. Additionally, *Uber* drivers have minimal contact with a virtualized management and other *Uber* drivers, which precludes the possibility for collective bargaining. Furthermore, even though research on post-Fordist employment remains U.S. centric, I argue that the city of Monterrey is an example on how work re-configurations constitute a global process. With the collapse of Fundidora de Monterrey in 1986, a major metal and steel factory in Monterrey which gave it its industrial regional identity, thousands of workers were unable to return to the industrial sector, and thus had to find employment in the service economy or remain



unemployed (Martinez Silva, 2016). My research aims to tend to the following concerns, and thus contribute to the literature on the following post-Fordist labor processes: A) noting how *Uber* drivers negotiate, navigate and resist the material conditions of the *Uber* system of work, B) noting how *Uber* drivers both internalize and resist the discursive rationalities of precarious work, C) noting the gaps and possible congruencies between material conditions and discursive frameworks as mobilized by the *Uber* drivers. My preliminary findings suggest that there is variation regarding the degree of consent. Older drivers who have been previously employed in the industrial sector tend to exhibit the most resistance to the discursive rationalities surrounding precarious work. On the other hand, younger drivers who were never employed by the industrial sector exhibit more internalization of discursive rationalities of precarious work. However, if the material conditions were not favorable, (e.g. the driver did not own their own car but had to pay rent to a third party) all drivers regardless of age exhibited resistance against the discursive rationalities of precarious work.

**Stream 5: Session 3: Thursday 22nd, 9.00-10.30**

**Entrepreneurship as assimilation processes: Recent experiences of Haitians in Tijuana, Mexico**

**Araceli Almaraz, El Colegio de la Frontera Norte**

As in the rest of Mexico's northern border region, cities in the northwest like Tijuana experienced diverse immigrant waves throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. Thousands of people arrived to this city dreaming to cross to United States, others suffered deportation proceedings from the US, and many others arrived on their own initiative from different parts of Mexico and other countries. Prior to the 1950s, Tijuana experienced mainly the establishment of diverse groups pushed by national events (1888-1936), prohibitionist policies in the United States (1910-1933), and interest in new opportunities for accumulation (1916-1950). The most prominent entrepreneurial groups were Mexicans, Italians, Spaniards, and Americans. Over the past three decades, new transit groups have emerged in Tijuana, including stranded Haitians, an atypical migration group. The experiences of Haitians in this city stand out. At least 4,000 Haitians are stranded in Tijuana seeking their integration in different ways. In this talk, I show how the Haitian community operates to find jobs, seeks to integrate into Mexican culture, start educational activities, and launch



entrepreneurial initiatives and projects.

### **Labour Practices and Precarization. The case of La Nominada in Chilean Ports**

**Hernan Cuevas, Universidad de Concepción**

In recent decades, there has been a growing debate on the precarization of labour. While some have received the concept acritically, others, from a Latin American perspective, have reacted to this debate arguing the inapplicability of the concept originated in the Global North. This article takes a different path, contributing to this debate by showing that any serious consideration requires a case informed analysis. This paper reports some mixed trends observed in the precarization of dockworkers labour in the Chilean ports of Valparaíso and Talcahuano/San Vicente. Through a flexible and pragmatic ethnographic research strategy, I have gathered quantitative data about ports, logistics, employment and labour conditions, and qualitative data about workers, employers and public officials' views regarding ports development. My analyses show some mixed trends of labour precarization and union revitalization. For one part, private companies and governments shifted the risks derived from logistical business and international trade uncertainties to workers through outsourcing, labour flexibilization, and intensification of automation and technology in ports. All these favour labour precarization. For the other part, a growing power of labour unions, strikes and the resurgence of a practice of control of the labour force derived from an outmoded closed-shop scheme, have limited the social effects of labour precarization. The so called "la nominada" is a personnel allocation mechanism based on dockworkers internal solidarity and a degree of control of the labour force by the labour union. The paper shows that its survival in a neoliberal economy can be explained because it remained attractive for workers, private companies and the government. For companies, because it reduces the transaction costs derived from contracting employees in an unregulated labour market. For the government, it produces social peace, stability in ports and trade security. For workers, it reduces the social inequalities that may have been produced by a purely competitive labour market. . I argue that the Union power accumulated by dockworkers' leaders depends on the practice of "la nominada". La nominada has been fought for and against, becoming an object of state regulation and a major issue in social, economic and political struggles in ports. This study shows that "la nominada" has been adapted by each labour union in interaction with its context, adjusting it to a series of national and local factors. Among these, management style,



technological and organizational changes in each company seem crucial. Along with these, political, legislative, social, and economic changes in the country have been also important. The paper concludes that labour precarization is context dependent, and that although global and national factors are key forces pushing for precarization, local union practices –such as la nombrada- may counter or reduce its effects

## **Precariousness comparisons between Brazil and Mexico: a macroeconomic and a micro-social analysis**

**Christian Caldeira, Fernanda Seidel Oliveira, Carlos Salas, Marlene Solís, IE/Unicamp**

The purpose of our multidisciplinary contribution is to make a South-South comparison between two countries of similar level of development, being the largest Latin American economies, but with different policy regimes – Mexico and Brazil – during the period from 2002 to 2014, focusing mainly on labor market precariousness. First, we will analyze the evolution of precariousness in both countries using an index that takes into account the national labor market context. Further, to complement the comparative picture, we will use the results of two case studies – one from each country – dealing with the working conditions in the apparel sector.

Following Rubery (1989), we aim to situate the precariousness in the national labor market context. In other words, given the traits that have historically outlined the structure of employment in the country and labor relations, we need an operational definition of precarious work. We will restrict precarious work to waged work to define a precarious work index constructed from the following characteristics: absence of a permanent contract, the absence of contribution to social security, income less than two minimum wages, non-union membership, work with days less than 15 hours or greater than 48 hours per week. We will use the multivariate statistical method of principal component analysis (PCA) in order to construct such index (Salas, 2012). The set of variables used is readily available in the household surveys of both countries, and data is strictly comparable.

To complement this quantitative analysis, we will present the results of a field work done in each country on the working conditions of people employed in the apparel sector. The reason of choosing this sector is the historical precariousness that surrounds these activities, its relative size in terms of employment in both economies,



and the gender bias of its labor force. We interviewed apparel workers which migrated towards Northern border cities and those who lived in Central Mexico. In the case of Brazil, we interviewed union leaders at the national level in the garment industry on the working and living conditions of people in this industry at the São Paulo metropolitan area. The comparison between those experiences will be valuable to assess the impacts of union organization on precariousness levels in the sector, which is well known to include some of the worst working conditions in many Latin American cities and other places around the world.

Our proposal seeks to fill the gap between highly aggregated quantitative analysis and qualitative sociological-oriented studies on how precariousness express itself at the national labor market level and at sectoral and local level. The index main achievement is to summarize a multidimensional definition of precariousness into a single number, which is helpful to, among other things, make comparative analysis between countries and different periods. On the other hand, the qualitative analysis helps to bring into fore the experiences of workers in one of the most precarious economics activities, which is the apparel sector.

#### **Stream 5: Session 4: Friday 23rd, 9.00-10.30**

##### **Exceptionality, Entrepreneurship and Exploitation: Postsocialist Transformation of Art Workers**

**Katja Praznik, University at Buffalo (SUNY)**

The paper uses the case of disenfranchised art workers in socialist Yugoslavia during the 1980s as a case study to demonstrate how the apparent promotion of art workers into socialist cultural entrepreneurs is an exemplary form of the neoliberal transformation of the socialist welfare-state regime. In light of political transformations of late Yugoslav socialism and the emergence of neoliberal rationality, the contribution reconsiders alternative art workers' political agenda of the 1980s. During the 1980s, art workers of the alternative art scene in Yugoslavia aimed to redefine and transform socialist production model by critiquing socialist ideology and institutions without taking issue with class differences in the arts. The paper demonstrates how the 1980s alternative art scene did not consider transformations of working relations of the freelance art workers who were at that time redefined by cultural policy as socialist cultural entrepreneurs. By examining government's attitudes of and policies for artistic labor the paper argues that the spontaneous absorption of neoliberalism (the realization of personal freedom) and



exclusive focus on the critique of repressive state apparatuses during the late Yugoslav socialist period undermined the mandate of the welfare state's institutions, which secured collective social reproduction and security. After the destruction of Yugoslavia in early 1990s, the protagonists of the alternative art scene became members of the postsocialist precariat of self-employed cultural entrepreneurs who are divorced from social security and economic stability. The paper expounds not only how the neoliberal rationality altered the identity of the art worker into a self-propelled enterprise, but also how the neoliberal profession of freedom to self-expression coincided with the notion that art is a labor of love.

## **The Legal Construction of Precarity: Lessons from the Construction Sector in Beijing and Delhi**

**Irene Pang, Buffett Institute for Global Studies, Northwestern University**

Even as labor is increasingly characterized by precarity in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the ambiguities of conceptual tools and analytical vocabularies sometimes hinders the study of precarious labor. This paper seeks to disentangle the concepts of “precarity”, usually associated with the Global North, and “informality”, typically associated with the Global South, to better understand the historical and empirical nuances in the different genealogies and varieties of precarity, and importantly, to examine the role of the state in its construction and reproduction. Using comparative ethnographic data on two cases of labor disputes within the construction sectors in Beijing and Delhi, in which precarious labor conditions are rampant, this paper traces the ways through which precarity is structured and reproduced by the Chinese and Indian states through the law, and reflects on the implications for worker resistance and claim-making.

