



BOOK OF ABSTRACTS

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Keynote speakers

‘Just-in-time’ Labour: A Temporal Approach to the Transnational Labour Process

Rutvica Andrijasevic (University of Bristol)

This talk will argue for the need to investigate the temporal dimension of transnational labour process in order to account more fully for the changing nature of capitalist production and related forms of labour control. The argument I put forward is that attention to space in the analysis of the transnational labour process needs to be matched by attention to time. A temporal approach makes visible diverse ways in which capital deploys time to reorganize and expand, and keep labour enrolled within regimes of capital accumulation. To illustrate my argument, I will examine how the so-called ‘just-in-time’ (JIT) model, typical of automobile and electronics manufacturing, is operationalized so as to synchronize the supply of labour to JIT production. Firstly, I will discuss the role played by labour intermediaries in supplying firms with migrant labour to produce ‘what is needed, at the time needed and in the quantity needed’, as per JIT logic. Secondly, I will scrutinize how collective worker dormitories reduce ‘unproductive time’ by merging productive and reproductive spaces and how they function as repositories of migrant labour that enable firms to meet the needs of the fluctuating demands of production. I will suggest that these attempts to transpose JIT temporality onto the world of labouring bodies are best understood as materialization of an ‘economic-utilitarian’ philosophy of time that posits time as instantaneous, simultaneous, and entirely calculative thus unhinging time from the flux of everyday life and from the social relations of reproduction. Finally, when migrant workers reject ad-hoc work scheduling, firms’ commandeering of their off-work time, and relentless downward pressure on wages and working conditions, they assert their ‘temporal autonomy’ and expose that struggle over working conditions is, increasingly, a struggle over time.

Segregating Workers on Ethnic Lines: Who does it and why it is a problem

Guglielmo Meardi (Scuola Normale Superiore, Florence)

Ethnic segregation at work continues to prosper in advanced economies, despite growing legislative and policy efforts to eradicate discrimination, and the flourishing of business pledges to equality. In the absence of universal protection or in case presence of regulatory gaps, employers can reduce labour costs by exploiting the more vulnerable workers, in a form of ‘price discrimination’ that extracts the most from each demographic group depending on their social resources and on their relative preferences. Yet pay considerations alone would not entirely explain why segregation is so entrenched even at times of overall wage decline, nor the ‘other side’ of segregation, ie the enduring preference for (higher-wage) national/ethnic majority workers when they could be replaced too. Consideration of different aspects of the labour process and of different actors is required for a more fine-grained understanding of when, how and why segregation occurs, as well as to design possible responses to it. In addition, new organisational forms and technologies (platforms, remote working) change the scope of competition between different groups and the opportunities for segmentation. The dynamics of segmentation and of ethnic hierarchies at work in recent decades point at complex



and changing workplace politics of (in)equality, which interact with changing migration policies and debates at the macro level, as well as with other changing lines of segregation such as gender. The proposed reflection starts from a reflection on the theoretical debates on segmentation to put forward an updated version of Piore's seminal work that can incorporate the complexity of different levels, actors and geographies. Illustrative examples are drawn from construction, shipbuilding, and service sectors, in particular from Southern Europe in the attempt to explain why these countries, despite fewer historical legacies of slavery or formal racial segregation than other advanced economies, have some of the most ethnically segregated labour markets.

Beyond Trump: immigrants and labor organizing in the 21st century U.S.

Ruth Milkman (CUNY Graduate Center, CUNY School of Labor and Urban Studies)

Immigrant labor organizing in the United States has faded from scholarly and public attention in recent years, in contrast to its high profile in the 1990s and early 2000s. Immigration slowed to a trickle after the 2008 financial crash, and efforts to win a path to citizenship for the nation's 11 million undocumented residents were blocked by formidable political obstacles even before Donald Trump's unexpected rise to power. During his presidential campaign and then in office, Trump promulgated a narrative blaming the misfortunes of U.S.-born whites on low-wage immigrant workers. This immigrant threat narrative galvanized large segments of the white working class and captivated public and media attention. The immigrant rights movement was thrown into a defensive crouch, while organized labor was preoccupied with declining union density and internal divisions within its ranks. Immigrant organizing continued in many "blue" cities and states, with some notable successes, but remained modest in scale and largely under the radar.

Under Biden, immigration reform remains elusive, amid a renewed influx of immigrants and refugees. At the same time, the COVID-19 pandemic has made "essential workers," many of them foreign-born, increasingly visible. The pandemic crisis has also generated growing public sympathy for workers and unions, helping fuel a notable spike in rank-and-file militancy. This offers a fresh opportunity to focus attention on the employer strategies and accompanying public policies that caused the reversal of fortune the U.S.-born working class suffered in recent decades, enabling progressives to counter the still-potent immigrant threat narrative and craft organizing strategies that highlight the shared interests of immigrants and other workers.

Contextualizing infrastructural capitalism through the Chinese high-speed rail's double logic and class conflicts

Pun Ngai (Lingnan University)

"It's a China thing!" – High-speed rail is portrayed as an epochal project by China's mass media signifying the rise of China and its superiority of constructing alternative capitalism in the contemporary moment. To conceptualize the capitalist dynamics of the contemporary moment as infrastructural capitalism and their relationship to social and labour conflicts, this paper moves



beyond a dichotomous constellation of the logic of capital and the territorial logic of power, and argues that these two logics, in the context of China, are not only closely intertwined, but also work as a double logic attempting to resolve the economic crisis and accelerate China's fast speed capitalism. In this article, we argue that the Chinese spatial economic system is not an alternative to capitalism but, at best, is a variegated form of capitalism, which we call infrastructural capitalism – a reaction to neoliberal capitalism shaped largely by the dual logic of territorial power and capital. Illuminating the dialectical relationship between the geographies of capitalism and labour, this article highlights the political role of the infrastructural projects in creating invisible social contradictions, resulting in a wide array of affected working-class masses to take individual and collective actions.

Symposium 1

The Future of Work and Workers

Tobias Schulze-Cleven (Rutgers University, USA), Todd Vachon (Rutgers University, USA), Donna Baines (University of British Columbia, Canada), Kendra Briken (University of Strathclyde, UK), Matt Vidal (Loughborough University London, UK), Paul Thompson (University of Stirling, UK)

How can we build a future of work that meets pressing challenges and delivers for workers? What conceptual innovations are needed to lead this process?

We propose a symposium on these pressing questions, anchored in the recently published volume *Revaluing Work(ers): Toward a Democratic and Sustainable Future* that Tobias Schulze-Cleven and Todd E. Vachon put together for the US-based Labor and Employment Relations Association (LERA) as the organization's 2021 research volume. In the spirit of bringing together the insights of neighboring academic fields and encouraging a conversation across the boundaries of different professional organizations, the symposium features labor process specialists with complementary expertise to critique the edited volume and build on it from the vantage points of these experts' varied research programs.

Contemporary societies are beset by interrelated ecological, political, and economic crises, from climate change to democratic erosion and economic instability. Uncertainty abounds about the sustainability of democratic capitalism. Yet mainstream debates on the evolution of work tend to remain narrowly circumscribed, exhibiting both technological and market determinism.

The volume by Schulze-Cleven and Vachon presents a labor studies perspective on the future of work and workers, emphasizing three tenets for a productive analytical lens: workers' struggles as an empirical entry point, an appreciation of interdisciplinarity, and a commitment to workers' rights. On that basis, the volume argues that revaluing work—the efforts and contributions of workers—is crucial to realizing the promises of democracy and improving sustainability. Second, it emphasizes that collective political action, and the collective agency of workers in particular, is central to driving this agenda forward. Third, it maintains that reproductive work—labor efforts from care to education that sustain the reproduction of society—can function as a crucible of innovation for the valuation and governance of work more broadly.

Participants in the symposium will relate their own work to the arguments made in the book, focusing on such issues as (and the implications of) care work, race and gender, gig work, technological change, and Marxist political economy.



Symposium 2

Workers' rights and solidarities in cross-border labour markets in Central and Eastern Europe: conversation with practitioners, trade unions and activists

Marek Čaněk (Central European Organising Center, C.O.Z.Z. - Trade Union, Czechia), Iaryna Khomtsii Damo (Radu Agency - NGO - providing support with obtaining pensions for returned migrant domestic workers, Ukraine - Italy), Marta Romankiv (You Can Count on Me - migrant initiative and support group, Poland) Jasmina Krunic (ASTRA - Organization combating human trafficking and labour exploitation, Serbia), Olena Fedyuk (University of Padua, MSCA fellow in the project RightsLab)

CEE has become a region which is both a place of exodus of workers for better paid jobs within and outside the EU, and also a place that increasingly and with a staggering speed absorbs workers from non-EU countries into its national labour markets. Being simultaneously on both ends of sending and receiving states' dichotomy, CEE can stand as a regional focus of analysis, where new employment practices are tested, adjusted and reinvented in a way that facilitates formation of new gendered labouring subjects adjusting to hyper mobility, fragmented employment relations, mediated recruitment, seasonal demand and sectoral fluctuations of capital and investments. As such it's a region of fluid and adaptive labour and mobility management regimes, rather than a periphery of labour practices developed elsewhere. The questions of workers' social reproduction, social risks and security, safety networks and solidarities get equally reinvented as they face a new and dynamic realities of labour processes and motilities.

This symposium will bring together a round table of practitioners, trade union members and civil society activists from CEE who, in their daily activities, deal with fragmentations and volatility of transnational working lives. New forms of mediated and subcontracted labour relations in the EU carry particular risks and costs for mobile workers and often reveal mismatch in the realm of practical provisions of social security, pensions, health care, employment security, solidarity and support networks.

The aim of this round table is to provide a space for mapping out various issues of social reproductions, transnational workers' rights, social protection and solidarity, through the lens of the practical work of selected organizations and collectives. It is an opportunity for the ILPC participants to meet with practitioners, see a close up of the questions and challenges they face in practice, connect theoretical and larger structural discussions with their daily manifestations. We hope to provoke critical discussions that will link larger theoretical perspectives with practices, explore overlaps and manifestations of insecurities in employment, recruitment, changing regimes of work and production in CEE, find examples of solidarity networks and actions.

Migration infrastructures. The role of Temporary Work Agencies in the Western Europe

Andrea Abbati (University of Urbino Carlo Bo, Italy)

Nowadays, the labour migration regime requires ready, accessible, flexible labor specifically coming from outside national borders, in this sense, employers are not only seeking to obtain labour, but to



obtain a specific form of labour that can be used under specific conditions of organization of the labour process. In the present case, intermediaries as TWAs are growing in importance in Central and Eastern Europe, as they can lead the final users to develop an internal micro labor market, where they can both directly employ highly qualified staff with a low work turnover, and temporarily hire low-skilled staff with a high work turnover thank to TWA.

Our research is based on the concept of “infrastructural approach”, this paper investigates the role of TWAs in Romania. Distancing ourselves from the approaches of migration systems, we consider migration not as a “system”, rather as a processual perspective that defines migration “as multi-directional and self-adjusting movements but shifts focus away from how migration behavior becomes stabilized to how migration is mediated” (Xiang and Lindquist, 2014:132). We look at the international mobility as the product of the interrelation between these different infrastructures working in Romania.

Romania’s context emerges as particular interesting as TWAs support both the placement of the Romanian workforce abroad and the recruitment of workforce from non-EU countries, such as Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, and Vietnam for Romanian companies. This phenomenon could be seen as a result of both the wave of large foreign direct investments, whose affect Central and Eastern European countries for more than thirty years and of emigration processes of Romanian workers looking for better working and life conditions.

This project is based on a qualitative study, using individual semi-structured, in-depth interviews. The sample considerate adequate is a criterion based on purposive sample. Our participants are selected since they have peculiar features or characteristics which will enable us to have a detailed exploration and understanding of the central themes. At the early stage of our research, we collected 20 interviews among TWAs managers and Human resource Managers of companies.

We analyze how temporary work agencies create new strategies to manage these migration flows, which are the main implemented strategies, and which are the consequence in Romanian labour market. Our paper suggests that the increase of labour intermediation process is having strong effect in all the dimensions of Romanian labour market through a construction of different infrastructures that help but also constrain the rapid moving of workers. Secondly, differently from the idea of the guestworkers pattern where the state shape migration flows, we suggest that international recruitment agencies and employers are growing in importance in shaping migration flows and producing an ever-strong stratification in the secondary labour market. Finally, our paper suggest that TWAs are able to maintain and feed the labour process, in and outside the national borders.

Can new technology challenge macho-masculinities? The case of the mining industry

Lena Abrahamsson, Jan Johansson (Luleå University of Technology)

The purpose of this article is to reflect on how the implementation of new technology, such as digitalisation and automation, at mining workplaces, engender changes in work and organisation and how this, in turn, may challenge existing gendered norms and roles. In fact, a tendency of change in relation to gender has occurred at the mining workplaces over the past few years in Sweden. This can be seen in an increasing number of women working at mining sites and perhaps also indications of changes in the meanings of masculinities and femininities in mining work. These small yet observable changes can be attributed to general discourses and processes towards increased gender equality in



the Swedish working life. However, when stepping into the mining workplaces, into the everyday work, it becomes apparent that these changes are intertwined with other changes at the mining workplaces over recent time that are related to, for example, more automation, remote-control technology and digitalisation, improvement of the work environment and safety. Step-by-step the mining industry moves toward a vision of automated and digitalised mines and recently we can see an accelerated pace of change, which involves changes in the local mining work and new conditions for what constitutes work in a mine. This observation is one point of departure for the analyses in this article since such a transition is seldom easy and not without restoring responses and resistance in the workplace cultures. We are interested here in discussing how constructions of gender, and especially the mineworker form of masculinity (which sometimes has expressed itself as macho-masculinity), is involved in these complex processes of both resistance and change. We can also see that history shows that the more mechanised the mining sector became, the more it was associated with masculinity. Moreover, since the digital technology requires skills and attributes which are male dominated and has a continued association to masculinities (at least in Sweden), the digital transformation may further entrench the current gender pattern and power structure.