## **Whose voices get suppressed and why?**

**Agnes Akkerman, Katerina Manevska, Roderick Sluiter, Radboud university nijmegen**

Flexibilization of the work force as well as a rise in migrant workers in European societies has led to an increase in the share of employees with an insecure position at work. For this group of employees, the burden to speak up in situations where they experience problems or conflicts at work may be especially high because their insecure position makes them more vulnerable to retaliation. Currently, no insights are available for (variations in) the prevalence, intensity and types of suppression



tactics deployed. Data on suppression of employee voice is scarce and notoriously difficult to obtain because of its sensitivity. In this paper, we explore differences in voice at work between standard employees and flexible workers. By doing so, we aim to develop a theory on the suppression of employee voice. In addition, we report on a survey instrument measuring employee voice suppression. The data, collected among a representative sample of the Dutch labor force (N=7599), enable us to study who speaks up at work and under which conditions and in what ways employers attempt to suppress what types of voices of employees. This paper contributes to our understanding of current barriers to employee voice. The insights obtained from our study can offer valuable contributions to both scholarly and public debates on employment relations in the post-industrial era, in particular on the voice of non-standard workers.

## **Reconstructing Solidarity: Labour unions, precarious work, and the politics of institutional change in Europe**

**Valeria Pulignano, , CESO - KU Leuven, Nathan Lillie, *University of Jyväskylä*, Virginia Doellgast, Cornell University**

This paper is the introduction of a recent published book “Reconstructing Solidarity” (Oxford University Press: OUP) which is about unions' struggles against the expansion of precarious work in Europe, and the implications of these struggles for worker solidarity and institutional change. The authors argue against the "dualization" thesis that unions act primarily to protect labour market insiders at the expense of outsiders, finding instead that most unions attempt to organize and represent precarious workers. They explain differences in union success in terms of how they build, or fail to build, inclusive worker solidarity, in countries or industries with more or less inclusive institutions. Where unions can limit employers' ability to 'exit' from labour market institutions and collective agreements and build solidarity across different groups of workers, this results in a virtuous circle, establishing union control over the labour market. Where they fail to do so, it sets in motion a vicious circle of expanding precarity based on institutional evasion by employers. The book builds its argument on comparative case studies from Belgium, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Poland, Slovenia, Sweden, and the United Kingdom. Contributors describe the struggles of workers and unions in diverse industries such as local government, music, metalworking, chemicals, meat-packing, and logistics.



### **Stream 5: Session 5: Friday 23rd, 13.30-15.00**

#### **Harvesting consent? Fairtrade certification and local regimes of labour control on tea plantations in South Asia**

**Karin Astrid Siegmann, International Institute of Social Studies of Erasmus University Rotterdam (ISS)**

This paper investigates whether and how Fairtrade certification of tea plantations in South Asia has been reconstructed as a tool to align workers' interests with the estate management's objective to increase labour productivity.

Work intensity on South Asian tea plantations has increased significantly in recent years, aggravating the precarity of some of the most marginalised workers in South Asia. This takes the form of, e.g., an expansion of productivity-based contractual arrangements, higher targets for the tea leaf harvest, pruning and weeding, as well as more restrictive interpretations of workers' leave entitlements. In the context of tea plantations in Northeast India, Sharma (2016) argues that these processes guarantee maximum effort at low cost for the plantation company, while simultaneously making it difficult for workers to find time for trade union-related activities.

Fairtrade certification of tea plantations seeks to address tea plantation workers' precarity and to empower these workers to negotiate improvements in their labour conditions themselves. In the 1990s, Fairtrade extended its certification from smallholders to plantations. Raynolds (2017) highlights two separate motives of this extension: a civic rationale, that landless rural workers are as deserving of support as peasants, and a market rationale, that many crops are not produced in sufficient quantities by small farmers to satisfy the demand associated with Fairtrade's expansion into supermarket shelves. Several authors, however, perceive that this move has been associated a shift from a 'logic of empowerment' to a 'logic of control' (Auld et al. 2015). The latter emphasises the amelioration of environmental and social externalities by establishing strict and enforceable rules rather than addressing the exclusion of marginalised actors in the global economy.

We found yet another logic at work in the integration of Fairtrade's certification system into local regimes of labour control, namely the logic of 'harvesting consent'.



In our mixed methods study of the role of Fairtrade in Indian and Sri Lankan tea plantations, we identified surprising reinterpretations of certification. For instance, both estate management and workers understood certification as a reward for higher quality tea, rather than for decent labour conditions. The resources made available through Fairtrade-certified tea sales were redesigned into incentives for attendance and for increasing the labour pool.

With Burawoy (1979, 2012), we interpret these local reconstructions as a way to 'harvest consent' in order to align workers' subjective interests with management's objective to boost labour productivity. This leads to the paradoxical result that, while Fairtrade set out to foster egalitarian trade relations, this way, certification contributes to tea companies' competitiveness while aggravating workers' insecurities - without challenging the unequal power relations that characterise the global tea commodity chain.

### **Lost in Translation? Challenging Precarity with Egalitarian Practice Transfer in a Multinational Firm**

Ödül Bozkurt, Chul Chung, Motoko Honda-Howard, Norifumi Kawai, University of Sussex

This paper will investigate how workers in precarious employment may experience the implementation of "egalitarian" / "progressive" human resource management practices by an individual firm within the broader context of rapid growth of nonstandard work arrangements. Drawing on a case study of a Swedish retailer in Japan, the paper will discuss how "improved conditions" are perceived and experienced by non-regular workers, who otherwise receive lower wages for the same work as regular workers, do not benefit from the same levels of training investment, and do not enjoy the same career development opportunities.

Research from an increasingly varied range of contexts has noted in recent decades that the growth of precarious work defined by "uncertainty, instability and insecurity of work" has involved labour market risks to be passed on to individual workers, as opposed to being borne by employers or the state, with an accompanying constraint on extent of social benefits and statutory entitlements (Kalleberg and Hewison, 2013:



271). Such a trend is also observed across Asian economies including Japan, where Osawa, Kim and Kingson (2013) have noted the rapid and extensive rise of precarious employment beginning in the 1990s, underscoring how the traditionally underprivileged non-regular workers have been disadvantaged even further in this period, especially the young and women. Non-regular job growth has outstripped "standard" job growth in the country, with legislation allowing for unfavourable treatment of part-time and temporary workers (Gottfried, 2014).

While the number of male workers in precarious jobs in Japan has noticeably increased, lower skilled workers and especially women still comprise the largest group holding such jobs. Indeed, the recent increase in precarity in the labour market is not really new in Japan as far as women are concerned. The country's much-studied national employment system has always been characterised, in addition to more celebrated tenets, by women's low labour force participation, their relegation to peripheral, temporary, and marginal positions in the workforce, and near-absence from managerial posts (Bozkurt, 2012). In fact the heavily gendered dual labour markets may best be seen as central to the core logic of the Japanese employment system rather than an unintended consequence (Taylor, 2006). "Active discrimination" (Lam, 1992), exploitation as "a buffer for economic cycles" (Renshaw, 1999: 3), and highly unequal treatment in the workplace have been persistent in women's employment experiences in Japan over decades (Hiroshi, 1982; Toshiko, 1983; Saso, 1990; Brinton, 1993; Graham, 2003; Volkmar and Westbrook, 2005).

In this context of widespread disadvantage for non-regular workers in general and women in particular, we look at an initiative by a Swedish multinational retailer in Japan where the wage and other distinctions between regular and non-regular workers were discarded and all non-managerial workers put on the same contract. Such a break with the dominant practice in the given context is especially noteworthy given the tendency of the retail sector globally to operate on the basis of low-skills, low-pay and high precarity.

While multinational corporations are generally seen as major contributors to processes of precarization globally, extant research has also shown there is



substantial variation in firm practices, including at least partially due to a country of origin effect (Ferner, 1997; Ferner and Quantanilla, 1998; Almond, 2011; Harzing and Sorge, 2003). Dickmann observes that where a country of origin effect is "successfully" retained in the HR practices of a MNE the *outcome* of such transfer may be positive or negative (Dickmann, 2003). Multinationals can also play a critical role by introducing new management practices even where these may not in the first glance be aligned with the institutional and cultural contexts of host countries (Gamble, 2006). The paper draws on this literature, as well as research on precarity, to inquire what happens when a multinational from a country of origin widely recognized as having an egalitarian, worker-friendly employment system, particularly in terms of gender, transfers HR practices to a subsidiary location in what appears to entail a direct improvement of the conditions of employment for the most underprivileged group of workers. The changes launched under a banner of "egalitarian", "progressive" management may be seen as an instance where "some firms develop more socially responsible practices" (Kroon and Paauwe, 2013), but a closer study of this case also promises to reveal the constraints on and limits to the extent to which firm level practices can substantially transform worker experiences of precarity.

The empirical material analyzed comprises of both qualitative and quantitative data. Data on the process of implementation and the responses from store staff in various ranks is derived from 12 in-depth interviews at the multinational's Japan Head Office and two selected stores in the Tokyo region, one a "high performer" and the other a "poor performer", as seen by head office. These were carried out in 2016, a year and a half after the launch of the new system. This data is supplemented by a range of archival data including firm documents and reports from external media outlets. The interview and archival data is further contextualized against quantitative data collected through a survey questionnaire among workers in 2015, six months after the implementation of the change package. The survey data includes information on respondents' general perceptions about the change initiative and the employer's claims to be "egalitarian". The findings and discussion will be elaborated and clarified in time for the conference in March 2018.

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### **State-sponsored precariousness in China: the case of agency workers**

**Xiaojun Feng, University of Oxford**

-Labour precariousness has been a worldwide phenomenon and has generated extensive enquiries into its multi-faceted driving forces, which can be generally categorised as the capital thesis, the state thesis, and the worker thesis. Put simply, the capital thesis argues that capital's endless pursuit of profit in an era of neoliberal globalisation engenders precariousness. The worker thesis emphasises that some workers voluntarily choose precarious work in exchange for more autonomy over work, work-life balance, et.al.