This article is predisposed so that we start with a description of the old but in some ways remaining mining masculinity and workplace culture, then presenting the current and coming technological and organisational changes in the mining context and the resistances that these changes meet. We conclude with a discussion on indications of changes in how mining masculinities are done or rather will or can be done. Empirical examples from our studies are used as illustrations that are integrated with discussions based on literature.

Masked staffing in the Swedish building sector

Rasmus Ahlstrand (Department of Sociology, Lund University, Sweden)

The organisation of work in the Swedish building sector is changing due to increased subcontracting and the adoption of construction management (Harris & McCaffer, 2013). In this paper construction management refers to a specific subcontracting regime in which contractors externalise all parts of the production process and organise work through subcontractors. Echoing global trends of cost-cutting, the externalisation between Swedish contractors and subcontractors attempts to achieve organisational flexibility by reducing the number of directly employed craftspersons. Such trends have accelerated in the past two decades as a result of the expansion of the EU-single market and the inclusion of new member states from mainly Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) in 2004 and 2007.

This paper builds on theories of the sociology of work and organisation and sets out to analyse the current subcontracting regime of construction management from a labour process perspective (e.g. Thompson & Smith, 2010). Based on a case study research design with interviews and visits to construction sites, the organisation of work in two building companies is analysed with the aim to explore manifestations of organisational change visible through dis-integrated organisational structures contingent on subcontracting. The analysis shows that contractors and subcontractors engage in a variety of contractual agreements structured around a balancing of price, quality, and trustworthiness, but that the access to cheap labour in the EU-labour market incentivises firms to engage in contractual agreements based on price to a further extent than previously. A key finding is the use of masked staffing in the organisation of work. Masked staffing is a novel and previously not



conceptualised form of subcontracting, which elaborates how subcontracting arrangements reliant on external business relations with trade-specialists builds on principles of staffing rather than those of actual subcontracting. Rather than the externalisation of the managerial control over labour, which is the case in different forms of subcontracting, control of the labour process in masked staffing remains directly with the general contractor. Consequently I show that rather than subcontractors, firms contracted on principles of masked staffing acts simply as unauthorised staffing agencies involved in the brokering of (cheap) labour.

Hence, access to cheap labour in the EU-labour market, together with processes of industrialisation and volatilities in product markets, motivates Swedish building companies to externalise work. Since all forms of subcontracting involve uncertainties and risks, and thereby relies also on the trustworthiness of the respective subcontractor's work organisation, I show how subcontracting arrangements are tied to one of three social control mechanisms: Opportunity control, incentive control or benevolence. As contractors and subcontractors renegotiate the trade-off between objectives of quality and profit, subcontractors' trustworthiness becomes secondary to price, and in turn stimulates subcontracting even further.

The paper shows how the current subcontracting regime of construction management restructures the organisation of work in the Swedish building sector. Such restructuring is indicative of the plethora of possibilities for contractors and subcontractors to shift both costs and responsibilities, and it reveals also tensions and contradictions in the labour process, including the changing character of construction work.

Mediated by technology, assisted by precarity: Content moderation work and migrant workers at a German IT-Services firm

Sana Ahmad, Maximilian Greb (WZB Berlin Social Science Center, Germany)

The public discourse is rife with discussions over the impact of social media on political, economic, and cultural developments in current times. Harmful content on social media that incites violence, hate and fear has been determined by both the scholarly and media communities as a regulatory flaw of platform operations. At the same time, very little is known about the operations of social media platforms and the production processes which keep these platforms viable. Content moderation is a specific process in this regard which is practiced by social media firms to remove unwanted content from their platforms. Some have even noted its essentiality for social media platforms to remain attractive to customers and generate revenues. Considering the enormous wealth creating power of social media monopolies such as Facebook, Instagram and Twitter, who have access to a greater number of users across the world today and have become an important part of the public sphere, it is becoming increasingly important to understand how social media firms moderate user content in view of their economic valorisation interests. Along with subcontracting the service work to low-cost destinations such as in the Philippines and India, outsourced practices of content moderation have also been observed in Germany. And the role of technology has been examined to be integral in maintaining the linkages between the geographically-dispersed locations of social media firms and subcontracting firms.

This article undertakes a labour process inquiry and examines the ways by which technology mediates the transformation of content moderators' labour power into productive labour. Our analysis in this



paper is informed by an interdisciplinary research design, by bringing together the focus group research method and the design-thinking method, in order to study the human-machine interaction in content moderation work. Both methods were applied using two workshops with ten participants who were employed at a Berlin-based IT-Services firm and worked on an outsourced content moderation project for a US-based large social media firm. Data collected from this research has predominantly been analysed using the concept of “technical control” developed by Richard Edwards (1979) and the subsequent debates on it, in particular by the research on call centres and service firms by Callaghan and Thompson (2001). On account of national and ethnic stratification observed in our research data, the analytical discussion in this article is supplemented by studies of migrant low-wage employment in Germany. We argue that labour market positions of the workers have an influence on labour’s agency in the content moderation labour process. The discussion in this paper can provide as a basis for further asking if new strategies are required to organize technically and socially segregated workplaces.

Keeping a job: asylum seekers and refugees in temporary and non-regular employment in Germany

Ayodeji Akinnimi (Duisburg-Essen University and Max Planck Institute for the Study of Societies Cologne)

In 2015 the German government relaxed its restrictions for asylum seekers to enter the German labor market by reducing the waiting time from 15 months to 3 and improving integration supports. The state of research shows that asylum seekers and refugees are mainly employed through temporary agencies. The expectation of labor market researchers is that agency employment provides a steppingstone into regular employment, as refugees learn the language and become better integrated into working in Germany. In my presentation, I will show how employment patterns diverge from the state of the literature to date, which depends on registered data from the job centers and employers. My research shows that immigration controls and employment regulations interact to force asylum seekers into informal employment, either intermittently or for the longer term. The research I present is based on an ethnography of three main locations of job seeking and work- day markets where asylum seekers are recruited to informal jobs, Schrottplätze operated mainly by persons with a migration or refugee background where most asylum seekers find informal work, and temporary agency-client workplaces, where asylum seekers are placed and share information on agencies. I will discuss two distinct patterns of job-seeking and employment experiences: the permanent forced mobility of temporary agency work due to how employers evade regulations on equal pay and the forced informalization of employment due to how the German government has classified some asylum seekers as not likely to remain in Germany in the long term. The first pattern covers asylum seekers from the five unsafe countries which are extended priority support in integration and language courses, while the second pattern covers those from countries which are not given the same priority. I focus especially on the meaning of informal labor markets for this second group of mainly Nigerians, for whom Schrottplätze are the main workplaces. I will end with an analysis of the meaning of informal employment, from both the perspective of employers and the asylum seekers who take up such jobs.



Mutualism, class composition and the reshaping of worker organization in platform mediated work

Gabriella Alberti, Simon Joyce (University of Leeds)

Our research on emerging forms of worker organisation in platform work and other precarious settings (Alberti and Joyce 2021; Alberti 2016) highlights the importance of informality and mutualism among workers, in ways that challenge mainstream and institutionalist approaches in European/Anglophone industrial relations.

Historically, scholars have identified mutualism as an important facet of working class organisation, where a variety of approaches and definitions are evident (for instance, Webb and Webb 1897; Cobble 2016). However, a systematic treatment is lacking. We explore the debate conceptually while drawing from our empirical evidence on forms of mutualism we have found among gig and platform workers in our research across the UK and Italy over a number of years. We argue that persistent Eurocentric and institutionalist approaches to union organising contribute to a misrecognition of new forms of mutualism among new sections of the workforce, and the role played by mutualism in processes of self-organisation and class formation.

As noticed by critical scholars outside Europe (Liu and Freedman 2021) most research on digitally mediated work focusses on how technological control constrains worker resistance. In contrast we build on emerging research that looks at how platform workers build solidaristic links from the bottom-up despite and at times within and around those constraints. Critical research at the nexus of labour process and class composition has indeed demonstrated impressive levels of organisation and contestation among groups of workers initially considered ‘unorganizable’: e.g. those in the gig economy whose employment relations are fragmented by spatial dispersion, the use of intermediaries-whether real contractors (e.g. Liu and Friedman 2021) or ‘digital gangmasters’- (Deliverance 2019) and not least disadvantaged by their migrant status, which increases their social precariousness (Chan 2020). How migrant gig workers may use platforms to develop forms of mutualism and solidarity among each other is an under-researched aspect of the debate that we look at in our paper. More broadly the paper emphasises the importance of looking at social composition, both within and beyond paid work and established trade unions (see also Joyce and Stuart 2021; Vandaele 2020), and at persistent habits of mutual support and solidarity among workers. These often draw on reservoirs and repertoires of collectivism from outside the workplace, which are used to reinvent traditions of resistance at work (Chinguno 2019; Cini and Goldman 2020; Eaton, Schurman and Chen 2017; Milkman 2020). We seek to build on these emerging accounts to contribute towards a more systematic understanding of mutualism as a foundational element within these processes.

Our main argument is that the institutionalist preoccupation of European industrial relations has often blinded researchers to the reality that working class organisation shows signs of regeneration from the bottom-up, driven by new practices devised far from union offices, by workers themselves; that is, exactly where mainstream research seldom looks. While some of these emerging practices take the form of new organisations – including grassroots unions – we are particularly interested in the informal solidarities generated by workers in and around paid work.



Labour mobility post-Brexit: a sectoral and multi-scalar approach to changing migration regulation and impact on labour processes and social dialogue

Gabriella Alberti, Chris Forde, Jo Cutter, Zinovijus Ciupijus, Ioulia Bessa, Marketa Dolezalova (University of Leeds, Business School)

This paper investigates migration for work in the UK labour market interrogating how different actors in employment relations are responding to changes in labour mobilities in the post-Brexit and Covid context.

Previous literature has argued the need to “Put the labour process in its place” (Newsome et al. 2015) calling for a focus on labour and changing work organization in supply and global production chains research. Research on both local and international firms using migrant labour to cut labour costs has similarly highlighted the importance of the specific social characteristics of the workforce available in certain geographical locations, as well as the interaction of institutional dynamics, migrant regimes and migrants’ own strategies as critical factors shaping employment practices and the recruitment of workers in relatively undesirable, poorly paid, insecure and work intensive jobs (Andrijasevic & Sacchetto 2016; Andrijasevic, Sacchetto & Pun, 2020; MacKanzie and Forde 2009).

Building on this literature, we draw on an initial mapping and analysis of workforce data in four low-skilled, low-wage sectors that have historically relied on migrant labour in the UK: hospitality, warehousing/transport services, social care and food manufacturing conducted as part for our ongoing ESRC project “Labour mobility in transition: a multi-actor study of the re-regulation of migrant work in 'low-skilled' sectors”. Focusing on the changing regulatory regime of the UK, we examine key tensions in the management of labour mobility emerging from the new points-based system of immigration and the “Brexodus” of EU nationals, to explore emerging labour shortages, worker bargaining power, dialogue between the government, workers, employers and changing forms of work organisation. The initial mapping of each sector looks at workforce composition, dominant working practices, the impact of changing migration rules, workers’ own mobility practices, the role of stakeholders in the sector and dialogue involving both traditional workplace and non-workplace actors. We critically examine the reactive dimensions of the UK government new visa migration policies, industry representatives and worker responses across the supply chain across local, sectoral and national scales.

We argue that the crisis of labour shortages in the midst of Brexit and the ongoing health crisis reveal a fundamental lack of coordination on labour migration by institutional and business actors suggestive of the ‘colonisation’ (Mackenzie and Martinez Lucio 2014) or exclusionary re-claiming of the regulation of employment relations by the nation-state. Yet initial analysis also illustrates that new forms of leverage for workers and dialogue among multi-actor coalitions emerge where more attention is paid to poor quality ‘migrant jobs’ amidst the crisis of labour reproduction.



Between criticism, collaboration, and competition: The place of unionism in the mobilisation of room attendants in Spain

Verna Alcalde González (Universitat Oberta de Catalunya, Spain), Ana Gálvez Mozo (Universitat Oberta de Catalunya, Spain), Alan Valenzuela Bustos (Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, Spain)

In this paper we look into the collective action of hotel room attendants in Spain, who have self-organised outside trade unions in recent years giving rise to Las Kellys, a movement located at the intersection of the labour and the feminist movements. We particularly analyse Las Kellys' relationship with unionism focusing on the standpoints and practices of these self-organised precarious workers. To do so, we build our analysis on the theoretical and empirical insights of global labour studies, intersectionality, and social movement research, and conduct a qualitative digital ethnography, comprising online observation, 40 semi-structured interviews, and documentary analysis. Our findings show that Las Kellys' relationship with unionism varies over time and space, ranging from harsh criticism of mainstream unions to timely collaboration and the creation of indie unions by room attendants themselves.