-The state is generally regarded as a regulator. The state thesis blames the state for deregulating the labour market. However, the state's role as a regulator is more complex in China. Moreover, the state in China is more than a regulator.

-The enactment and enforcement of labour laws is largely separated between the



central government and the local government. The implementation of the labour law is subject to the changing economic, political, and social priorities of the latter (Ching Kwan Lee, 2016).

- The conflictual interests between different state organs at the same level, for example, the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security, also affect the state as a regulator.
- The Chinese state is not only a de-regulator, but also a re-regulator. After radical creation of a labour market in the 1990s, the Chinese state has initiated rounds of labour protection legislation in the new millennium.
- The Chinese state is also an employer. According to China's State Bureau of Statistics (SBS), approximately 20 percent of urban employment is provided by state-owned units in present-day China (SBS, 2016). According to the All-China Federation of Trade Unions (ACFTU), state-owned enterprises are leading users of agency labour in China with 16.2 percent of their entire workforce being agency workers in 2011 (ACFTU, 2012).
- The Chinese state is also a staffing firm manager. Many top staffing firms in China, such as the FESCO and CIIC, are state-owned or even owned by labour bureaus.

Thus, the complexity and the multiple facets of the Chinese state have the potential to expand our understanding of the role of the state in the surge of precariousness.

### **Methodology:**

- This study is primarily based on interviews with labour officials both at the central level and at the local level, including those from Beijing, Shanghai, Suzhou, Guangdong, and Jinan.



## Findings:

-By linking the wage quota of state enterprises to its financial performance and putting them in a competitive market economy, the state pushes the state-owned enterprise to pursue profits and thereby to lower labour costs by using more agency workers.

-The weak implementation of the labour law and the deliberate vagueness of certain stipulations allow loopholes for enterprises to escape and very often change the forms of precarious labour while retains its nature.

-The conflictual role of the state organs hampers both the enactment and the enforcement of the labour law.

**The Stage of the Research:** fieldwork finished, manuscript in preparation

## Stream 5: Session 6: Friday 23rd, 15.30-17.00

### Double precarity? Triple precarity? European Union migrants in the context of Brexit

**Benjamin Hopkins, University of Leicester**

Previous research into the workplace experiences of migrant workers has found that they are more likely to be found in precarious forms of work, such as temporary or agency work (Hopkins and Dawson, 2016). This doubling of precarity, combining both migration status and work status, has been found to create significant issues for migrant workers. This is found in areas including absence management (Dawson et al., 2017), career progression (Hopkins and Dawson, 2016), workplace health and safety (Hopkins, 2015), and pay and reward (Dawson et al., 2017).

For workers from the European Union currently based in the United Kingdom, a potential third level of precarity has been introduced. The current status of many people in the UK is currently highly uncertain given the result of the referendum held



on 23 June 2016, the result of which means that the UK will leave the European Union. This so-called 'Brexit' has led to concerns for migrants, both in terms of their future in the UK, and also for their present living and working conditions, with evidence of increased levels of hate crimes following the referendum (Home Office, 2016). Anecdotal evidence suggests that this has also created worsened workplace relations between migrant workers and those from the UK. As such, there is a requirement to develop existing academic workplace studies which have investigated migration and precarity in the context of intra-European migration, to the new context of uncertainty created for these migrants in the move to Brexit.

In this rapidly developing new context, this paper presents first findings from in-depth qualitative studies in UK workplaces. The aim of these studies is to investigate the working and wider living conditions for those workers who face not only a precarious working environment as a result of working on a temporary or agency basis, but also great uncertainty in the wider context of 'Brexit'. Themes to be explored will include the future life and career plans of migrants in this context; impacts on health, safety, mental health, and well-being; potential instances of workplace bullying and hostility; pay and reward; responses by UK workers to the post-referendum context; and the impacts on organisations of these issues.

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**From precarious to ordinary work? – the case of work migration from Eastern**



## Europe to Norway

**Rolf Andersen, Anne Mette Ødegård, Fafo**

In 2017, it is 13 years since the first major EU-enlargement when Poland, Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Slovenia and Hungary incorporated into the single market. In 2007, Bulgaria and Romania joined and Croatia in 2013. The EU enlargement gave Norwegian companies new opportunities for recruiting labour, and has led to a great influx of workers and companies. During these years, Norway has experienced the largest immigration flow ever, from approximately 6 000 Eastern Europeans settled in 2004 to nearly 160 000 in 2017.

A large majority of these workers are recruited to low-skilled jobs in construction, manufacturing and private services (cleaning and hotels and restaurants). The immigration has challenged the system and norms in the Norwegian labour market, and “social dumping” has become a central theme in the public debate. Central actors, like the trade unions and the Labour Inspectorate, have warned against a development towards a more divided labour market. Low wages, long working hours and poor health and safety standards are hallmarks of social dumping. The immigrants are often also subjected to more insecure types of employment (hired through temporary agencies or directly engaged on at temporary basis)

In this paper, we will elaborate Norwegian employer’s use and experience with Eastern European labour in a period of 11 years. We have monitored the situation in construction, manufacturing and hotel and restaurant. Managers in a representative samples have been asked a series of questions about this theme in surveys conducted in 2006, 2009 and 2017.

In the same period, several measures have been introduced to combat exploitation of these workers. The regulations can be regarded as attempts to prevent a more profound division of the labour market, between “insiders” and “outsiders”, or a dualization of the labour market. One of the most effective measure is the extension of collective agreements. Following these extended collective agreements are rights for trade union representatives to inspect wages and labour conditions for employees of sub-contractors. In additions, a contracting enterprise is obliged to ensure that sub-contractors stick to the regulations. Furthermore, contractors are joint and severally liable for wage obligations of sub-contractors.

The research question in this paper is:



- Has the motives for recruiting Eastern Europeans changed during these years? Do we for example see a higher degree of "normalization", i.e. that Eastern European workers are increasingly employed under the same conditions as Norwegian?

-What is the companies' experience with central regulations introduced in the aftermath of the enlargement of EU/EEA?

## **New forms of solidarity? Precarious work and temporary migrant workers in Australia**

**Iain Campbell, John Burgess, University of Melbourne**

This paper draws on findings from a project of interdisciplinary research in two industry sectors in Australia which are characterised by an increased use of temporary migrant workers in precarious jobs: a) food services; and b) agriculture, forestry and fishing.

The paper argues that the increased use of temporary migrant workers in these sectors signals a process of reconfiguration of employer practices, which increasingly rely on more intensely precarious work, characterised by abusive working conditions and wage rates under the legal minimum. It draws out the broader implications of this process for class composition and class politics, offering an analysis in terms of class fragmentation rather than in terms of the emergence of a precariat. An immediate effect of the reconfiguration of employer practices is to disrupt traditional forms of worker solidarity. But at the same time it creates conditions for new forms of solidarity, both at the workplace, where temporary migrant workers labour alongside local workers under similar conditions of precarious work, and in the broader community, where community organizations and trade unions are slowly becoming more active. The paper discusses two incipient symptoms of a possible countermovement in Australia: a) the intensified enforcement activity of the Fair Work Ombudsman (FWO); and b) successful campaigning on work insecurity by individual trade unions. At the same time it outlines the barriers to development of new forms of solidarity.

The research project incorporates background industry research, interviews with government representatives, employers, trade union officials, and activists in community organizations, and a special program of in-depth interviews with over 80 temporary migrant workers (plus selected local workers) from three main visa sub-



classes. The in-depth interviews provided powerful evidence on experiences of precariousness both inside and outside the workplace, indicating that societal structures, starting with immigration status and exclusion from social welfare, as well as debt and other inherited social obligations, act to amplify the negative effects of precarious work and to obstruct the prospects of complaint and resistance for most temporary migrant workers (Campbell and Price 2016). Temporary migrant workers appear here as highly vulnerable workers (Burgess et al. 2013).]

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## **Stream 6: HR Practice in Labour Proces and Workplace Contexts**

**Stream 6, Session 1: Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup>, 9.00-10.30**

**The role of intermediaries in governance of global production networks:  
Restructuring work relations in Pakistan's apparel industry**

**Hugh Willmott, Cass Business School**

Kamal Munir Judge Business School, University of Cambridge, United Kingdom

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Muhammad Ayaz Institute of Business Administration, Karachi David Levy University of Massachusetts, Boston, United States

This paper locates the reorganization of work relations in the apparel sector in Pakistan, after the end of the Multi-Fibre Arrangement quota regime, within the context of a global production network (GPN). We examine the role of a network of corporate, state, multilateral and civil society actors who serve as intermediaries in GPN governance. These intermediaries transmit and translate competitive pressures and invoke varied, sometimes contradictory, imaginaries in their efforts to realign and stabilize the GPN. We analyze the post-MFA restructuring of Pakistan's apparel sector, which dramatically increased price competition and precipitated a contested adjustment process among Pakistani and global actors with divergent priorities and resources. These intermediaries converged on a 'solution' that combined and enacted imaginaries of modernization, competitiveness, professional management and female empowerment, while also emphasizing low-costs and female docility. We highlight the intersection of economic, political, and cultural dynamics of GPNs, and illuminate the gendered dimensions of GPN restructuring. We theorize the role of these actors as a transnational managerial elite in GPN governance, who led a restructuring process that preserved the hegemonic stability of the GPN and protected the interests of Western branded apparel companies and consumers, but did not necessarily serve the interests of workers.