This paper makes the following contributions. First, we respond to recent invitations to de-centre the workplace and the trade union form in scholarly analysis of labour conflict (Atzeni, 2021; Nowak, 2021) by focusing on the views and self-organisation practices of room attendants in Spain, a precarious, feminised, and significantly migrant working community. Second, we align with prior research at the junction of intersectionality, trade unions and precarious work; however, instead of prioritising trade union top-down practice (Alberti, 2016; Alberti et al., 2013), we emphasise bottom-up collective organisation and action located at the intersection of class, gender and ethnicity (Alberti and Però, 2018). Third, while other bottom-up studies focus on indie unions (Atzeni, 2016; Però, 2020; Woodcock, 2020), we take a social movement (Las Kellys) as our unit of analysis, thus we apply a social movement approach to the study of precarious workers' self-organisation and mobilisation (Jiang and Korczynski, 2016).

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Re-thinking Surveillance Capitalism: Big Tech, Mass Worker Surveillance, and Securitization

Jake Alimahomed-Wilson, Sabrina Alimahomed-Wilson (California State University, Long Beach, USA)

This paper traces the rise of securitization and the surveillance of everyday life that emerged in the global "war on terror" in the United States with the rise in mass surveillance of blue-collar workers of color. We argue that increased surveillance in both work and society is grounded within a racialized logic of capitalist extraction and normalized and managed as threats to securitization. We examine how surveillance capitalism, which refers to “a new economic order that claims human experience as free raw material for hidden commercial practices of extraction, prediction, and sales” (Zuboff 2019, p. 1) as a site to more effectively control workers of color. If Google is credited for creating surveillance capitalism, Amazon is now leading the development of normalizing mass worker surveillance through its algorithmic management system and logistics practices. Amazon's workplace technology, along with other app-based platform corporations in gig work, disproportionately surveils workers of color and migrants in order to extract valuable information about their work flow that is used to further exploit, discipline, and control workers, while increase labor efficiency, atomizing and weakening worker movements, and informing the development of workplace automation and other capital investments.

Similar, but different - coordinating wage bargaining within the Nordic models

Kristin Alsos, Kristine Nergaard (Fafo Institute of Labour and Social Affairs)

Theoretical perspective

The wage setting models of the Nordic countries are often classified as organized decentralization (Traxler, 1995). This indicates that even though bargaining partly is undertaken at company level, trade unions and employer organizations, as well as state institutions play important roles in coordinating the bargaining rounds. The strong emphasize of cross sector coordination is based on macro economical models of the 1950's and 1960's. In order to secure the competitiveness of the manufacturing industry – and to avoid job-losses – wage increases should not exceed the wage



increase of the international trading partners. This includes wage increases in other sectors in order to avoid wage-wage and wage-price spirals.

Traditionally this type of wage setting was based on centralized bargaining and the support of a few dominant confederations. Somewhat paradoxically - cross sector coordination has been strengthened over the last two decades, parallel to decreasing employment in manufacturing and a more decentralized wage setting (Nergaard et al, 2016; Calmfors et al. 2019). Recent studies emphasize that the actual level of negotiation plays less of a role compared to other mechanisms for coordination, included voluntary coordination among trade unions and among employer organizations (see for example Dølvik 2008; Andersen et al. 2014; Traxler 2001; Vartiainen 2011). An implication is that it is – and will be – more important to secure support for the model among a wider set of labour market parties, including unions and employer organizations in the sheltered sectors.

Findings

Both employer organizations, trade unions and state institutions are decisive to achieve this coordination in Denmark, Norway and Sweden. However, what institutions that exists and the strength of the institutions are diverse in the three countries. We look into the role of the national mediation institutes in the three countries, the significance of wage statistics and analyzes of the economic situation around wage formation, as well as how employer organizations and trade unions coordinate wage bargaining both horizontal across sectors and industries, and vertical from central to company level. The paper is divided into a part describing the most important features of the models in Denmark, Norway and Sweden, and a part looking into similarities and differences and strengths/weaknesses and future prospects. Here we are also discussing the role of strong female dominated unions in the public sector and to what degree the social partners in the private service sectors will look for more influence on wage setting.

Methodology

The paper is based on desks study of academic publications and grey reports, as well as semi-structured qualitative interviews of representatives of employer organizations, trade unions and the national mediator in Norway.

Contribution to knowledge

The aim of this paper is to get a better understanding of the role of different institutions when it comes to coordinating wage bargaining, and what challenges organized decentralized models face. Based on our findings we will contribute to the knowledge of what institutions that could be strengthened in order to secure a coordinated model in the future.

Digitalization of Norwegian retail – towards a more divided workforce?

Kristin Alsos, Kristine Nergaard, Sissel C. Trygstad (Fafo Institute for Labour and Social Research)

Theoretical perspective

Norway, together with the other Nordics countries are at the forefront when it comes to the spread and use of digital technology and digital competence in the population (EU Digital Economy and Society Index (DESI), 2019). There has also been a steady growth when it comes to the share of employees who make use of new technological and digital tools at work (LFS). Retail is a labour intensive low-wage sector with many young employees and high turn-over rates. The potential of



productivity growth following from digitalization of retail is great, and the growth has proven faster here than in the rest of the economy (Steen et al. 2019).

According to Christensen et al. (2020) the development has an impact on issues like worker perceptions of job demands, autonomy, empowerment, trust and security “but how remains an open question” (Christensen et al. 2020, p.8). One outcome might be dualization of the workforce, both between companies and within companies, where workers can be divided into “insiders” or “outsiders” (Emmenegger, 2012). We define the insiders as workers with varied jobs and career opportunities, while outsiders is characterized monotonous and standardized jobs, with few options when it comes to career development.

Findings

The lockdowns following the Covid-19 pandemic have speeded up this transformation, and can be regarded as a critical juncture when it comes to the pace of digitalization in part of retail. While grocery stores could remain open, specialist trade had to close due to infection control measures. Serving customers online became a strategy to maintain sales numbers, and administrative staff and customer service had to work from home. In one of the companies, lockdown has led to upgrading of part of the workforce, where elected employee representatives seem to have played an important role. At the same time, e-commerce has led to increase in monotonous jobs. In the other company, the pandemic have speeded up digitalization processes, but with little consequences for the employees. One important explanation is that high level of skills of shop assistants is part of the branding.

Methodology

In this paper we use two case studies in specialist retail companies to study how this transition has affected work and work organization. Both companies have several stores in Norway, and one is a multinational company. In each company we have undertaken qualitative semi-structured interviews with 6-8 employees, including management at different level and employee representatives.

Contribution to knowledge

The aim of this paper is to get a better understanding of how digitalization affects work and organization of work in retail. We will do so through the following research questions:

- Has the digitalization of work due to Covid-19 brought forward new forms of work organization?
- Do we see signs of job destruction, job change, job shift and / or job creating? (Degryse 2016; Pedersen et al. 2018).
- Can we observe a dualization in the work organisation, where the jobs are divided into insider and outsider jobs?

The Intertwined (Im)Mobilities of Migrant Platform Labour in Denmark

Magnus Andersen, Marlene Spanger (Aalborg University)

All over the world, the ‘gig economy’ allows companies to ‘employ’ a flexible, yet precarious workforce for instance within the service industry such as food and groceries delivering, cleaning and waiter services. In Denmark, Wolt, Vigo, Hungry, Happy Helper and Hilfr are examples of platform companies that organise and transforms labour in one way or another (Andersen & Spanger 2021). However, as elsewhere in World, the majority of the active workforce on these platforms in Denmark are migrant workers. In Denmark, however, this intersection between transnational migration and



digital platforms remains overlooked and unexplored. Drawing attention to the figure of the migrant worker, we explore how digital platforms intermediary work or more precisely ‘employ’ migrant workers. Taking point of departure in the case of the food delivery company Wolt, the paper analyses how the occurrence of the digital platforms change the conditions for a ‘differential inclusion’ (Mezzadra & Neilson 2013) of migrant platform workers on the Danish labour market. The paper asks: How do platform labour foster particular transnational and local mobilities of migrants working on digital platforms at the margins of the Danish labour market? Hence, the aim of the paper is to analyse how transnational migrant platform workers challenge the highly institutionalised categorisations of the so-called ‘Danish labour market model’. In particular, we distinguish between migrants with EU citizenships and non-EU citizenship as the citizenship status play a crucial role for their working conditions in Denmark (Spanger & Hvalköf 2020). The paper draws on qualitative data of interviews with migrant platform workers and the CEO of Wolt Denmark, ethnographic fieldwork and various documents produced by the trade union and Wolt. Applying the concept of ‘migration infrastructure’ offered by anthropologists Biao Xiang & Johan Lindquist (2014), we examine and map how different actors such as the migrants themselves, the trade union, the platform company as well as the state apparatus together constitutes particular (im)mobility patterns that challenge the national labour market. Analysing the migrants’ experiences and practices, the paper explores the intertwined (im)mobilities produced in the intersection of digital platforms and transnational migration. Through a case study of Wolt in Denmark we argue that the way in which the migrants working on the digital platforms are positioned at the margins of the labour market depend on how they move and are moved across transnational, national and local spaces. As a result, the intertwining of the migrants’ transnational and local (im)mobilities reflects another perspective on the precarious working conditions that platform labour produces, which challenge the national labour market institutions.

Smart manufacturing and tasks automation. Reflecting routine work and the importance of transversal ‘skills’ in shifting to industry 4.0

Luca Antonazzo, Dean Stroud, Martin Weinel (School of Social Sciences, Cardiff University)

Industry 4.0 often evokes images of fully automatised production lines with workers controlling processes through digitalised devices. This brings speculations on how the job landscape might look in the near future and what skills will be valued. The polarisation scenario depicted by Frey and Osborne (2017), for example, suggests a critical fall in mid-range qualifications related to jobs at risk of automation. Further, the quantitative fall in jobs that is predicted is often expected to be accompanied by a qualitative fall in skills requirements, since working with machines is often described as routine work (Autor et al. 2003). But some, such as Pfeiffer (2015: 22), have criticised the idea on which previous scenarios are based i.e. that work on machines is classed as routine work, stating that this is a ‘huge over-simplification’ that does not reflect ‘the diversity and complexity of real work on and with machines and equipment’.

It is with such arguments in mind that we discuss the relationship between technology-induced transformation at the level of the workplace and replacement by automation of ‘routine work’ for low- and mid-skilled workers. On this we note that jobs often labelled as ‘routine’ can entail a range of tasks that current technology remains unable to entirely automatise. Indeed, recent research on



Industry 4.0 developments has started to underline the degree of complexity and interconnectivity that Cyber-Physical Systems require (Spöttl and Windelband, 2020), with transversal (soft) skills associated with process monitoring and optimisation, data literacy and analysis and software proficiency at the forefront i.e. the tasks that cannot always be easily automatised (see Cimini et al. 2020).

In this paper we employ data from a large European project on the steel industry's skill needs to reflect on the relationship between work, digital technology, technical and transversal skills. While technical skills will continue to be important for plants and machinery maintenance roles, we suggest that operators in the Industry 4.0 workplace often interact with devices designed as "black boxes" by the technology providers (see Giddens, 1990), for which they are not required to have specific technical competencies to operate. Hence, whilst technical competence remains critical, what is increasingly coming to prominence, at every occupational level, is transversal skills, such as problem-solving, leadership, communication, adaptability and autonomy. We also find that such requirements are located within specific (intersecting) 'skill domains' i.e. digital, environmental/green, social, individual/personal and methodological (Antonazzo et al, 2021).

In drawing on qualitative data derived from stakeholder (e.g. employers, unions) and expert (e.g. vocational training actors) interviews (n.60) across five countries (Germany, Italy, Poland, Spain and UK), we provide critical reflection on the categorisation of routine work and Industry 4.0 skills requirements. In particular, we comment on the increasing centrality of transversal skills for workers performing the tasks flowing out of the technological transformation. We further extend the discussion to reflect on what are changing notions of 'skill' within sectors commonly associated with 'hard' technical abilities, physical dexterity, spatial awareness and technical 'know-how' (see, for example, Payne 2000).

Locked in, Logged Out: Pandemic and Ride-hailing in Africa

Mohammad Amir Anwar (University of Edinburgh, University of Oxford, University of Johannesburg)

An estimated 85.8% of the employment in Africa is already in the informal sector, the highest in the world (ILO 2018). Informal workers (e.g. waste collectors, domestic help, artisans, street vendors) exist in the most precarious conditions characterised by low pay, lack social protection, and have poor occupational and health standards at workplaces. The COVID-19 pandemic has made their situation worse. They face an unimaginable choice between hunger and infection. With this in mind, the article sets out to examine the implications of the pandemic on ride-hailing in Africa, which attracts a large segment of migrant drivers.