## **Company positionalities within the Scottish Spirits supply chain network and the effect on absence management**

**Pedro Mendonca, Nottingham Trent University**

**Dr Anastasios Hadjisalomou, Professor Dora Scholarios, University of Strathclyde**

**Dr Kirsty Newsome, Sheffield University**

Increasing research attention has been focussed on the impact that supply chain dynamics have on human resource management (HRM) practices (Grimshaw et al., 2015; Wright and Kaine, 2015). Currently, there is wide consensus that the business decisions of one organisation can shape managerial practices at other organisations across the supply chain (Flecker et al., 2013; Marchington et al., 2005). For instance, research investigating retail supply chains, which are highly competitive and cost-driven, have demonstrated that suppliers become vulnerable to pressures by retailers to comply with specific supply chain requirements. As a result, managerial



mechanisms are adjusted to keep unintended costs down and a smooth supply chain flow (Raworth and Kidder, 2009; Newsome et al., 2013; Wright and Lund, 2006). Yet, recent accounts suggest that the amount of pressure leading firms apply on suppliers may be related to the latter's positioning in the production network. In other words, the supplier's 'positionality' [i.e. the supplier's relative importance to the overall function of the supply chain] may result in those suppliers being more or less pressured to comply with specific requirements (Rannie et al., 2013; Hesse, 2010: 88).

It has been demonstrated that absence and workplace attendance is a key determinant for keeping costs down in organisations, particularly as staffing levels become leaner (Taylor et al., 2010). Consequently, workers' attendance in the context of highly pressured and cost-driven supply chains becomes a crucial behaviour that needs to be managed. Following Taylor et al.'s (2010) suggestion that the study of absence cannot be explored as a phenomenon detached from wider market and cost pressures and their call to include a broader sectoral range, the present study explores absence management in the context of production networks. In doing so, the paper aims at expanding the analysis beyond intra-firm relations to a wider network of cost pressures across the supply chain. The study examines how different positionalities within the same supply chain affect absence management. It focuses on two research questions:

How is absence managed by organisations within supply chain and production networks?

What roles do 'positionality' and power dynamics play in the management of absence?

Qualitative data was gathered in four workplaces which are involved in the same production network – SpiritsCo bottling hall, SpiritsCo distillery, MaltCo, and TranspCo. Each workplace contributes with different production processes and services for the production of Scotch whisky. This production network, within the Scottish Spirits Industry, provides a sectoral example of how companies manage their workforce in response to constant capital and product market pressures stemming from the ever-more consolidated and powerful supermarkets.

The analysis demonstrates changes in absence management, a managerial mechanism that aims to keep costs and disruption to a minimum (Newsome et al., 2013; Taylor et al., 2010), in relation to inter-firm power dynamics within a specific production network. The data reveal different managerial approaches across and



within organizations, depending on the level of disruption that absence generates for the production process and supply chain. Yet this varies according to the relative importance [or positionality] of the supplier in relation to the supply chain and the (in)direct pressures from retailers. For workplaces which occupied a closer position to the retailer (SpiritsCo bottling hall), management resorted to coercive methods aiming to eliminate absence through a comprehensive and sophisticated absence management system. In contrast, for those at a relatively more distant position from the retailer (i.e SpiritsCo distillery), where supply chain pressures are less intense, the absence management system was based on cooperation, negotiation and flexibility. The paper contributes to the understanding of how the supplier's positionality within the production network shapes absence management practices.

## **Retaining and extending labour rights in global supply chains: a case of supply networks in Vietnam**

**Diane van den Broek, Do Quynh Chi, Sydney University**

**Tony Dundon, Manchester Business School, The University of Manchester**

The proposed paper for the 2018 ILPC conference will report evidence on the role of labour and the relationship to HRM practice as an extension of labour rights within supply chain firms of a leading exemplar MNC relationship in Vietnam. The supply chain is located in the fast moving consumer goods sector in Vietnam. The data advances a theoretical System, Society and Dominance (SSD) contribution unpicking the roles of HR practitioners, societal agents and contextual factors that link to debates about contemporary varieties of capitalism and labour process analysis. The evidence will explore limits, and the contradictions, of leading MNC 'good HR practice' and attendant employment conditions across the global supply chain network through an analysis of the interplay of forces and asymmetries of power within and across global relationships.

### **Outline**

While there has been a serious deficit about the 'place of labour' within global supply chains and supply networks, substantial contributions have sought to develop various analytical approaches and critical perspectives on the issue (Elger and Smith, 2005; Taylor, 2010; Rainnie et al., 2011; Newsome et al., 2013). The proposed presentation will add understanding about HR practitioners, line managers, NGO activists and trade unions within a specific societal context of



Vietnam. It draws on forms of labour process analysis concerning the importance of locating labour and asymmetries of work and employment power within assessments of contemporary HR practice. The increasing globalisation of business activities across national and organisational borders, underscores the need to develop frameworks that clarify the complex inter-relationships between workers in supplier and lead firms.

The research will analyse tensions between important features of labour rights and the procurement strategy of a lead Multi National Corporation (MNC), contextualized within the broad literatures relating to GPNs and SSD. The data engages with narratives about societal actor influence in terms of the shifting dynamics of market power, actor-driven relationships in the context of Vietnam, and divergence of HRM strategy (Delbridge et al., 2011). It will report considerable supplier variation in support for labour rights and in so doing advances knowledge on a '*societal, system and dominance*' (SSD) framework to existing debates on labour process and global supply networks (Edwards et al., 2013).

The Vietnamese context is important for several reasons: it has experienced consistent growth for over two decades; it is a preferred location for a growing number of MNCs and thus a centre for concentrated foreign-direct investment; and it is a country transiting between a significant legacy of State Communism alongside recent capitalistic market initiatives that influence both indigenous and foreign-owned supplier firms. The SSD framework offers potential to analyse such dynamism by inter-connecting global capitalist change with local value and supply change pressures. Here system effects that reflect broad socio-political and economic frameworks highlight how shifts from a State regulated economy to voluntary capitalist market approach might influence adherence to labour standards across the supply network. Similarly the role of national institutions that guide collective bargaining and labour standards are important explanatory societal variables that in turn shape the actions of dominant actors – whether it might be the State, MNCs or consumer pressure groups –in helping to understand how social relations develop across global networks. The data is collected from four supplier firms all operating within the supply chain network of one leading MNC. Respondents include senior and lower level managers; trade union and NGO stakeholders; local managers and workers at the four supplier firms.



**Stream 6, Session 2: Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup>, 11.00-12.30**

**Manufactured Uncertainty and Contrived Competition; Understanding Managerial Job Insecurity in International Perspective**

**Jonathan Morris, Cardiff University**

**John Hassard, Manchester University**

Manufactured Uncertainty and Contrived Competition: Understanding Managerial Job Insecurity in International Perspective John Hassard (Manchester University), Jonathan Morris and Rick Delbridge (both Cardiff University) Abstract The article examines the debate over insecurity and precarity in managerial employment. It addresses the discussion that while some commentators suggest advanced economies are characterized by managerial job insecurity, others argue for relatively stable tenure rates for managers. To make sense of this we offer qualitative, interview-based data for managers working in liberal-market (US and UK) and coordinated market (Japan) economies. The goal is to ascertain whether we have witnessed a sharp rise in managerial job insecurity internationally and if so can this be seen as a consequence of ‘contrived competition’ in the private sector and ‘manufactured uncertainty’ in the public. Specifically we argue that contrived competition and manufactured uncertainty is created by corporations either implicitly or explicitly cementing an atmosphere of employment precariousness and uncertainty. Ultimately, the proposition arising is that, contrary to some database and questionnaire studies, managerial job security is in fact widespread in modern economies. Keywords Contrived competition; managerial insecurity; manufactured uncertainty; precarious work. Introduction The issue of precariousness in employment has been largely associated with relatively low skilled work and, in the UK at least, with such labour market features as the growth of so called ‘zero hours’ contracts and the ‘gig’ or ‘access’ economy, and thus the rise of employment in organizations such as Uber, Airbnb and Zipcar etc (Pennycook et al., 2013; Philpott, 2014). However, a significant share of such employment contracts are actually associated with people in what might be deemed to be relatively privileged labour market positions. Nearly half, for example, are employed in the top three occupational groups: managers, professionals and technical staff (Brinkley, 2013). Furthermore, we have seemingly witnessed a sharp rise in managerial job insecurity internationally, and especially over the past couple of decades, despite significant evidence of enduring attachment to continued long-term jobs (Fevre, 2007). Many researchers have tried to account for this. Significant amongst them, Doogan (2009)

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notes that the seemingly related ties between long-term employment and job security can no longer be automatically assumed. Among the reasons for a break between these ties is an increasingly hegemonic corporate discourse of neo-liberalism, which has privileged financialization and shareholder value over employee concerns, notably as represented by corporate globalization. Additionally, this can be seen as a consequence of ‘contrived competition’ in the private sector and ‘manufactured uncertainty’ in the public (Doogan, 2009). This article explores these themes through analysis of a number of large-scale studies of managerial work. Six countries – including both developed and emerging nations and coordinated and liberal market economies (Hall and Soskice, 2001) – were examined over an extended period. The basic proposition upon which the analysis is based is that, contrary to several database and questionnaire studies, managerial job security is actually widespread in modern economies. The article contributes to the literature in a number of ways. First, it is empirically progressive – it adds, for example, to the research of Doogan and others by providing qualitative data on the issue; for the majority of previous studies have been based on quantitative government data sets. Second, it is internationally comparative – with such comparison being based on economy type as much as geographical location. Thirdly, it is temporally comparative – with the analysis being based not only on the contemporary employment situation, but through contrasting economic contexts both before and after the global financial crisis of 2008/2009. Importantly, the article argues that it is ultimately the corporate environment which has generated this managerial uncertainty – specifically the amount of wider restructuring that our case study firms experienced prior to and during the first phase of our research and which continued in the second and third phases (see below for research details). Specifically we argue that the situation of contrived competition and manufactured uncertainty has been created directly by corporations – either implicitly in certain cases, or explicitly in others – cementing an atmosphere of employment precariousness and uncertainty. To these ends, the article is divided into five further sections. The next section will explore the recent literature on job insecurity before the data is presented in the form of three case investigations. Finally a discussion and conclusions section is provided.