By doing so, this article contributes to emerging gig the economy literature in the following ways. Firstly, there are several country-specific studies on ride-hailing in high-income countries such as the United Kingdom (Woodcock 2020), the United States (Ravenelle, 2019), and Australia (Veen et al. 2019). There is also literature on low- and middle-income countries e.g. Brazil (Amorim & Moda 2020), Indonesia (Raharjo & Fabrianto 2019) and India (Samuel 2020). But so far less focus has been given on African countries (exceptions, Carmody & Fortuin 2019). The article, therefore, not only brings the African perspective to the ride-hailing research but also presents one of the first empirical accounts of the pandemic's impact on ride-hailing in low- and middle-income regions. Secondly,



despite platforms touting their potentials for flexible work opportunities, research is beginning to showcase increasingly precarious working conditions in the gig economy (Anwar and Graham, 2020; Ravenelle, 2019). This article adds to this literature by highlighting that while the gig economy jobs can be volatile, the pandemic has amplified African workers' vulnerabilities, particularly migrants. The article outlines how the migrants in the gig economy are impacted by the pandemic (an aspect relatively less-studied so far in the gig economy literature), especially in regions like Africa where social protection measures can be inadequate.

The article employs a mixed methods approach: in-depth interviews and digital ethnography i.e. understanding data as objects of ethnographic inquiry (Shankar 2018). Drawing on in-depth interviews with ride-hailing drivers, local drivers' representatives, and local trade unions in South Africa, Ghana and Kenya were conducted between April 2020 and June 2021, and studying drivers' communications in WhatsApp groups, the article makes two arguments. First, it argues that the gig economy offers livelihood alternatives to the African workforce, but it also vitiates the working conditions through the commodification and informalisation of work. The effects of which can be devastating for certain types of workers, e.g. migrants. Second, the state-directed emergency measures to mitigate the loss of livelihoods during the pandemic act as a veneer to capital's efforts to commodify labour and the gig economy platforms have emerged as primary tools for it. It briefly discusses drivers' mitigation strategies to provide a narrative of resilience and solidarities among workers in the gig economy. In the conclusions, we outline the need for a better regulatory system that holds platform companies accountable and collective bargaining to improve material conditions of workers, especially in the low- and middle-income regions.

Worker Power and Informal Organising Networks in the Gig Economy: Insights from Ride-Hailing Drivers' Movements in Africa

Mohammad Amir Anwar (University of Edinburgh, University of Oxford, University of Johannesburg)

Labour movements in the gig economy is a relatively new area of study. This article examines the informal organising networks and mobilising practices in the gig economy in Africa. It draws on the power resources approach to foreground the socio-political contexts and labour processes to understand informal organising networks in the gig economy. The paper shows how gig workers, who are normally understood to be atomised and fragmented, build solidarity networks across different spatial scales to exert their power with variable outcomes. It argues that gig workers' informal organising networks are an important outlet for worker power outside the domains of established unions.

Examining these drivers' informal organising networks (unrecognised groups of workers outside the organisational domain of trade unions) and how they mobilise to build solidarity and exercise workers' power is particularly important for a variety of reasons. Firstly, these informal groups offer forms of effective representation to a growing class of workers who are often labelled as 'precariat' (which established trade unions have been unwilling or unable to organise) (Standing 2014). Existing literature on labour organising has generally been focussed on trade union fetishism (Atzeni, 2021) and their struggles to reinvent themselves in the age of neoliberal globalisation (e.g. Gallin 2002; Simms et al. 2013 cited in Pero 2020). However, grassroots movements and initiatives of workers



outside trade unions have been generally overlooked (Alberti and Pero 2018; Atzeni and Grigera 2019). Secondly, precarious workers' agency has been brought into the academic debates recently (e.g. Pero, 2020; Smith and Ngai, 2018) and also from the field of labour geography (e.g. Anwar and Graham, 2020). A growing literature has analysed not only how people in the informal sector get by their daily lives through a variety of everyday practices (e.g. in Africa, see Kinyanjui, 2014; Callebert, 2017; also, Cooper, 1987) but also the unique ways they organise themselves and exercise their agency (see Lindell, 2013; Kabeer et al., 2013). Some have argued that such precarious workers' mobilisation offer a bottom-up/self-organising perspective in labour studies (Rizzo and Atzeni 2020: 115). This article extends this body of work by examining how worker power is utilised by individual workers in precarious conditions, such as in ride-hailing in Africa and what motivates them to organise. In doing so, it places emphasis on the possibilities and structural constraints of the socio-political contexts in which workers are embedded and the labour processes in the gig economy on worker power and their mobilisation strategies.

In the context of the gig economy in Africa, worker power rarely materialise into a meaningful front for resistance and instead their actions can be understood as resilience and reworking of the system to extract material and non-material rewards. The paper outlines a number of technological, socio-economic and political constraints faced by African ride-hailing drivers which inhibit collective resistance. The empirical data comes from in-depth interviews conducted telephonically between April 2020 and July 2021 with ride-hailing drivers and leaders of driver groups in South Africa, Nigeria, Ghana, and Kenya.

(Neoliberal) optimization in the public employment relations of Turkey

Esra Aras (Kocaeli University)

Re-formed by a military coup in 1980 in harmony with the synchronous neoliberal aura in the globe, a political order like Turkey's exemplifies the "optimization" of the rights and freedoms of any kind. This systemic shift has intrinsically generated the predilection for the comfort of the capital in the political economy. With an economic outlook having cheap labor as the competitive advantage, Turkey could hardly put up with any "rigidities" in the labor market. A series of military-minded re-adjustments reconciled with the neoliberal trajectory over decades have thus culminated in the systematic dismantling of the organized power of the working class in Turkey as achieved in the 60s and 70s.

In the light of the neoliberal (im)balance within the state-society relations in Turkey, this proposal concentrates on Turkish public employment regime by conducting policy analysis of the legal/institutional re-arrangements adopted since 2004 and displaying the embedded challenges of the political culture in optimizing labor rights. The state is the leading employer of Turkish economy with nearly 4,8 million workers more than 1,8 million of whom have fragmented legal status, out of around 27 million employees in total. It adapts its roles as employer to its regulatory functions in the neoliberal restructuring of the political economy. While promoting the position of the capitalist class and degrading social rights, the state has simultaneously re-adjusted its employment policies to the market-oriented strategy. Put another way, working conditions and social rights of public employees which have always been attractive for Turkey's labor force have been subject to optimization.



This proposal analyzes the nature of Turkish-style optimization of public employment regime by questioning the ideological strategies in their far-reaching socio-political context the state has introduced to ensure the superiority of market rules upon its workforce: securitization of the bargaining power, rationalization through developmental goals, assigning normative responsibilities for the sake of national unity and survival of the holy state, complicating the legislative basis. The outcome is a fractured public personnel regime that reproduces intra-class conflicts, precarity, and alienation for the public employees who constitute a big part of the whole Turkish workforce. Within this framework, the analysis is based on a comparison between the (re)design of the legal framework and the reflections in the praxis of the public employment relations of Turkey.

Open subsumptive processes and the production of subjectivities. Interpretative hypothesis on algorithmic management

Emiliana Armano (University of Milan), Marco Briziarelli (University of New Mexico), Elisabetta Risi (IULM University)

The inextricable relationship of platforms and algorithms with our datafied lives (Risi, 2021) and the emergence of platform capitalism (Armano et al. 2017) has brought new practices of control of work and data informed by digital connectivity, which is at the basis of ‘algorithmic management’ (Beverungen et al. 2019).

Based on empirical findings on the digital media users (Risi et al, 2000), our paper proposes an interpretive framework to understand algorithmic management model and to re-energize the study of the notion of subsumption (Marx, 1973, 1990). We reframe subsumption not as an end-point outcome but as open subsumptive relations, which points to a dialectical perspective on power relations, exploitation and subjectivation inside a productive process mediated by platforms (Cingolani, 2021). In this sense, we advance a theoretical and practical redefinition of the concept of autonomy and (direct and indirect) control on an algorithmic basis and therefore we join the debate (Moore et al., 2020) on the apparent self-management prompted by digital technology. We argue that subjectivities have become fundamental performative agents of new kind of individuals/users who allegedly, through (self-) management, can express their own personalities, access knowledge and better manage their inner emotions (Boltanski and Chiapello, 1999).

As a result, neoliberalism becomes coextensive with all society by generating one of the great paradoxes of platform-driven subjectivities, i.e. the tension between abstraction and a rich individualization, exploitation and enjoyment, and auto-direction and hetero-direction (Armano et al. 2020). Those are the tensions by which we suggest a more open and dynamic subsumptive process. By drawing on 80 auto-ethnographic diaries of Italian young platform users, we argue that users on digital platforms can be framed as algorithmic prosumers. This first implies understanding individuals compulsively activated through recommendations which are algorithmically personalized. In fact, the connection between digital algorithms and human action transforms the “numerical representations” (Manovich 2001) into a complex process of interaction with human language, social representations, subjectivities and behaviours.

Our findings show a recursive loop: data produced by variety of tracking and self-tracking practices, in turn affect subjects’ attitudes, dispositions, relationships preferences by constitutive



representations. Thus, our study suggests that individuals reflect about themselves and their relationships through numbers within a neoliberal logic that is encoded into the platform.

We also found a second process in the algorithmic management: a collaborative and proactive attitude on that feeds a compelling request for a co-active engagement in the digital environment. We use the term heteromation (Ekbia and Nardi, 2015) specifically to describe the formalization of a managerial decision-making process that exploits the users' perceived autonomy to feed the use of the platforms/devices, and consequently subsume their data and value.

After all, our study dialectically frames algorithmic prosumers as identified subjects and identifying objects, thus inhabiting a fluid position inside the digital (free) labor (Terranova, 2012) and inside the subsumption process.

Renewing theories of workers' collective action in the gig and precarious world of work

Maurizio Atzeni (Ceil Conicet Argentina), Lorenzo Cini (Scuola Normale Superiore, Firenze, Italy)

The field of industrial relations (IR) and social movement studies (SMS) have rarely entered into a dialogue. Kelly's mobilization theory has been one of the few successful attempts to integrate the two fields of study by providing a framework for the analysis of micro processes of mobilizations. Yet, his framework was mainly aimed at rediscovering the pivotal role of labour unions in triggering mobilizations in times of relative labour pacification (i.e., the 1990s), with a still prominent focus on their resources and opportunities within the work environment. In the light of the new conflicts that are emerging in the context of the gig and precarious economy we do think, however, that is necessary to rethink our theorisations about workers' collective action and organisation in order to go beyond trade union centred analyses of collective action (Atzeni 2021) and to account for less institutional and Eurocentric types of IR frameworks (Nowak 2021). SMS has for long paid attention to the non-institutional socio-political context to explain social movement formation processes—focusing on factors such as the protest culture of a given country, the informal networks of activists of a given community, the presence of social movement organizations, the organizational tradition of mobilization of urban localities (Ford and Honan 2019; Munck 2019; della Porta and Diani 2020). In this respect, SMS can provide a useful toolkit to supplement the “institutionalist” approach of IR in accounting for the current mobilizations. However, without a previous reworking, such literature seems no immediately applicable to labour issues. Since their foundation, SMS have neglected an analysis of material processes of labour exploitation and, therefore, have been unable to incorporate labour mobilizations in their theories (Cini et al., 2017). In orienting social movement scholars to pay attention to the capitalist labour process and to its antagonistic relations, IR may aid such scholars to rectify their analytical frameworks and to fill their gap on labour issues. In this paper, by reviewing the burgeoning international literature on labour conflict and organisation in the gig and precarious economy, we thus aim to show how institutional and non-institutional factors combine with precarious labour processes in urban contexts to produce collective organisation and conflict. In doing this we hope a more integrated framework for analysis can be provided to scholars interested to understand contemporary changes in labour and social conflicts worldwide. In our view, such integrated approach offers two advantages for the analysis of this wave of labour mobilizations: first, it provides a more agential, worker-based and not union-centred, interpretation; second, it emphasizes the importance of the socio-cultural and socio-political context of mobilization, beyond the workplace



and the institutional landscape, in which the relation between workers and the surrounding socio-political environment becomes analytically evident.

The expansion of platform logistic retailers to the Global South and workers' resistance: Lessons from Argentina and South Africa

Maurizio Atzeni (Ceil Conicet, Argentina)

Research on the labour process in logistic warehouses in the North of Europe (Dorflinger, Pulignano, Vallas 2021) and on Amazon fulfilment centres in France and Italy (Massimo, 2020; Delfanti 2021) has helped to explain the mechanisms through which flexibility and consent is extracted from workers in different ways according to the existence of different production regimes and institutional settings across countries and locations. In line with this approach and its comparative scope, this paper aims to provide insights on the expanding presence of platform logistic retailers in the Global South and of the consequences this produces for workers' organisations. This will be done primarily by focusing on the labour process mechanisms existing in the Argentinean warehouse and logistics operations of Mercado Libre, an Amazon like platform company that recently started operating in Argentina and Latin-America and, secondarily, by mapping the e-retailers business strategies, current legislation, IR systems and regulatory policies in place in South Africa and Argentina respectively. We present a study of dynamics in Argentina and South Africa as a way of generating 'lessons' for workers' organisations and regulatory processes from the Global South. The paper presents new empirical evidence collected in Argentina through interviews during a period of the full scale expansion of Mercado Libre's operations, and key stakeholder interviews and scoping research from South Africa. Interviews will include: warehouse and lorry drivers workers on their different labour process experiences in Argentina; trade unions leaders involved in organising workers in the sector in both countries; and key labour policy experts in both countries. In both countries desk research will complement this analysis by looking at corporate policies and market dynamics, the current regulatory framework, including in South Africa the current Competition Commission inquiry into online intermediation platforms, trade unions' presence in the sector and a review of existing secondary literature.