**Discussion and Conclusion** Our interview data, drawn from managers in large organizations in six countries and over a fourteen year period, generally points to a trend of continued managerial uncertainty over job security. The responses however sometimes varied between organizations and even between managers in the same organization. This was perhaps understandable given the degree and nature of previous and ongoing restructuring in our sample organizations, such as at the auto plants GAC (US) and GAC (UK) and the US and UK utilities plants. Perceptions also differed somewhat by country, with arguably managers having far more immediate concerns about job

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security in the US, for example, than in Japan, with the UK placed somewhere in between. There were also differences between older and younger managers, with the former far more perplexed about job security than their younger counterparts, who often had similar concerns but were more accepting of a working milieu where employment could no longer be judged to be 'safe' and 'reliable' but rather was taken-for-granted as an 'uncertain' or 'precarious' phenomenon – simply 'the way of the (modern) world'. Furthermore, there appeared widespread acceptance that younger managers would now naturally move to similar positions in other organizations, and through their own volition, rather than be tempted to fan the dying embers of 'job for life' or 'cradle to grave' employment notions, which had been rehearsed by older managers in the first stage of interviews but seemingly no longer. In later rounds of interviewing, this even appeared a widespread concept among managers in traditional Japanese organizations. Nevertheless, despite recurrent rounds of corporate restructuring, plus potential managerial employment uncertainties associated with the global financial crisis, job tenure rates remained extremely resistant. The managers interviewed were of course an unrepresentative sample in that they were corporate 'survivors'. However, even with apparently stable tenure rates, they generally reported at least a sense of insecurity, even those who had effectively experienced one company careers. Indeed in the second round of interviews (2015) at the auto company GAC (UK), all of the interviewees fell into this category, a number having joined as graduates or even as apprentices and then been educated while in the employ of the company. Given that a fairly (but not exactly) similar situation pertained in the 2016 round of interviewing at the utilities company UKU, what explains the concerns that managers had about their jobs? We argue that our empirical evidence basically supports the earlier arguments of Doogan (2009) for 'manufactured uncertainty' and 'contrived competition'. At the utilities companies older managers had been through privatisation followed by varying degrees of marketisation in the direction of facing full competition. Similarly local authorities were divesting themselves of service provision in a number of areas reflective of 'manufactured uncertainty'. There was also considerable evidence of the destabilising influence of merger and acquisition activity: this was evident, for example, at UKU, which had been subject to considerable speculation of a foreign takeover at the time of the first interviews, and at the large Japanese engineering keiretsu; where the company had divested large loss-making parts of the business, again creating uncertainty. This seems similarly to support the argument of Burchell et al (1999) that the threat of M&A activity was the single biggest influence on perceptions of job insecurity. However we also argue that the 'contrived competition' argument extends beyond this. Our contention is that – whether intentionally or not – firms are creating uncertainty by the nature and extent of organizational restructuring. This was seen



extensively in corporate actions both prior to and during the first round of interviews in the early 2000s, and represents a trend that supports Alvesson and Spicer's (2016) argument that constant corporate restructuring inevitably leads to job uncertainty. Moreover to a large extent global competition explains this too, notably through the incessant pressures applied by large corporations on cost control, and particularly on maintaining low labour costs. One of the UK companies in our 2016 interviews, for example, was a multinational technical consulting firm. Here one of the key performance indicators, for all managers, was how much business they could transfer to India; where labour costs, even for highly skilled management consultants were much cheaper, this being a strategy that seemed to pertain also at other companies we visited in that round. Similarly the constant quest for managerial cost reduction was seemingly universal from the corporations we visited, irrespective of corporate performance. This is being driven however by something far more fundamental, the search for shareholder value. Again this often leads to 'contrived competition' engendered by corporations themselves in order to maximise labour productivity, and managerial labour in this case. In turn this heightens uncertainty about employment, or a form of what we term intentional corporate-induced managerial job insecurity. Ultimately, this is part of a wider institutional and ideological explanation of precariousness in contemporary capitalism in which neo-liberalism, financialization and shareholder value are increasingly hegemonic. Note Funding for these studies came from a variety of sources. For the first study funding was provided under the ESRC grant R000239288. For the second, funding was provided by Anonymous University, the Santander Foundation, the Alliance Foundation, China University of Business and Economics and Meiji University. And for the third by Meiji University and Anonymous University.

## **Mechanisms of managerial control and worker reactions: a case study of a large chilean company**

**Alejandro Castillo, Universidad de Chile**

This paper presents partial results of a case study about control mechanisms that are deployed within a large dynamic company of the agro-industrial sector in Chile (2017-2018). In addition, it includes a description of the worker reactions of resistance, consent or commitment in the workplace of such company. The objective of this



exploratory study is to provide empirical evidence to understand the organizational obstacles that exist for the development of critical trade unionism in Chile.

The analytical framework incorporates various critical approaches of the labor process discussion, taking up the notions of "control", "resistance" and "consent" problematized by the neo-marxist "Labor Process Theory" and the "Critical Management Studies", with the aim of approaching the ways in which the exploitation relations in the company are concealed. On the other hand, it also incorporates the discussions on social justice developed by the "Pragmatic Sociology of critical capacities" and the studies of "Organizational Justice". The objective is to approach the repertoires of normative evaluation that the workers perform with respect to the control mechanisms existing in the company.

It is important to consider that "worker reactions" involve practices, experiences and discourses. In order to determine if there are provisions of resistance, passive consent or commitment with respect to management directives, it is necessary to understand not only their concrete experiences in certain conflict situations, but also to analyze the discourses that connote such experiences. In this sense, this analytical framework proposes to study the evaluations that workers perform on distributive, procedural and interactional justice with respect to managerial control guidelines expressed in various instances, such as, for example, the selection of personnel, performance appraisal, conflict resolution and laid offs.

To carry out this case study, a total of twenty five interviews were conducted with various actors of the company: human resources managers, union leaders, and unionized and non-unionized workers. Additionally, it was organized a discussion group of workers belonging to the main union of the company. The data was analyzed through various techniques. First, a general qualitative content analysis was carried out in order to organize all the information. Then, a critical discourse analysis was made in the case of the interviews of managers and, finally, a structural analysis was made of the interviews and the discussion group provided by the workers.



For the moment, the results allow to identify simple (traditional), technical, bureaucratic and normative control mechanisms. In general, administrative employees consent to such control modalities. Only critical discourses and experiences of resistance of some plant operators involved in the main union of the company are identified.

## **HRM implementation in practice: Symbolism, decoupling and the substitution of HR practitioners during organizational reforms**

**Julia Brandl, IAE Business School**

The proposed article invites a dialogue between HRM scholars who problematize the lack of HRM implementation and insights from new institutional theory on decoupling, which differ substantially in their implications for managing HRM implementation issues effectively. From an institutional theory perspective, it is argued that HR practitioner profiles symbolize that organizations implement HRM innovations and the flexible handling of implementation issues constitutes a source for trust in HR practitioners in organizational settings with multifaceted goals. Drawing on a longitudinal study of HRM reforms in the context of the privatization of a public-sector organization, I use the insights from new institutional theory to interpret the circumstances related to the dismissal of a freshly appointed HR director with extensive private sector experience who aimed to implement performance-based pay. I argue that the HR practitioner's faith in the mainstream HRM discourse inhibited him to recognize the importance of his symbolic role in the reform process and impeded him to understand the complexities of the organization, especially the usefulness of actual pay practices. The insistence of implementing performance-based pay eroded other managers' trust and finally led to his substitution. I conclude with discussing how the insights from this study can inspire current debates on HRM implementation.

**Stream 6, Session 3: Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup>, 13.30-15.00**

**University professors working conditions in the context of Higher Education globalization**

**Cecilia Lusnih, Javier Pablo Hermo, UBA (Universidad de Buenos Aires)**

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# CLASS AND THE LABOUR PROCESS



In this paper we'll present theoretical and empirical initial approaches of our research in progress about university professors working conditions in the scenario of globalization as a complex and multifaceted phenomenon and in which, in addition, Higher Education acquires a crucial importance.

Thus, work, knowledge, symbolic analysis, communication and affects become closely linked, making idle any distinction between productive and unproductive work and making necessary the category of "immaterial work" for an adequate interpretation of the social reality and the problems of the world of work. Immaterial work crucial importance lies in the tendency to subsume all other forms of work, a fact that's even more evident in the knowledge field and makes it especially relevant to the theoretical perspective we propose. In this sense, we propose a theoretical perspectives integration that have addressed the problems of globalization and the phases of capitalism relating them to transformations in the field of knowledge, the immaterial work new role and the integration processes in new global scales, but with local condiments and connections without which it's not possible to understand these new dynamics. The concept of "cognitive capitalism" is also useful to describe the complex connections between the new technological-productive paradigm, the new technologies (in an outstanding way, information technology and communications), the global economy and the new socio-cultural patterns.

Our central hypothesis proposes the existence of a renewed relationship between knowledge and capital in this globalized capitalism phase and that this affects different spaces of production and social reproduction, but prominently the world of Higher Education. It's in the universities where those who will be "symbolic analysts" are formed and, among them, scientists stand out, while science and technology acquire a central role in innovation and this in the dynamics of capital expanded production and reproduction; the CEOs, "managers", senior and middle management necessary for the global capitalism organization and functioning (in multinational companies, transnational and international organizations, services firms and central states) and university professors necessary for training the preceding categories.

We'll emphasize, in this opportunity, the first results, both quantitative and qualitative, around to the specificity of the double regulation that we find in university teaching that refers, on the one hand, to the contractual conditions that regulate the work plane itself and to which they are directed the regulation of working conditions such as the working day, the salary condition and social benefits and, on the other hand, the plan that regulates the academic conditions of work and are related to the mechanisms of academic organization, the evaluation processes of



academic work for admission, promotion and permanence. Undoubtedly, both planes are affected directly or indirectly, by the tensions that the phenomena of globalization and internalization means, which affect Higher Education in Argentina as in MERCOSUR.

## **Skills regulation and HRM: Theoretical discussion and some initial findings**

**Steve Vincent, Scott Hurrell, Andrew Kozhevnikov, The University of Newcastle**

The UK has been characterised as being trapped in a low-skills equilibrium (Keep and Mayhew, 1999), with skills deficiencies given prominence in analysing the UK economy's current sluggish performance (Tetlow, 2017). Until relatively recently, the UK has been characterised by supply-side policy interventions, with resources targeted at improving workers' qualifications. Academic discourses, however, suggest a switch to demand-side interventions. This includes, *inter alia*, proactive engagement of social partners to encourage high-skill ecosystems (Warhurst and Findlay, 2012); and focussing, more broadly, on job quality rather than more narrow conceptions of "high performance" HRM (Lloyd and Payne, 2006). These writers argue that such interventions offer better pathways towards a more productive economy and better-paid jobs. The basic argument is that, without compulsion, many employers will be unlikely to adopt high-road employment strategies.

The UK government is currently adopting an apparently more demand-side approach. Most notably, from April 2017, the Apprenticeship Levy mandates that employers with a wage bill of £3million plus will contribute 0.5% of this bill to funding apprenticeships. Whilst not entirely demand side directed, it can be argued that the Levy will encourage employers to consider how best to leverage local apprenticeship provision and their workers' skills and qualifications.

We argue that a crucial aspect of understanding the impact of the Levy, and of skills regulation more generally, is to consider HR managers as key agents in transforming regulation into something which might have positive organisational impact. The paper will therefore consider how HR managers are engaged with different forms of skill regulation and how/whether they use regulation to gain leverage within their organisations. Such an analysis should reveal the impact that regulations have on the agency of HR managers and how/whether this agency is deployed in HR work.

The paper will first offer a theoretical review of what we know about the link between skills regulation and HR practices. It will then analyse qualitative data from a



pilot study of six interviews with senior HR managers, where respondents were invited to reflect on the role of skills regulation in their own organisations' HR policies and practices. The data will be analysed using a framework that considers the interactions between the skill levels of specific groups of workers and the form and extent of labour market regulation that affects these workers. It will be argued that it is useful to categorise employer responses to different forms of skill regulation in these terms.

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## **The Form and Content of Creative Labour: Management, Measurement and the Market in a Case Study of Creative Agencies in the UK and the Netherlands**

**Frederick Harry Pitts, University of Bristol**

This paper uses a case study of how labour time is measured in the creative industries to restate the relevance of the concept of value as a means by which we can connect what goes on in the workplace at a HRM level with what goes on outside in the market, and the determination of the former by the latter. Drawing on 33 interviews with workers at 10 graphic design, brand design and strategic design agencies in the UK and the Netherlands, including 9 freelancers, it considers how the decisions made by managers in the creative industries about who, what and how to measure are not made in a vacuum, but impacted upon by the specific social, economic and political



contexts to which creative labour is subject at a sectoral, corporate, national, local and contractual register.

In so doing it addresses two very different perspectives on the specificity of contemporary labour of which work in the creative industries is typically taken to represent: labour process theory (LPT) and postoperaismo. Whereas the first centres the workplace as the locus of continuity in capitalism, the latter centres the workplace as the locus of change. In so doing the former has traditionally stood as an opponent of the claims of novelty found in the latter and its cognate schools of thought- no more so than today in the reappearance of many of postoperaismo's key ideas in contemporary 'postcapitalist' thinking.

But in one respect LPT and postoperaismo share a key commonality: the stress placed upon the content of labour as the arbiter of wider changes or continuities in capitalism, and not the specific commodified forms this labour and its results assume in the market. This is expressed in their respective ambivalences around the Marxian theory of value. For the postoperaists, notably, the conceptual pre-eminence granted labour's content is the basis for the claim that the character of contemporary 'immaterial labour' is such that it sparks a 'crisis of measurability' whereby work is beyond all measure, leading finally to a crisis in the law of value. Here the rejection is empirical, based on an observable change.

For LPT, meanwhile, the core theory rejects the Marxian understanding of value not as empirically outmoded, but as a logical dead end in and of itself from which certain elements such as exploitation can be rescued. But what these two ambivalent treatments tend to preclude, in both theoretical instances, is an appreciation of what makes labour specific in capitalist society- the particular value-bearing form it and its products take.

The preoccupation with the content of labour leads postoperaismo to extrapolate from microscopic changes in the character of work a crisis in capitalism *tout court*. The creative industries are taken to exemplify the tendencies that produce this crisis. Meanwhile, the same preoccupation with the content of labour leads LPT to disregard the reason why this crisis of measurability cannot be so. This is that the ultimate arbitration of how work is managed and measured is not to do with the labour itself but with the imperatives placed upon it by the forms in which it results. The measure is forced upon work by the framework of value to which it is subservient. Value is therefore suggested as an indispensable conceptual tool to understand the relationship between the workplace and its context, beyond the



labour process to the valorisation process of which it is a part.

This argument is made on the evidence of an in-depth case study of HRM practices in ten creative agencies in the UK and the Netherlands, specifically with reference to how forms of measurement are sustained in spite of the inscrutability of creative labour. They are sustained, the paper suggests, with reference to the specific socio-economic and political-economic context of crisis, competition, regulation and so on in which creative agencies find themselves at the precipice of both external product and labour markets. They are particularly susceptible to global, national and local institutional factors arising from outside the firm owing to their pivotal position in addressing the most sensitive area of capital enterprise: the realisation of value in the buying and selling of products of labour as commodities in the market. This means they act as a vector for the accumulated pressures of other actors in this outside context.

The paper identifies five areas in which this is so, all of which relate in some way to the commodified form assumed by the particular service the agency offers or, alternatively, the particular commodified good the service is rendered in order to help to sell. In enforcing the continued measure of creative labour, managers have to confront and resolve a series of contradictions in each:

Sectorally, the particularly kind of creative agency impacts upon the particular pressures managers face in measuring labour. High-turnover large global media conglomerates, their subsidiaries, independent agencies, smaller 'boutique' agencies and, finally, freelancers, all experience and enforce different kinds of measurement-but it proceeds in each case nonetheless in spite of claims otherwise in the literature.

Nationally, agencies are subject to the specific working cultures in which they are located, although, as I show, in the case of Dutch and British agencies, flows of individual labour from the latter to the former subtly restructures expectations around work intensity and extent.

In the specific corporate contexts in which they find themselves owing to the clients they work with, agencies act as a conveyor belt for the importing of sector-specific pressures from elsewhere. Public sector clients demand accountability which requires a greater emphasis on producing paper trails of time served. Construction companies have least affinity with the ins and outs of the creative labour process, requiring constant justification of the work completed on the basis of hourly chunks of time worked. Fast Moving Consumer Goods firms, the principal source of income for the



agencies studied, exist in perpetual contingency and thus place great pressure on agencies to conform to the constantly unexpected in time and effort. Tobacco companies, another central source of revenue, are constrained by new laws and regulations that in turn standardise the content of labour performed by designers working on tobacco packaging. Finally, in dealing with commodities and chemicals companies, agencies are compelled to act as the good conscience of controversial market actors, plugged into the feedback loop of public sentiment and forever on call to put out CSR-related fires. All these specific contextual complexes wield an effect on how work is managed and measured internally.

Locally, the process of creative clustering and the cycle of gentrification associated with it inducts agencies into a spiral of initial cheap rent and plentiful labour gradually replaced by rising rent, overheads, and competition as creative talent is leaked to more liberated upstart studios taking advantage of cheap rent elsewhere. At each stage the imperatives on management to measure to either invest or cut costs issue from outside the labour process and sculpt it from without.

Finally, different kinds of contract from different kinds of client impact upon how the graphic design, brand design and strategic design agencies covered in the studies manage and measure the work performed within. Larger multinational clients more likely insist on a retainer relationship which creates a closer sense of time budget with attendant impacts on the work conditions creatives experience. Medium sized firms might be more comfortable with a typical billable hours way of working, where a notional amount of hours feeds down through the agency hierarchy and structures work in turn. And for the smaller luxury brands with which boutique agencies work, jobs may be priced by the piece which induces an apparently more creatively liberated way of work- although not without complications of its own.

Each of these impact on measurement in a certain way that stems from the form labour and its products assume and in which they are valued, rather than the labour itself. HRM is performed in service to these contexts, its expectations and actions crafted by the form rather than the content of labour. What this goes to show, I suggest. Is that the value of 'value', specifically in its Marxian understanding, is that it does the theoretical underlabour for understanding how what goes on day to day in the workplace relates to what goes on outside. I suggest that the evidence given in this paper suggests a productive meeting point between Marxian value-form theory and institutional analysis, insofar as the value-form can be taken to itself act as a regulative mechanism placing certain barriers, limitations and compulsions on managers and their attempts to measure creative labour. This would provide a



valuable counterpoint to optimistic postoperaist and postcapitalist portrayals of the kind of work found in the creative industries and the purported crisis of measurability it precipitates, which seem to suggest that the labour they celebrate is no longer governed by capitalist social relations or social forms, uprooted from any institutional influence whatsoever.