Why most occupations won't be 'Uberized'

Dario Azzellini (Cornell University), Ian Greer (Cornell University), Charles Umney (University of Leeds)

Although the literature on labor-based platforms is vast and rapidly expanding, the share of the workforce working in platformized labor markets remains small. Moreover, many platforms are actually hybrids, rather than the purely marketized mode of control discussed by some theorists. There are limits to the spread of the platform model, and it is important to understand what these are. Existing literature identifies some possible explanations. Platform workers often resist the most exploitative aspects of the platform model, investors are increasingly wary of money-losing "uber-



for-x” business models, and governments are increasingly requiring the platforms directly employ the producers.

In this paper, we argue that these forces can all interfere with platformization, but they are not necessary to prevent it. Using a case study of live music as an illustration, we show that the features of markets themselves often prevent platformization. First, the market is fragmented into market segments (vertically in terms of prestige and horizontally in terms of genre) that are too small to achieve a vast scale. Second, value is irreducibly qualitative, making taste centrally important role and online information inadequate for making quick comparisons of cost and quality. Third, the task itself is subject to complex contingencies, making it impossible to control musicians’ behavior through an algorithm or to fully automate the transaction.

We point out that these limitations are far from unique to live music. We conclude that to understand the impact of platformization, researchers shouldn’t just look at work that has been platformized, but also the limits of platformization caused by features of everyday offline life.

The Covid-19 crisis as a turning point in the decline of working-class power and moving beyond mainstream industrial relations approaches

Dario Azzellini (Unidad Académica de Estudios del Desarrollo, Autonomous University of Zacatecas, Zacatecas, Mexico), Marcelo Vieta (Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, University of Toronto, Canada)

The handling of the Covid-19 pandemic increased inequalities between poor and wealthy, between North and South, for non-white people, for women and for many minorities. While global labour income decreased by an estimated 10.7% (or US\$3.5 trillion) in the first nine months of 2020, workers’ struggles and revolts intensified the world over. Labour and industrial relations scholars, however, have not yet paid adequate attention to these emerging pandemic workers’ struggles. While for US Bureau of Labor Statistics 2020 had the second-lowest number strikes since 1947, the US labour activism website Payday Report documented a divergent scenario: 2020 witnessed the largest wave of strikes in the US since 1946. How is that possible? Is class struggle still declining? Or are there other forms of workers’ protests and actions emerging within and outside of official union-sanctioned strikes? Are workers’ striking back in new ways?

We argue that the pandemic marks a visible turning point and change of circumstances regarding workers’ struggles and structural power. Looking at working-class uprisings globally, we argue that mainstream industrial relations approaches, mainly centred on the global North, are still using categories that focus on employers, official unionism, state policies, or organizational structures that make it difficult if not impossible to recognize many of the new working-class actions on the ascendancy today. The new labour unrest is explicitly coming from the margins, from formerly unorganized sectors, from new forms of community or social movement unionizing, and in working conditions that apply many other methods of struggle beyond conventional “industrial action” approaches.

Moreover, class composition is in flux. Although the working class was never predominantly white and male, today’s labour struggles are being led increasingly by women, immigrants and black and brown workers. Additionally, the waged workplace is not the only sight of struggle for working people, as class revolts in several countries, from Black Lives Matters, to gig economy workers



unionizing or creating co-ops, to working-class protests and actions in Bolivia and Chile, have shown recently. The fragility of the global commodity chains that was exposed during the pandemic at the same time increased the structural power of many workers. Those who were once marginalized as “service workers” are now “essential workers”. What is a “labour shortage” to employers is now an opportunity to re-envision work and the workplace for working people. These sudden reminders of workers’ crucial role in the economy has apparently increased their willingness to initiate new struggles for not only more pay but for much better working conditions and say at work, and for – far more radically – reconceptualizing work itself in ways that guarantees the long-term dignity and sustainable livelihoods of people. While this does not mean that the balance of power between labour and capital substantially shifted in favour of labour, we argue that the long decline of labour power that begun in the early 1970s has come to an end and that class, together with race and gender, is still a valid category of analysis.

Border regimes and unfair conditions for Eastern European migrant workers in the Swedish construction sector, a labor process theory perspective

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This paper investigates border regimes, precarity, and employment conditions from a labour process theory perspective (Braverman, 1974; Thompson and Smith, 2010; Mezzadra and Neilson, 2013). Our specific focus is on the studies investigating the working conditions, labour rights, and employment forms for Eastern European migrants in the Swedish construction sector. In particular, we ask: how does the border regime shape employment forms and work practices, and what are the new forms of resistance and organisation in the Swedish construction sector? The migrant workers are conditioned by Swedish and EU legal aspects, depending on the country they originally come from, and its relation to the EU. The origin of the migrant workers in the Swedish construction sector has continuously shifted since the 1950s, with Eastern Europe being especially prominent since the 1990s. Along with this shift, the focus on organized crime and on “unfair conditions” considering both a national and protectionist gaze, has been increasing in Sweden, implying that the understanding of the “unfair conditions” is something external, atypical, and non-Swedish. A critical perspective on these issues calls for a “methodological de-nationalism” (Anderson, 2019). At the same time, the Swedish model system of high regulation and welfare protection is highly challenged (Mackenzie et al., 2010), led to the emergence of two labour markets. The first one, dominant and highly regulated, is represented by big companies and construction unions, and is characterized by collaboration, good work relations, equity, democracy, and welfare (Haakestad and Friberg, 2000); the second one, subordinated and quite unregulated, is embodied by small companies working partially in illegal conditions, and is not characteristic for the Swedish labour market (Koch and Sederblad, 2019). As such, this paper focuses on the ways the sector has adapted to migrant labour inequalities due to labour and migration law, and the organisation and resistance forms that have been adopted. Labour



process theory allows us to expand our analytical frame on the way the work is organized in the Swedish construction sector, its variations, and the ways those relate to what we can basically understand as migrant workers' rights. It means that we cannot separate labour, class, and the features of the border regimes, as we need to include a knowledge of a "total social organization of labour" (Gluckman, 1995). Methodologically, a systematic literature review is conducted on the precarious and unequal working conditions, as well as on labour and employment forms, for Eastern European migrant workers within the Swedish construction sector. Our methodological choice of focusing on that context aimed at accounting for its specific peculiarities. Our study shows that a labour process theory perspective and a "de-nationalizing" analytical framework can reveal factors that impact labour processes connected to immigrant workers. Moreover, we draw attention to the way the criminalizing gaze may be national, but the value-adding labour force is indeed international. Thus, this paper contributes with knowledge production regarding the implications of border regimes for international workers' employment forms, and precarious work practices having become part of the construction sector.

Care Work, Crisis and Successful Resistance Strategies: A Situationally Sensitive Framework Analysis

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Ackroyd and Thompson (forthcoming) recently called for situationally sensitive frameworks to capture the dynamics of labour agency. This paper advances a situationally sensitive framework aimed at capturing the dynamics of resistance strategies undertaken by unionized care workers during the COVID-19 pandemic in British Columbia, Canada. In care work, collective resistance strategies emphasize care for service users, coworkers, and communities as well as reforms in the workplace and larger uncaring society. Individual resistance often focuses on predominantly female care workers consciously undertaking unpaid care to those deprived by what is seen as an uncaring and unkind system.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, long-term care workers launched strategies aimed at protecting workers, residents and the public and emphasizing solidarity across the public, nonprofit and for-profit sectors. Throughout 2020, the Hospital Employees' Union successfully lobbied the labour government to twin 1) restricting care work to a single site, with 2) a policy of raising wages across the sector to the level of the public sector long-term care wages. Referred to as pay levelling, the resultant pay increase across the LTC sector rolled back losses experienced in the private sector where wages were far behind their nonprofit and public sector counterparts. The policies limited the spread of the virus and buffered the financial impact of restricting care workers to only one site (many held multiple part-time jobs). It also meant that low wage employers did not end up with an additional crisis as workers who were restricted to one employer moved to their highest wage employer. In an overlapping resistance strategy, individual workers quietly undertook unpaid care work in their own workplaces to lessen the loneliness of residents during lockdowns in long-term care facilities. In a final example, two decades after they were privatized, the same union successfully lobbied government to bring thousands of dietary and cleaning staff back into public sector employment in hospitals across the province. Piggy backing on the popularity of health care workers in the global



health crisis and the ongoing threat to public health, the union and government agreed to a plan to bring 4000 workers back in-house.

These strategies reflected gendered, solidaristic resistance strategies in a sector where the female majority workforce are expected to provide boundless care regardless of wages or conditions. Yet, this same group of exploited workers undertook an effective, activist union strategy to mobilize members, the public and the government to take strong action in the midst of a major global public health crisis. The following components will be argued to be essential to a situationally sensitive framework of resistance and care work: gender, the moral economy (consisting of neoliberal/austere economic relations and social connectivity/solidarities), real or imagined crisis (in this case a global health crisis), intentional actions against actual and inferred others (employers, governments, and an assumed wider uncaring society), and specific social, political and economic conditions (a social democratic government, the healthiest economy in Canada and an activist union). The paper concludes with further contributions to labour process theory.

Neoliberalism and the digital revolution: Governing employees through 'reskill or perish' norm

Muneeb Ul Lateef Banday (Goa Institute of Management)

In this paper, I analyse how 'reskill or perish' has emerged as the governing logic of employment relations in the Indian information technology industry. Drawing from the analytics of governmentality framework, I analyzed industry reports and HR conference discussions to study how workforce management is problematized as a particular kind of 'problem' and employees are positioned as specific kinds of 'subjects'. The findings reveal the employers' construction of employment relations through the discourses of neoliberalism and the Fourth Industrial revolution (or digital revolution). The former is mobilized to responsabilize employees for their survival and growth in the industry where one's continued employment is contingent on continuous change. The latter is mobilized to construct the digital revolution as an inevitable transformation, which presents both risks (redundancy of existing jobs and skills) as well as opportunities (new job and new skills). Through such discourses, workforce management is construed as a 'problem' of supply and development of skills and accordingly continuous upskilling/reskilling is constructed as the only appropriate 'solution'. Employees are positioned as modifiable bundles of skills or abilities and governed through pastoral and disciplinary techniques of power. Through this analysis, I illustrate the shift from the language of 'rights' to the language of 'interests' in the employer-employee relations in the new economy.

Labouring, caring, and family rearing: multiple burdens of employment and housework in Croatia

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Croatian labour market is characterized with continuous low employment rates and predominantly fixed term labour contracts. The working conditions are shaped by the country's high dependence on tourism, service sector and seasonal work, which makes labouring in Croatia rather unsecure and precarious, especially for younger and midlife workers. Therefore, it comes as no surprise that nearly 10% of Croatian working population has migrated to EU over the past few years. Those who remained are faced with not only double, but multiple burdens on their employment and housework life. To inspect the interdependence of temporary employment, unreported (under and un) employment and other forms of precarious work and non-standard working times on housework and family life, the kin work and the institutionalized and paid support that allows for social reproduction to occur in these conditions of precarity must be considered. In that context, the gendered dimension of multiple work and life burdens becomes a sharp indicator of labour market conditions, as well as of persistent gender gap in paid and unpaid work, but also of overall social and economic life conditions in Croatia. This paper is based on large scale survey research from 2021 on a sample of 3600 parents of minor children. This population has been selected for research, since the scope of household work, responsibilities and family care are more extensive and demanding in families with minor children. The survey was conducted with CATI and CAWI interviewing techniques, and covered urban and rural areas, parents of different social, economic, and educational statuses, and those with various working positions. In order to give a more detailed image of relation between work and housework in Croatia, in this paper we analyze different dimensions of housework (physical work, management and organization of the household) and family care (providing emotional support to family members, conflict resolution, crisis management, maintaining contacts with kin and friends), and we also analyze who all contributes to housework and care on a paid or unpaid basis.

The results of the survey that housework in families with minor children in Croatia is multidimensional and in addition to everyday physical work (e.g. cooking and cleaning) includes a number of different organizational, managerial and emotional activities. Although some households include additional assistance (paid and / or unpaid) in doing some everyday chores, the division of household chores (physical and organizational) and care still maintain existing gender-role norms especially when emotional work, planning, and family care is included in the analysis. When this is analyzed in relation to employment status and work responsibilities, it unveils complexity of life for parenting and/or working women. The responsibility to economically co-support their families, while mostly being in the grey areas of labour market that does not support women with families, domestic work becomes even more forced onto women. These multiple burdens of employment and housework are the main traits of family life in Croatia.

Strategies of Real Subsumption and their Limits at Amazon

Georg Barthel (Universität Duisburg-Essen)

The logistics centers of Amazon are critical nodes of its supply chain. They have been in the focus of critical research recently. The general tendency has been to highlight the capacities of new digital technologies to control labor. The organization of labor has been characterized as digital Taylorism. While following this diagnosis in general I want to challenge the widespread assumption of total



control. Neither is it possible to state the complete elimination of the autonomy of workers in the warehouses of Amazon nor can all strategies of real subsumption be regarded as successful.

In my paper I want to analyze the strategies of real subsumption to transform labor power in productive labor. I follow the theory of labor process theory in general and in particular the theory of regimes of production elaborated by Michael Burawoy. Therefore, the labor process and the apparatuses of production in a logistics center of Amazon will be scrutinized with regard to their aims and effects on labor.