I close with consideration of the wider political and practical implications of this analysis. For the understanding of capitalism and the possibility of its replacement, a form perspective on contemporary labour does not permit utopian schemes based on perceived changes in the content of labour as precipitating a postcapitalist or postwork society. For worker struggles in the area studied, the analysis poses important and probing questions for how the new forms of work organisation being developed by creative workers can confront challenges that emit from outside the workplace in the market and society as a whole.

#### **Stream 6, Session 4: Thursday 22nd, 9.00-10.30**

##### **Employee sustainability in work organisations: A critical review, map and research agenda**

**James Richards, Heriot-Watt University**

It is nearly two decades since concepts and ideas related to “sustainability” began to increasingly feature in academic research and professional practice related to work and employment. What is meant by sustainability in the widest context of work organisations is organisations recognising the role they play in ecological, social and economic problems and, in turn, how work organisations are showing a growing readiness to demonstrate a commitment to making their organisations more sustainable (Ehnert et al., 2015). Indeed, the past two decades has seen an increased and wider interest in sustainable (e.g. Ehnert, 2009; Jabbour and Santos, 2009), green (e.g. Dumont et al., 2016; Guerci et al., 2016) and socially responsible forms of HRM (e.g. Shen, 2011; Voegtlin and Greenwood, 2016).

How organisations are showing a growing readiness to commit to making organisations more sustainable comes via a wide-range of employee-orientated practical solutions, often with the support of a range of government run or sponsored agencies, suggesting resources can be sustained through increased attention to the careful handling of employees (Lund, 2004). Solutions to work organisation sustainability vary and can be broadly categorised as follows. Firstly, organisations



have been known to invest in the built environment by creating “intelligent buildings” (Clements-Croome, 2005), which provide healthy workplaces in physical and perceptual terms (Smith and Pitt, 2008). Secondly, organisations aim to become more sustainable by helping to improve employee health and well-being. For instance, making workplaces more inclusive through work-life balance initiatives for all employees (Hirsch, 2007), flexible working practices (Atkinson and Sandiford, 2016), regulating working time to promote gender equality (Zbyszewska, 2013) and occupational health services (Koolhaas et al., 2012). Thirdly, organisations, often supported by third party organisations, aim to provide solutions to job insecurity and unemployment. This means of creating sustainable employment comes via employer provision of training (Bichard, 2008) and the use of career counselling (Wiese and Knecht, 2015). Fourthly, is the concept of “sustainable working lives”, or the creation of work environments aimed at regenerating its human resources (Eriksson et al., 2017). In this instance, the emphasis is on organisational practices aimed at prolonging working lives (e.g. Van de Ven et al., 2014), better preparing new entrants and re-entrants for contemporary employment markets (e.g. Akkermans et al., 2015) and catering for the general and unique needs of disabled and chronically ill employees (e.g. William et al., 2010).

However, the literature on sustainability and work organisations is problematic in a range of ways. The literature, for example, appears largely driven by an employer/governmental agenda, typically underpinned by employer-dominated HRM, organisational behaviour and occupational health discourses, where the rhetoric of sustainability is pitched in terms of concern for employee health and well-being, but the reality is one of continually increasing and controlling organisational productivity, unlikely to be congruous beyond the short-term with key sustainability indicators, such as employee health safety and well-being. Further, the literature appears remiss in terms of engaging with a wider and more critical body of literature related to work organisations, such as that associated with industrial relations, industrial sociology and labour process traditions. Such literature, which may not make specifically refer to sustainability, but without engaging with such literature, a comprehensive and critical understanding of sustainability in relation to work organisation is simply not possible.

To provide a comprehensive review of sustainability in work organisations, with the express aims of mapping out such literature and generating a research agenda, the proposed paper is to be set in four sections. Firstly, definitions of sustainability, the rich variation in sustainable practices related to employees and the emergence of sustainability in relation to work organisations will be discussed. The second stage



discusses key features of the literature, noting, for example, key details such as, nature, methodologies, theories and location of studies related to sustainability in organisations. The third stage introduces literature associated with traditions of industrial relations, industrial sociology and labour process theory. The aim of this section is to relate a range of individual, self- and formally collectively organised employee activities to the concepts and ideas related to sustainability in organisations. The final section represents a summary of the key findings from the paper, setting out a revised agenda for future research on sustainability in organisations.

The critical literature review and subsequent mapping and research agenda exercise will allow a range of parties to the employment relationship to better understand/conceptualise sustainability in organisations. The critical literature review will also act to encourage and direct further research on a key and growing area of academic research and professional practice related to work and employment.

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### **Victims, survivors and the experience of internal redeployment: exploring the impact on the 'inbetweeners' of employment restructuring**

**Chris McLachlan, University of Hertfordshire, Ian Greenwood, Robert MacKenzie, Leeds University**

A typical consequence of organisations implementing employment restructuring and redundancy is the profound negative effects related to employees' social, economic, psychological and physiological well-being. The experiences of employees affected by such processes have been generally categorised in the HRM and organisational psychology literature as 'victims', who are directly affected by redundancy, or 'survivors,' who are not directly affected and remain at the organisation post-restructuring (Ket de Vries and Balazs, 1997; Sahdev, 2003; Devine et al, 2003, Armstrong-Stassen, 2002).



This paper is framed by the critique that this dichotomous categorisation acts to limit understanding of the variety of human experiences associated with restructuring and redundancy. The central contribution herein, is the presentation of a new, analytically discrete, category of employee affected by restructuring and redundancy, termed inbetweeners. Inbetweeners are defined as employees whose experiences fall within the interstices of victim and survivor, with a specific focus on employees' experience of displacement following internal redeployment. The findings point to the need for a greater acknowledgement of the different types of employee experiences of restructuring and redundancy, expanding debates outside the victim-survivor bifurcation prevalent in extant research. The research proceeded through a qualitative case study of a restructuring process at a UK subsidiary of a multi-national steel company, SteelCo, that cut 1700 jobs between 2011-2015.

This article makes three additional contributions to theory and practice. Firstly, this article complements research in the organisational psychology literature that has tentatively acknowledged the experience of employees that lose their jobs but are subsequently redeployed internally and thus remain at the organisation (Armstrong-Stassen, 2002). The article highlights issues related to the adequacy of redeployment processes, employees' career disruption and specific organisational constraints that help explain why inbetweeners may experience different outcomes to victims and survivors. Secondly, the SteelCo research relocates the experience of redeployment within the HRM literature, noting the implications of inbetweeners for the way organisations, and the HR function, strategise restructuring and redundancy processes. This advances the debates related to how restructuring strategies might be devised and implemented to account for the experience of survivors, proposing that the HR function must necessarily take into account the experience of inbetweeners, where they exist, in order to more effectively manage the workforce post-restructuring (Sahdev, 2003; Teague and Roche, 2014). Finally, in comparing the experience of inbetweeners with those of victims, the specific structural and cultural constraints facing affected employees are identified. A distinctive characteristic of inbetweeners is thus the manner in which such constraints continue to shape ongoing experiences of restructuring and redundancy internally, and within the organisation; as opposed to victims that typically exit the organisation and deal with such effects in the external environment. This means more attention is subsequently afforded to the internal capacity of the HR function to deal with the effects on employees post-restructuring, and for the HR function to recognise how the conditions that shape particular experiences of restructuring and redundancy, such as redeployment, can



impact employees' subsequent relationship with the organisation

### **Work–Family Balance Practices in the Malaysian context: a comparison of two oil companies**

**Noorhasyimah.Ismail, Raffaella Valsecchi, Brunel Business School**

Work –family balance practices (WFBPs) refer to the human resource practices and policies created by organisations that facilitate one's work, family and personal life to be integrated, and the ability to form a workplace environment that encourages workers' commitment (Poelmans et al. 2008). The WFBPs are a common human resource practices and have been adopted in most Western countries, although they are growing new to Asian countries (Subramaniam 2010). The core focus of the paper is to examine how a different socio-political economic context (culture, religion, employment law), such as the Malaysian context, has an impact in the implementation of WFBPs. Moreover, by drawing on two Malaysian oil and gas (O&G) companies, this paper explores the implementation and experiences of WFBPs in two different sectors: one private multi-national company and one government owned company. A number of researchers have examined the issue of WFBPs in Malaysia. While the implementation of family-friendly practices in multinational or international companies even and included few small firms has a long history; only limited studies examined the implementation of these HRM practices within Malaysian government owned companies, due to their recent start (Subramaniam, 2010). This study aims explored further this under research context. In addition, the work environment of O&G companies has not yet deeply explored within the current literature and, as our data showed, has a deep impact in developing specific WFBPs. Previous studies (Bloom et al. 2011) showed that family-friendly practices such as the introduction of flexible hours, childcare flexibility, working from home, job sharing, and childcare subsidy, positively affected the work –life-balance of workers. However these practices can have some drawbacks, if they are not associated with the involvement of supervisor support (Chou and Cheung 2013). Therefore, the role of managers plays a major role in the implementation of these policies and practices. One of the objectives of this study is to examine managers' experiences and attitudes towards WFBPs by investigating their role, strategies and challenges in implementing such practices in the Malaysian context. Our data collection draws on 36 semi-structured interviews with managers/ executives and employees of O&G companies (one multi-national company and one government owned company). Overall our data clearly show that different employment laws, culture (collectivism versus individualism) religion, work environment (O&G companies) and sector (private



versus public) have deeply influenced the implementation and experience of WFBCs within the two companies examined. References Bloom, N., T.Kretschmer, and J. Van Reenen. (2011). "Are family-friendly workplace practices a valuable firm resource?" *Strategic Management Journal*, 32: 343–67. Chou, K. L., and K. Chi Kin Cheung. (2013). "Family-Friendly Policies in the Workplace and Their Effect on Work–life Conflicts in Hong Kong." *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 24(20): 3872–85. Poelmans, S.A.Y., S. Patel, and B. Beham. (2008). "Stages in the Implementation of Work-Life Policies." In *Harmonizing Work, Family, and Personal Life: From Policy to Practice*, 133–65., Cambridge University Press. Subramaniam, G. (2010). "Family Friendly Policies In Malaysia: Where Are We?" *Journal of International Business Research* 9(1): 43–56.