My research is based on a case study of a logistics center of Amazon in Leipzig, Germany. I have conducted several qualitative interviews with workers, works council members and union representatives. I also can rely on an observant participation in the struggle of workers as a supporter and researcher in Leipzig and beyond.

My findings confirm that the organization of labor at Amazon can be characterized as digital Taylorism. It is based on the separation of conception and execution and is enhanced by digital technology. The job of the workers is divided into simple standardized tasks which don't need a lot of training. Digital tools guide the work and register every operation. Thereby they constitute a panoptic factory. Nonetheless, the control of labor still depends on direct intervention of superiors, not the least because the use and effects of digital technology are limited by institutional power resources. In contrast to the scientific management of Frederick Taylor the control at Amazon focusses not on the execution of labor, but on its result. It's not the strict compliance with the standard operation procedures alone, that guarantees productivity, but every day deviance is necessary as well. Especially in older logistics centers without robots the speed of work still depends on the movement of workers giving them crucial structural power.

Besides a specific organization of labor Amazon uses different production apparatuses to secure the transformation of labor power into productive labor. Political production apparatuses consist of company specific institutions like working groups which hardly manage to control dissatisfaction. Political production apparatuses also include works councils in Germany, which limit the arbitrary disposition of the labor force and integrate dissatisfaction. Finally, the production of ideology by Amazon tries to make every worker oriented to consumer satisfaction. Though, it cannot be regarded as having a significant effect on the performance of workers.

Workations - A New Destination of Mobile Work?

Mona Bassyouny, Maximiliane Wilkesmann (TU Dortmund University Sociology of Work and Organization <https://ao.sowi.tu-dortmund.de/en/>)

Almost a decade ago Okhuysen et al. (2013, p. 492)[1] stated that “work and workplaces are constantly reorganized, reformed, and reconstituted such that the people doing the work, the arrangements around the work, the technology used in performance of the work, and even the purpose of the work may change”. The outbreak of Covid-19 and the imposed contact restrictions immensely accelerated the ongoing revolution of work through information and communication technologies (ICT) on a global scale. Lengthy procedures to reorganizing work, such as the introduction of new working time models, were implemented immediately, banishing employees to the home office from one day to the next. The gained flexibility with regard to the choice of workplace moved many of those affected to relocate their home office abroad for a limited period of time.



The fast reaction of the tourism industry on this phenomenon is reflected in the expansion of hotel offerings towards so-called ‘workations’. The origin of the neologism derives from the combination of the two words ‘work’ and ‘vacation’. At first glance, these two terms seem to be incompatible or even contradictory: People who are on vacation are not looking for work and vice versa. Workations aim to unite both extremes and further blur the lines between (employed) work and vacation. This trend is in line with concepts of new work and the associated possibility of a global workplace decentralization gained through ICT. Due to the novelty of this phenomenon, the question arises as to how the relationship between work and leisure is being reshaped.

Starting from an observation of this new trend, we conducted in spring 2021 a qualitative study in order to explore this phenomenon. The results of 11 semi-structured interviews with hotel managers, workationers and other experts in this field indicate that workations, in general, are here to stay. Specifically, the tourism industry sees the concept as an opportunity to attract new customer groups and to secure additional income. Initiated investment projects either focus on improving internet connectivity or the reconstruction of office-like structures (e.g., work spaces, communities, etc.). However, workations will not apply to everyone. The potential for employees strongly depends on organisational framework conditions (e.g., (in)formal agreements, labour law, insurance cover, etc.). Our contribution extends the existing literature by distinguishing workations from other forms of new work and alternative work arrangements (e.g., digital nomadism). We believe to fill an important research gap by identifying user groups and exploring their strategies on balancing between work-related obligations and personal needs of relaxation in times of the Covid-19 pandemic and beyond.

[1] Okhuysen, G. A., Lepak, D., Ashcraft, K. L., Labianca, G., Smith, V., & Steensma, H. K. (2013). Theories of work and working today. *Academy of Management Review*, 38(4), 491–502.

Privileged workers on the fence. How luxury hotels employees leaned towards mobilisation

Amelie Beaumont (Paris 1 Pantheon Sorbonne University CESSP Cresppa-CSU)

This presentation aims at showing how privileged and conservative groups of workers can end up turning against their employers and conduct a mobilization. The case of Parisian luxury hotels is studied, showing from the extensive study of one hotel how a mobilisation emerged and subsequently shaped and gave visibility to other labour movements throughout the hotel industry nationally.

The data were collected through an ethnography of a Parisian luxury hotel – I got recruited as a bellhop in the guest service for five months and conducted biographical interviews with most of my direct co-workers and employees of other services. I also participated in lunches, dinners and nights out with my colleagues, weddings, and other various events over 8 years. During my participation as a worker, a mobilization was successfully conducted by the main union present in the hotel (nationally categorized on the political left): I could observe its progress and I followed its impact on the political views and later trajectories of employees.

In luxury hotels, most workers are from backgrounds and in situation that makes it unlikely for them to rebel. Their employment conditions are among the best in the hotel industry: permanent jobs, the best wages of the sector, opportunities for upward occupational mobility, access to tips for most of them. Moreover, they are shaped by their proximity to the elites, to whose consumption practices they aspire. Lastly, they come from right-wing leaning families, working in world of commerce and



sales, none have previous experience of labour movements and most have a very negative opinion of unions and their role in the regulation of labour and of the economy more generally.

Yet recent changes have challenged this equation. Because the sector is not only run for profits but also for prestige, it particularly attracts foreign capital, especially since the 2000s. The growing number of luxury hotels and of elite travellers have generated a market for the normalisation of guests' experiences that enhanced the role of international quality guidelines.

In this presentation, I will show how these changes degraded the working conditions of employees, whose autonomy was called into question; and how they favoured more educated workers over the usual working-class backgrounds employees, effectively closing possibilities for internal upward mobility. As the hotel was announced to be closing for renovations to update it to international standards, the level of tension with management rose and the union gained traction. Employees have overwhelmingly participated in workplace actions that they otherwise despised. I analyse the discursive tools they used to make sense of their involvement, ill-at-ease with the larger implication the case of their hotel could mean. Despite the employees' reluctance to turn their movement into a political one, the successful mobilization served, among others, as an example in the hotel industry in general, where there is very little unionization, and helped encourage other movements.

Not so Routine after All: Creative Work Routines, Off-Standards and Tacit Knowledge in the Smart Factory

Chiara Benassi (King's College London), Lisa Dorigatti (Università di Milano)

As the terms of the employment relationship cannot be entirely specified in advance, employers need to control the work process to such an extent that their employees unleash their full productivity. Yet, control is never perfect, and workers have typically been found to change, avoid and resist the rules even in workplaces characterised by high levels of managerial control. Some scholars argued that workers play these 'games' to make the work more bearable; by so doing, they push themselves to work harder. Other scholars claimed that employees act outside the (un)determined rules of the labour contract to rebalance the effort bargain; e.g. through banking, time-wasting and absenteeism.

In this article, we go back to the work environment which provided the context of the first works on managerial control: the factory. While there is a rich body of research on control and resistance in the Taylorist, Fordist and Lean factory, we analyse the functioning and the implications for workers of a relatively recent technological innovation which has been, to our knowledge, rather neglected in the sociological literature: the use of ergonomic algorithms as a tool to design work systems, determine work times and describe the method as a form of documentation for training. These algorithms combine the traditional Motion-Time-Measurement standards, which assign a basic time to execute a given motion, with an ergonomic allowance applied to the workstation. The result is a standard time based on a 'norm' level of performance and a work sequence with a controlled biomechanical load. These predetermined work times are developed through computer simulations accounting only for mechanical movements, without factoring in workers' cognitive input, which remains excluded from the working time and therefore unpaid.

Our findings suggest, instead, that workers' cognitive input is often required. First, workers on the line often deal with small problems – so called 'off-standards' - which require them to apply their tacit knowledge, sometimes even unconsciously, to quickly solve them; second, they have to change



the pre-assigned movements to ‘make it work’ within a tight work pace, which often does not allow workers to operate according to the work sequences prescribed by the ergonomic algorithm. Workers therefore deviate from prescribed work sequences not for ‘playing games’ or resisting the rules but to make the assembly-line system, quite simply, work. Despite the managerial rhetoric about the efficiency of work sequences developed by the ergonomic algorithm, this behaviour is implicitly accepted, and sometimes actively encouraged, by the management, especially by those operating closer to the lines. Our analysis provides important insights on the (resilient) centrality of workers’ cognitive input in manual standardised work in the era of the fourth industrial revolution.

Findings are based on the in-depth study of an Italian company which has introduced its own new ergonomic algorithm in all its Italian plants since 2007. Empirical evidence consists in company’s internal documents, interviews with four union representatives, seven managers, one consultant who directly contributed to the development of the ergonomic algorithmic system, and 165 workers in different production plants.

Labour mobility of Argentinean software and IT service workers: the search for autonomy and income stability

Natalia Berti (Universidad del Rosario, Colombia), Carina Borrastero (Universidad Nacional de Córdoba - Conicet, Argentina), Agustín Zanotti (Universidad Nacional de Villa María, Argentina)

Since the location of several TNCs in the early 2000s, promoted by the State (Borrastero, 2019), Argentina has been linked to software and IT services (SIS) transnational value networks. This radically transformed the SIS national labour market. The industry moved from a dispersed group of SMEs targeting the internal market to a network of large foreign and local companies focused on off shore, ecommerce and fintech services. There was a considerable increase of jobs and an improvement in working conditions, but changes were introduced in work processes, control and consensus management (Braveman, 1974; Burawoy, 1985).

Increased market-place bargaining power and attempts at collective action (Silver, 2008) precipitated changes in company strategies (Berti, 2019): they consolidated temporary hiring and created a cartel to restrict personnel movements from one company to another. Moreover, companies apply practices that fragment the labour pool (complex salary scales for different levels of seniority, types of contracts, performance evaluations, the management of interpersonal relationships, outsourcing, etc.). In addition, they profited from the continuous depreciation of wages in a context of growing inflation and currency devaluation. The possibilities that SIS opens up in terms of location-independent jobs (Pesole et al., 2018) allowed for a greater fragmentation of the labour pool.

Faced with the difficulties to unionizing within labour relations characterised by a “segmented neo-corporatism” (Etchemendy&Collier, 2007), workers added to the mobility between companies and production segments, other strategies that increased their market-place bargaining power (Silver, 2008): creation of their own mini-firms; online freelancing; formation of IT cooperatives (guided by the specific principles of collective work in the FLOSS field (Zanotti, 2017)).

Based on in-depth interviews, expert interviews, websites review and analysis of secondary sources, this work explores the forms of online freelance and cooperative work in SIS in Argentina as options within workers mobility throughout their labour trajectory. Attention to cooperative work shows



counter-hegemonic tendencies to the current global accumulation processes in the SIS industry, which allow us to envision potentials towards development with social inclusion.

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Remote work during the emergency: social and organizational implications

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Remote work entered the lives of many workers since the first months of 2020, when the pandemic spread around the world. The use of remote work then gave rise to what has been defined as "a great social experiment": the sudden introduction of working from home methods was the effect of an exogenous shock (Campello, Zucco 2020) - the pandemic - that imposed social distancing measures. In the situation of general uncertainty that the pandemic has produced, the usual work regulation and negotiation processes in the workplace have been suspended and replaced by quick and one-sided decisions. This mechanism appears quite similar to the ones studied with respect to other types of calamitous events (earthquakes, famines, floods, disasters, wars, etc.) which make the ordinary action strategies inadequate (Rodríguez, Quarantelli, Dynes 2007) and tend to justify unilateral solutions. This paper, on the one hand, explores the modes and times with which organizational transformations have been absorbed by organizations and workers; on the other hand, it investigates the reactions of workers to the messages sent by their companies about the urgent reorganization imposed by the spread of pandemic. The research material consists of 189 qualitative, semi-structured interviews with people who found themselves working from home during the health emergency, 91 of which were re-interviewed after the first partial return to the workplace.



Workers were forced to face radical disorientation and bewilderment. In this context, the organizational change has been accepted as devices capable of restoring order in the face of the infringement of the previous one. Moreover, corporate communications have represented a source of security in the face of a collective unsettling event, which had eliminated confidence in routine actions and some of the institutional trust. While government-level measures were often fragmented and difficult to understand, companies have often been providing a “filter to uncertainty”, through the reorganization of work and the introduction of rules for health safety. In our opinion this is the key to explain the rapidity of the adaptation observed in the transition and its substantial acceptance by the employees, who tended to give up not only conflict, but even “voice” strategies. The metaphor of war and of the presence of a common enemy, combined with the desire to feel useful, have pushed workers to do everything possible to enhance their contribution, including self-training and voluntary working overtime.

The consequences of labour market exclusion for youth in Europe

Sonia Bertolini (University of Torino), Marge Unt (University of Tallinn), Vasiliki Deligianni-Kouimtzi (University of Thessaloniki)

Unemployment and job insecurity are widespread among young people in Europe and their opportunities have been more affected by the current pandemic. While previous research mainly focused on the determinants of youth labour market insecurities we will address the very topical issue of the multifaceted consequences in terms of risks of social exclusion. Our presentation will be based on the recent volume freely accessible <https://policy.bristoluniversitypress.co.uk/social-exclusion-of-youth-in-europe> This is complementing the few existing studies on consequences that focus on single outcome dimension, specifically in terms of wages and employment career, we develop and offer an original comprehensive account of the consequences. Specifically, we investigate the implications of experiencing individual labour market insecurities for youth’s subjective well-being and health, their chances of gaining autonomy by leaving parental home, gaining economic independence from parents as well as their short-, medium and long-term economic situation in terms of risks of poverty, material deprivation and capabilities of qualifying for social security. This comprehensive setting offers a unique opportunity to identify the complex interrelationships and potential risks of cumulative disadvantages and possible compensatory mechanisms.

In the presentation, we will give voice to young Europeans themselves to reach an in-depth understanding of how disadvantaged youth themselves perceive the challenges of their transition to adulthood. We draw on qualitative analyses of the rich material from 386 semi-structured interviews in nine European countries. In the qualitative analyses we are able to study how the subjective experiences of precarity and coping strategies vary in different economic, institutional and cultural environments.



Integrating refugees into the labour market as a collective endeavour: The role of support organisations

Almina Besic (Johannes Kepler University Linz), Renate Ortlieb (University of Graz)

Refugees' labour market integration is one of the 'grand challenges' of contemporary society. Previous research and practice have highlighted challenges refugees face when entering host country labour markets. These are situated across the macro-institutional level (e.g. integration policies), the meso-organisational level (e.g. support measures provided) and the micro-individual level (e.g. skills and language knowledge). It is well known that refugees face such challenges, but the question of how to overcome these and with what support is largely unexplored.

While several aspects at the individual and macro level may affect refugees' employment, their labour market integration takes place in a specific organisational context with several actors involved, such as (agents within) the public employment service, non-governmental refugee support organisations and work organisations hiring the refugees. Given the importance of employment for refugees, there is surprisingly little knowledge regarding the organisational environment of their labour market integration.

Based on data from previous research projects, in this conceptual study we analyse organisations and organising practices aimed at integrating refugees into the labour market, thereby showing the collective organising through the example of support in Austria. We focus on support organisations as the refugees' main contact point for entry into the labour market as well as the wider organisational networks in which the support organisations are embedded.

The questions we address include: how do support organisations contribute to labour market integration of refugees? What are institutional barriers they are confronted with (e.g. restrictive integration policies or budget limitation) and how do they react to these? How do support organisations and employers collaborate towards refugee employment? How do the employment needs of refugees change over time and how can support organisations and employers capture these? By addressing the organisational level and organising practices we advance the understanding of labour market integration. We highlight that first, integrating refugees into the labour market is a collaborative endeavour, in which multiple actors are involved. Second, these heterogeneous actors and factors affect the success and sustainability of the refugees' labour market integration. We propose a conceptual framework and outline directions for future research.

Institutional impact on job quality in multinational corporations. The case of LIDL in Italy and Denmark.

Beatrice Bianconi (Università degli studi di Milano-Bicocca, Italy)

This work presents the results of a PhD thesis that wants to investigate the different institutional impacts on job quality in multinational corporations. Considering multinational corporations' increasing relevance and their high level of standardisation, investigating the role of the institutions represents a way to test whether they can play a role in defining working conditions. Thus, the research takes into account specific institutional elements: labour market regulations, industrial relations system and welfare regimes, to analyse their impact on aspects such as the level of



contingent employment, wages and working hours; but also to deepen how different industrial relations regulation and unions strategies affect working conditions inside multinational corporations. The research focuses on service sector and in particular on retail, which presents a series of peculiarities still not deeply investigated and interesting in the analysis of the job quality (for example, high turnover, high level of contingent employment, difficulties for trade unions). To analyse these issues, the research adopts a case study comparative approach, investigating job quality between different branches of the same multinational corporation, operating in two different institutional contexts, Italy and Denmark. The research's methodology involves the collection of qualitative semi-structured interviews to trade unions representatives and corporation's managers in both countries. Also, the research relies on the analysis of descriptive statistics in order to describe both the workforce's characteristics in the two countries (analysing the European Union Labour Force Survey, Eurostat) and the job quality indices in the retail sector presented in the European Working Condition Survey (Eurofound). The preliminary findings have underlined how the company tends to replicate its functioning model in all the host countries, even if some institutions are particularly capable to affect job quality differently: trade unions have been, for example, fundamental during the COVID-19 emergency, especially in relation to personal protective equipment provisions. Unions' different strategies can also affect the management of flexible working schedules, common in the retail sector, and consequently working-life balance. The research aims to offer a contribution to the convergence/divergence debate on multinational corporations functioning in host countries. Moreover, it deepens the impact that welfare policies have on the characteristics of the labour supply, which in return affect MNCs' strategies and the perceived level of job quality. Finally, the research investigates industrial relations operating in service sector, offering new perspectives on the potential fundamental role of trade unions in this sector.

From Homeworking to Hybrid working: A 'new normal' in terms of autonomy and control?

Karen Bilsland, Donald Hislop (University of Aberdeen Business School)

The purpose of this paper is to outline a new project which explores office-based workers' perceptions and everyday experiences of the levels of control they are subjected to, and the level of autonomy they are afforded, as they transition from home-based working to hybrid working.

For the vast majority of office-based workers, the Covid 19 pandemic required them to work full time from home. There has been a reasonable amount of research on people's experiences of home-based working, and the various challenges involved, such as balancing work with childcare, issues with technology, work intensification, and the dissolution of the work/home boundary. With the easing of pandemic restrictions as the vaccination programme continues, the opposite transition is now occurring, with office-based workers being encouraged to begin returning to the office, for at least a proportion of their working time. This work pattern is encapsulated in the term 'hybrid work', an alternative name for what used to be referred to as part time home-based working. In contrast to the sudden, abrupt transition to home-based working that occurred at the start of the pandemic, the transition from home-based to hybrid working is taking place slowly and gradually. This transition raises questions regarding the extent to which workplace practices will return to how they were pre-pandemic, or whether a 'new normal' will develop and evolve. Our particular interest in this respect, is with a crucial aspect of the employment relationship: the way in which employee control is



organised, and the extent to which workers are given autonomy to carry out their work. We are interested in exploring the extent to which worker autonomy and control is (re)negotiated with the transition to hybrid working, focusing specifically on employees' experience of this process.

The presentation and paper will draw on data collected from interviews conducted with workers at selected case study organisations, where the aim is to explore different subjective perceptions of how control is experienced, and autonomy is negotiated, in different work contexts.

Financial resilience of self-employed workers during the corona crisis: the role of networks

Rowena Blokker, Wieteke Conen, Paul de Beer (AIAS-HSI/ University of Amsterdam)

The corona crisis has severely impacted the working lives of many self-employed workers, resulting in a loss of (a large share of) clients, customers and income almost overnight. However, not all self-employed workers were equally hit by the crisis, and the impact of the crisis differs between groups of self-employed. Both media and experts have paid particular attention to questions on the precariousness of various groups of self-employed and how public policies have moderated income hardship. Our study adds to these debates.

Earlier research on self-employment in times of crisis adopted mostly an economists perspective, focusing on entry, exit and duration/ survival, income effects and the moderating effect of public policies. This line of research thus largely focussed on the self-employed as an individual, sometimes including the spouse. However, self-employed workers do not operate in a vacuum, they are part of a larger social context. This article combines insights from earlier research on precarious self-employment, self-employment in times of crisis and insights from the sociology of work to study the question: How do networks of professional and social relationships affect the financial resilience of self-employed in times of crisis? We incorporate the broader professional and social context in which self-employed operate into our research, i.e. study how the professional network, the household context and/or relations with (other) family and friends may play a role in the financial resilience and duration of self-employment.

To that end, we analyse semi-structured interviews with self-employed workers in the municipality of Amsterdam, in the Netherlands. Data collection is in progress. In-depth interviews aiming at $N \approx 45-60$ (depending on the point of saturation) will be finished in early 2022. All interviews are recorded electronically and fully transcribed. The topic list for interviews includes: current work in self-employment, the employment history, the transition into self-employment (voluntary/ involuntary), household context, experiences during corona crisis, appeal for support (public/ municipality) and perspectives on the future. The main inclusion criterium is that self-employed need to be active in a sector that was substantially affected by the corona crisis.

Preliminary results based on $N=20$ interviews reveal that both professional and social networks play an important role in how self-employed deal with hardship resulting from the corona crisis. The professional network plays an important role in the creation and spread of innovative ideas on survival and finding help from financial advisors; the social network seems more important for the self-employed who are less 'established'. The findings of this study contribute to our knowledge on how self-employed workers 'survive' in times of crisis: to what extent are public policies, professional ties and/or social relations key for 'survival'? We will reflect on between- and within-group differences and provide practical implications of our findings for policy makers.



COVID-19 pandemic in Ireland and the gendered division of labour: the impact of policies on female employment and unpaid work

Alicja Bobek (Technical University Dublin, Ireland), Sara Clavero (Technical University Dublin, Ireland), Yvonne Galligan (Technical University Dublin, Ireland), Sylvia Gavigan (Technical University Dublin, Ireland), Mark Ryan (Technical University Dublin, Ireland and University of Limerick, Ireland)

This paper will explore the impact of COVID-19 public policy on gendered division of paid and unpaid work in Ireland. In our analysis, we will demonstrate how the gender perspective was often missing from the decisions aimed at combating the public health crisis, and from policies implemented to mitigate the consequences of public health policies. As we argue, these decisions and policies exacerbated pre-existing gender inequalities.

Studies on previous crises showed that while economic downturns tended to have a more immediate impact on men, women suffered from the long-term consequences of the subsequent austerity measures (Cook, Grimshaw 2021). However, international evidence suggests that women have been more profoundly affected by the COVID-19 pandemic compared to men, both immediately and on a long-term basis (e.g., Matthewman, Huppertz 2020). As we will show in this paper, women in Ireland were also negatively affected by the pandemic and by the policies aimed at combating the crisis. First, women were more likely to be over-represented in front-line occupations, which not only suffered from extreme pressures during the pandemic but were also impacted by the lack of childcare provision during the first lockdown. Secondly, the extended closure of schools and childcare facilities had an impact on all working parents, especially those combining work from home with care responsibilities. While international research shows that men did increase the time they dedicated to childcare and housework during lockdowns, women continued to be more involved in the unpaid work at home (e.g., Chung *et al.* 2021). There is evidence suggesting that the same occurred in Ireland. Finally, women were also more likely to take on other care responsibilities, including looking after elderly relatives who were advised to ‘cocoon’. These care needs, often combined with paid employment, were not addressed by government policies, and thus had negative effects on the working lives of many women. Furthermore, the unequal division of house work and care work during the pandemic may have long-term consequences for female employment, as well as for the gender pay gap and pension gap.

This paper is based on data collected as part of the RESISTIRÉ (Responding to outbreaks through co-creative inclusive equality strategies and collaboration) research project. RESISTIRÉ is an interdisciplinary project investigating how the COVID-19 pandemic has affected equality in 31 European countries, including Ireland. The project involves a ten-partner European consortium and network of researchers in the EU, the UK, Serbia, Iceland and Turkey. Theoretical conceptualisation of the project builds on an intersectional approach (Hankivsky *et al.* 2014) and the theoretical framework focuses on specific domains of gender inequality. The project meets its objectives in three cycles, each consisting of four steps combining quantitative and qualitative research with co-creation activities. In this paper we will utilise the data collected in Ireland during the first cycle of the study, which included the extensive mapping of policy and societal responses to COVID-19, the analysis of secondary survey data, a workshop with civil society representatives, expert interviews, and individual narratives.



Decentring the algorithm, addressing social agents' interactions in the labour process: an ethnography of food-delivery work

Francesco Bonifacio (Catholic University, Milan)

The labour process control is a topical issue in the research on platform labour. An increasing number of studies have critically addressed the disciplining function of the algorithmic management upon platform workers. Mostly rooted on Marxist approaches, these studies tend to compare very different occupations – such as ride-hailing, home-delivery, care work – by virtue of the common presence of an intermediary platform, the latter being understood as the “point of production” of the labour process (Gandini 2019). Accordingly, many have focused on how workers elaborate tactics, both individually and collectively, in order to resist against the algorithmic control (Ferrari & Graham 2021). While this perspective has undoubtedly contributed to demystify the self-employment status of many platform workers, it risks reducing the labour conflict to the antagonistic relation between workers and technology. On the contrary, recent contributes have described the algorithmic management as a way to decentre the labour process control on peripheral social agents – mainly customers – through the rating and ranking system (Stark & Pais 2020).

Food-delivery work is an emblematic example of the sort, where workers control is decentred on customers and restaurants. Here, we adopt the riders' point of view, and we argue that in order to understand the logic of the labour process algorithmic-mediated control, the organizational role of the platform needs to be explored in terms of how it structures power relations between the social agents involved. Accordingly, the labour conflict does not only concern the relation between workers and technology. It materializes in the interaction between riders, customers and restaurants, both inside and outside the space of the platform.

Drawing on these insights, the paper explores how the structures of work enabled by the platform “are articulated in and through interaction” (Corbin & Strauss 1993) between the social agents involved. In particular, it focuses on:

- 1) The emotional and relational labour that a rider, as a sort of service worker (Fellini 2017), is required to perform in the interaction with restaurants and clients, assuming that the conditions of such interaction are pre-mediated by the platform affordances in favour of the latter;
 - 2) The conflicts arising between riders, clients and restaurants, in terms of space and time negotiation.
- Methodologically, this paper draws on a six-months participant observation conducted in Milan between January and July 2020, during which the author has worked as a Glovo part-time rider. The ethnography has been integrated by 21 in depth interviews with workers, a small survey personally administered to 130 Milan-based riders, few interviews with restaurants and with Glovo and Uber Eats managers.