**Stream 6, Session 5: Thursday 22nd, 15.30-17.00**

**Agreeing on the Wage: the Imposition of Wage Systems in Chinese Factories**

**Fuk Ying Tse, Warwick Business School**

This research investigates the design and implementation of wage systems in Chinese factories. Wage and benefits play an indispensable role in recruitment, motivating and retaining employees. By delving into wage-related HR practices deployed by the management, including how a wage is designed, communicated and executed, I seek to understand how organisational control over employees is legitimised at the plant level, and the extent to which it could be counterbalanced by employees.

Previous literature on wage determination is mostly situated in developed economies where various levels of collective bargaining mechanisms are in place. However, in non-union settings, there is not necessarily a common understanding of the wage system on which workers could further build up their wage demands at the plant level. Recognising that wage as an area of contestation between employees and the management, means of obscuring the understanding of wage systems, including the encouragement of wage confidentiality and employee silence within the organisation, which effectively undermines capacity of employees to challenge the management, are explored.



A case study of an industrial zone with strong presence of automobile manufacturing in China is thus conducted, using the extended case method. Data is collected by in-depth interview with HR managers and workers, document research and participant observation on the shop floor and the region, in order to achieve a multilayer analysis of how the local labour market, and respective communities among the management and employees shape dynamics on the shop floor.

## **Actor-Centred HRM: Workers' Narratives of Technology Upgrading in two Chinese Multinationals**

**Yu Zheng, Shaowei He, School of Management, Royal Holloway, University of London**

In recently years, a growing number of Chinese multinationals have started to acquire firms in the developed countries as a pathway towards upgrading their technological and management capability (Peng, 2009; Elia and Santangelo, 2017). While there are some empirical research showing the mixed purpose of acquisitions, the complex process of post-acquisition integration and performance outcomes of the parent and acquired firms, limited workplace-based studies have been done to unpack the meaning of human resource management (HRM). In fact, the meaning of HRM is seldom discussed as if HRM is a set of coherent activities that can be applied to any case of cross-country acquisition. In this paper, we aim to address this research gap by examining workers' narratives about the roles HRM played in the post-acquisition technological upgrading process, with a particular focus on comparing the interpretation of HRM made by workers expatriated from the parent firms and to the local workers.

The empirical data are collected from two Chinese multinational firms, both of which acquired an upstream supplier in early 2010s. *Company A* is a semi-conductor manufacturer in the UK, acquired by a Chinese state owned transport machinery manufacturing group. *Company B* is a chemical pulp mill in Canada acquired by a Chinese private owned nylon fibre production plant. *Company A* adopted an employee engagement approach to implement the changes brought by upgrading production technology and retraining the engineers, technicians and workers. By the time this fieldwork was conducted, *Company A* was on course to becoming the largest R&D hub of the parent firm outside China. *Company B*, in contrast, followed a



more confrontational route, which led to an 18-month suspension of production.

Despite the contrasting experiences of the workers in the two companies, some common features emerged from the initial phase of comparing what human resource management means to the workers. The Chinese managers and expatriated workers are found to be championing 'job insecurity, hard-work and self-sacrifice' as key to effective technological upgrading, and hence the objective of HRM. This point echoes findings from previous research conducted in Chinese multinationals in the developing countries (Lee, 2014; Rui, Miao and Shipment, 2017). The local workers, in contrast, put emphasis on 'equality, autonomy and self-development' as critical to the technological upgrading process. HRM is presented as playing mediating roles. The contrasting meanings reveal underlying tensions as both firms move forward in technological upgrading.

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**Stream 6, Session 6: Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> , 13.30-15.00**

**Self-employment as horizon and precariousness as foundation: topics on Kirchner's social policy**

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The 36th International  
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# CLASS AND THE LABOUR PROCESS



Our job intends to analyze the main subjects regarding the rationality that sustains the last years' implemented social policy in Argentina, making special emphasis on identifying foundations and particularities of specific self-employment policies from the National Social Development Ministry. By reading official documents and productions, we intend to advance in our analysis regarding the following plans and programs: Plan de Desarrollo Local, and Economía Social "Manos a la Obra", "Banco Popular de la Buena Fé" (BPBF), National Micro-Credits Law N° 26117 and Plan Argentina Trabaja. All of these proposals look to promote actions such as self-employment, social monotax, family-based work, working cooperatives, among others stated on the provision of supplies, loans/micro-credits and equipment for implementation of low-scale activities, based in "know-how" skills, which would allow working sectors to generate their own incomes. Partial results of our research allow us to appreciate how social policy configuration articulates rights ownership and citizenship, with an idea of participation and citizen involvement structured towards a speech of reaching higher autonomy and dignity levels, which actually operates as an actualization of meritocratic logic. This established, over a basis of social problems individuation, and through the mentioned speech's spirit, subsidies (such as mentioned before) are associated with dependence, a loans/micro-credits are seen as a possibility to people for to overcome their poverty situation with dignity, while it is sustained the need of resignifying employment in its "dignifying" dimension, the value of identity, as well as the subjects' commitment with themselves and with society. Employment appears in official speech as the best organizer and social integrator since it would allow people to develop their capabilities, socialize and grow with dignity. As a consequence it constitutes a compulsive action and dictate, and thus, its association to dignity and work-culture, and so, as well, the association of people working insertion with the right to receive any kind of social assistance as necessary components. This logic finds its foundation in the diffusion of a supposed working crisis, associated to the alternative of developing individual abilities for to constitute an own business and think (and live) a life besides market, fomenting self-employment, individual work, remarking and associating such aspects with freedom, independence, etc.; and not considering the stability of a long-term professional career. As an example: unemployment appears associated to educational deficiencies or lack of necessary new competences demanded by the working market, firming up, as a consequence, an individualist understanding where unemployment ceases to be a society general problem, and shows as an exclusive matter of those persons who haven't invested enough resources on their own education and haven't made enough effort to guarantee their own means for daily reproduction.



## **Valuing work in wage policies and criteria**

**Ylva Ulfsdotter Eriksson, Bengt Larsson & Petra Adolfsson, University of Gothenbourg**

Performance based pay, under the label “individual and differentiated wage setting”, is increasing in Swedish organizations and companies - not least due to changes in the wage formation process and collective agreements. Wage criteria are commonly used for evaluations and valuations of employees’ performances, and are stressed as prerequisites for objective, transparent and salient assessments of employee contributions at work. Also, the idea is that wage criteria ought to mirror the more general wage policy and be aligned with the organizations overall goals and values. Thus, the wage policy and salary criteria are tools for communicating, and governing, what practices and behaviors that are valued in the organization. It is in this way, performance based and individual differentiated pay is assumed to have motivational and performance enhancing effects among the employees. The aim of this paper is to explore how wage policies and wage criteria express what in work that is valued and how. Through a qualitative document analysis this paper study how four organizations, from both the public and private sector, express value in performance and behaviour. The analysis is illustrated with quotes from actors working in the selected organizations. Preliminary results show that e.g. “professionalism” is a common criteria - yet defined and operationalized differently within the various organizations. Theoretically, the paper draw on concepts developed within “Valuation studies”, such as Orders of Worth. An important aspect of the valuations is the presence and use of numbers in evaluations and valuations in order to “anchor” the assessment and in that way signal its objectivity.

## **Manpower under Tripartism in Singapore**

**Adrian Kuah, Stephane Le Queux, Chris Leggett, James Cook University**

Organizations and employers are often concerned with the design and implementation of HRM practices to fit the various institutional structures. Our paper examines the motives behind policies for productivity management and the shifting institutional supports to employment in Singapore. In the absence of natural resources, the availability of skilled labour and its level of productivity have been central to the industrialisation of the city-state and commonly viewed as one of the keys to Singapore’s economic success: ‘There can be few other places in the world where the social regulation of the labour market has been so consistently and



explicitly a central component of national development strategy as it has been in Singapore' (Coe and Kelly, 2000: 414).

After outlining the tenets of Singapore's corporatism, we review the policies that characterize the 'productivity movement' from the early 1980s (Ohno & Kitaw 2011) to recent developments following recommendations from the Inter-Agency Productivity Taskforce which proposed a range of initiatives that included 'Skills Future' under the Workforce Development Agency led by the Singapore National Employers' Association (Leggett, Kuah and Gan 2017). While maintaining (labour) productivity growth is identified by Singapore's tripartite institutions to be a national priority as the country climbs further up the global value chain (Leggett 2013), it is primarily directed at the Singaporean 'core' workforce (Kuah, Le Queux and Hassan 2016). The Tripartite Alliance for Fair and Progressive Employment Practices (TAFEP) was also formed to promote and encourage the wider adoption of fair and progressive employment practices among employers. There is indeed a socio-demographic component underlying the economic imperative. Social pressures are mounting over the dramatic increase in the ratio of migrant workers to Singaporean workers. Tightening the labour market is therefore perceived as a means to persuade employers to extract the best from their human resources, and reduce their dependence on foreign skilled manpower.

The success of the new agenda still need to be assessed over time. The agenda is full of challenges. First, because Singapore aims to become a regional talent hub, authorities want to reassure international investors that they will not be restricted from access to the human resource competencies they need. Despite upskilling, a critical issue is whether or not the Singaporean 'core' workforce, and especially its young graduates, are competitive with global talents. Second, in a dual labour market, a challenge is how to manage the only 'partially incorporated' migrant workers (Leggett and Le Queux 2014) for social cohesion and industrial order.