On a theoretical level, the paper aims to contribute on the debate on the algorithmic management. On an empirical one, it aims to provide an incarnate account of an occupation that so far has been mostly understood as a generic example of the so-called gig economy, or as the protagonist of a new stage of class struggle.



Emerging forms of collective representation. The case of RedActa

Andrea Bottalico (University of Naples), Annalisa Murgia (University of Milan)

In the current debate, solo self-employed workers are considered as part of a large variety of situations, ranging from entrepreneurs to new precarious workers, depending on the different national contexts and employment sectors. In such a heterogeneous scenario, new and more fluid collective actors representing the solo self-employed are emerging, which differ from the traditional actors of collective representation, i.e. trade unions and employer organisations.

The focus of this contribution is on self-employed workers who have mobilised in the publishing sector in Italy. The case study was chosen because, despite the highly vulnerable position of workers in this sector, in recent years a number of collective actions have been constructed against the exploitation in the cultural industry, especially in the Milan area. More specifically, our study focuses on RedActa, an association born within ACTA, the national association of freelancers. Indeed, RedActa was created from the initiative of some ACTA members following an enquiry into working conditions in the publishing industry. Over time, RedActa has transformed itself into an organisation able to bring together professionals specialised in different fields – editing, translation, illustration, graphics, communication – but with the same problems, such as the fragmentation of multiple jobs, which often do not even guarantee workers basic rights, as well as the physical and emotional isolation that tends to translate into unbridled competition, also due to the low remuneration of work despite the high qualifications.

Drawing on the resource mobilization approach in social movement theory, our contribution explores the experience of RedActa – an association that belongs neither to trade unions nor to employer organisations – to provide an in-depth analysis of an emerging collective actor representing solo self-employed workers in the Italian context. In particular, the main objective is to investigate how solo self-employed workers in the publishing sector are able to offer organisational resources useful for this category of workers, while at the same time constructing new forms of collective representation, even at the time of the Covid-19 pandemic. Based on data collected between 2019 and 2020, by combining participant observation and in-depth interviews, we explored under what conditions these forms and strategies of collective representation were found to be successful.

In the conclusions, reflections are proposed on the role of the emerging and more fluid collective actors representing the solo self-employed, thus analysing in what ways and under what conditions this type of organisations can play a role in the arena of representation of hitherto poorly represented workers.

Making Labour Available for (Super-)Exploitation: Infrastructures of Migrant Work in the German Construction Industry

Celia Bouali (Humboldt University Berlin, Berlin, Germany)

In this paper, based on my master's thesis, I explore the super-exploitation of migrant workers in the German construction industry and examine the role that infrastructures of recruitment, placement, transport, and accommodation play therein.



The concept of super-exploitation used here refers to the structural undercutting of social and legal norms typical of these labour relations, e.g. with regard to wages, working hours and safety at work. If we consider these norms as a codification of the value of the commodity labour-power within the framework of a given national class compromise, the undercutting of these can be understood as super-exploitation.

Based on expert interviews with representatives of counselling services for migrant workers and trade unions, semi-structured interviews with individual workers and industry reports, I examine the above-mentioned infrastructures as an enabling condition for the super-exploitation of migrant workers.

I conceptualise recruitment, placement, transport, and accommodation as elements in a process of making migrant labour available for (super-)exploitation, with the infrastructures underlying this process not only facilitating but conditioning the “‘encounter’ between capital and labour” (Mezzadra 2015). The infrastructures mediate labour mobility between different spaces in a simultaneously fragmented and interconnected EU internal market. They shape the spatial and temporal dimension of labour mobility and thus not only make access to labour more flexible but also enable its simultaneous localisation in different socio-economic contexts. The differences in reproduction costs and wage levels that become operational in this way put the national class compromise in relation to its 'outside' and open up spaces for super-exploitation.

These infrastructures affect migrant workers in different ways. While some primarily rely on networks of acquaintances to find employment opportunities and get in touch with autonomous service providers for travel and accommodation, for others job placement, employment and accommodation are linked through formal or informal forms of cooperation between job brokers, employers, and accommodation providers.

Overall, the infrastructures can only be understood in their interaction with the production structure of the industry. The mediation of labour mobility through the infrastructures intersects with the provision of labour by the lower links of the subcontracting chains in the construction industry. Facilitating and conditioning the “‘encounter’ of labour and capital” thus goes beyond the sphere of the labour market. When intermediaries also act as foremen and multiple dependencies (e.g. through the coupling of accommodation and employment) have a ‘disciplining effect’ on workers, the infrastructure extends into the production process and makes labour-power not only available but also more 'compliant'. The interlocking of infrastructure and production structure also makes it possible to reduce labour costs by deducting wages, especially for job placement and accommodation.

There is a contradictory relationship between these infrastructures and migrant networks. On the one hand, migrant networks form the context and are partly a resource for brokers and employers. On the other hand, they can provide a basis for workers to exchange information on certain actors within the infrastructures, offers of help and alternative access to transport, housing and employment, as well as opportunities for organising.

Conflict and class beyond the law. The case of Gilets jaunes, undocumented workers and wildcat strikes against the pandemic

Stephen Bouquin (Université of Paris Saclay - Centre Pierre Naville)

In recent years, we have observed the resurgence of unregulated conflict, with a lot of liminality regarding the traditional frameworks of negotiation or social regulation. I will first cite the case of



the Yellow Vests revolt (France, November 2018) targeting hiking prices and the lack of purchasing power price as much as the political governance of Macron. This mobilisation, which lasted several months, was not supported by instituted and representative structures such as trade unions. Another example is the formation of the carré de tête during traditional trade union demonstrations in France. This informal block brings together demonstrators of all kinds being ready to confront the police forces. Here too, we can speak of a liminality regarding to the law. On a much smaller scale, we can also cite the case of strikes by undocumented workers, particularly in France and Belgium, which reveal a social group residing ‘illegally’ on the territory but whose collective action makes their existence visible to the point of sometimes obtaining a regularisation of their status. Last but not least, during the first wave of the pandemic, we observed in industrial companies in northern Italy and, to a lesser extent, in France and Spain, a strike wave with many spontaneous work stoppages in order to stop production to hold back contaminations of Covid-19. We could cite other cases of disruptive mobilisations where the urgency of the situation or the intensity of the feeling of social injustice are that high that spontaneous actions « beyond the law » seemed to be the only way out.

Our paper proposes to investigate this kind of conflict at three levels.

1 What are the possible commonalities, beyond the singularities of each mobilisation? Does the exteriority towards institutional and legal frameworks have common origins? Is it assumed or rather imposed? Or both?

2 What are the class dynamics involved, formulating the hypothesis that there is a class-based community of destiny, in formation. We acknowledge of course that this process is also favored or restrained by the main narratives held by the actors themselves as much as by the strength of the mobilisation and the opposition it encounters.

3 Most of these mobilisations are marked by tensions and contradictions, both in terms of objectives and strategic positioning. Still, is it possible to identify a common horizon and a level of agreement regarding the means to achieve this or should we first of all recognise the heterogeneity and fragmentation, both the objective and subjective levels?

Our paper is based on personal field work among the Gilets jaunes in the south of France and the southern suburbs of Paris (January-March 2018); a survey of young precarious students identifying themselves with the cortège de tête and other voluntarily disruptive black block type activists; a collective survey of mobilised undocumented migrants' collectives in Paris and Brussels (2019-2021); as well as ongoing survey among shop stewards of metalworkers in Italy, France and Spain.

Fieldnotes from an apprentice butler: a window into the hidden labour of elite distinction

Bryan Boyle (Vrije Universiteit Brussel)

The occupation of ‘butler’ is undergoing a revival. Butlers and high-end domestic employment agencies report an increase in butler demand over the last thirty years as butlers find employment working for the emergent, global ‘super-rich’ in addition to their traditional, aristocratic employers. This paper presents some findings from an ‘enactive ethnography’ (Wacquant, 2015), which involved the author actually training at a butler school and working as a butler in private houses in the UK. A number of vignettes from this fieldwork are presented, each of which aim to elucidate pertinent features of butlering as a labour process. These include: (1) how to present an employer a pen, as this usually mundane practice is emphasised as non-mundane to amplify the ‘level of service’; (2) how to



‘meet and greet’ employers’ guests, a practice that facilitates elite persons’ movement through physical spaces, such as airports, in a way that is most pleasurable, care-free, and devoid of encounters with the ‘vulgar’; and (3) butler students’ induction into the world of luxury consumption, wherein how to recognise and handle distinct products (such as fine cheese, hunting attire and handmade shoes) are pedalled, as well as how to simply ‘behave’ within elite shopping spaces. The analyses of these thick descriptions are informed by and in turn inform a relatively novel concept: ‘labour of distinction’. This highlights how the ability of economically dominant groups to implement a ‘distinct’ lifestyle (Bourdieu, 1984) may often depend upon the appropriation of specialised labour power (Marx, 1990). A synthesis of cultural and labour sociology, the concept and its empirical grounding vis-a-vis butlering also identify gaps in both fields: first, how Bourdieusian analyses omit the potential importance of labour process within distinction mechanisms; second, how labour sociology rarely considers how ‘symbolic capital’ and ‘cultural capital’, rather than solely economic, may also be accumulated through classically undertook modalities of appropriation.

Coworking through and after Covid 19: Remote working, property markets and the spatial reconfiguration of the spaces of work

Odul Bozkurt (University of Sussex), Harry Pitts (University of Bristol), Greig Charlock (University of Manchester), Jennifer Johns (University of Bristol), Ed Yates (University of Sheffield)

COVID-19 accelerated trends towards remote working, office closures relocating digitally-mediated work to the home. This has been widely discussed through the prism of worker experiences and organisational outcomes, especially productivity (Ipsen et al., 2021; Bloom et al., 2020). We argue that the spatial reconfiguration of the places of work after the pandemic requires a broader view beyond the office-home binary, incorporating the wider market context. This paper advances such a perspective through a study of coworking spaces (CWS). The extant literature on CWS largely focuses on microlevel organisational processes, evidencing their status as an established site for adaptation to digital labour and remote working (e.g. Clifton et al., 2013; Moriset, 2013). But CWS also spring from a wider spatial rearrangement of work driven not only by organisational initiatives but financial and rentier dynamics in the ownership and management of urban real estate. This paper contributes to the growing CWS literature by situating CWS within this context. Building upon recent contributions connecting labour process analysis to the circuit of capital as a whole, coworking is explored in relation to the labour process within broader transformations in the ‘valorisation process’, namely the financialisation and rentierisation of urban property.

The paper reports findings from a study involving 42 interviews with CWS managers, owners, property experts and relevant policymakers (e.g. from local authorities) in three cities – Brighton and Hove, Bristol and Manchester- during the pandemic. It is observed that the pandemic accelerated the corporatization of the original social mission of CWS, with intensified competition between a range of fundamentally different business models. At the same time as the pandemic disrupted extant property rent systems that enabled and empowered certain types of CWS, their original communitarian and collectivist connotations began to blur with a more generic model of ‘flexible workspace’ provision supported by financialised flows of investment and speculation. This boom is based on an expectation that the home/-office binary will dissolve further post-pandemic, with strategies centring on the expansion of workspace provision in second- and third-tier locations away



from the existing concentration of CWS in urban centres and ‘Global Cities’. While local and regional policymakers look favourably on CWS, we found little direct involvement in protecting the availability of CWS on a broad and affordable basis to large numbers of workers. The potential contradiction here is that the development of CWS, when left to the property market alone, begins to erode the supportive community and infrastructure they provide to independent, precarious and remote workers at a time when it is most necessary.

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The student becomes the gig-worker: An inquiry into an emergent hospitality platform and its student workforce

George Briley (Department of People and Organisations, The Open University Business School)

Platforms present the gig economy as offering flexible work to fit around the lives of workers. However, many have highlighted how this flexibility often works one way, with workers denied rights and forced to make their lives flexible to platforms (Moore, Akhtar, Upchurch, 2017; Woodcock and Graham, 2019; Cant, 2019). Alongside this, the ways in which marginalised subjects are incorporated into the labour-force has begun to be drawn out in the literature (Cottom, 2020). In the hospitality sector, low pay, precarity, and sexual harassment is rife, with a labour force of predominantly young people (often graduates) aware of their exploitation, yet with little to no experience or understanding of trade unions or labour organising (Good and Cooper, 2014; Ram, 2015, Woodcock and Cant, 2020).

Whilst face-to-face hospitality work is not predominantly administered through the gig economy, studying emergent platforms offers a site to consider how this might change. The ways in which the gig economy interacts with the wider terrain of social reproduction and class struggle, particularly disputes that occur in the public sector, is unclear. With the composition and work patterns of students in the UK changing drastically since the tuition fee reforms of 2011, there is still little understanding of the ways in which the labour market is adapting to exploit this increasingly precarious fragment of the labour force. How the gig economy operates in a labour process that demands face-to-face hospitality service, concentrated into high intensity work periods, is also unclear.

Drawing on the example of Mint, a London based gig economy hospitality platform for students, this paper will begin to clarify the ways in which hospitality work becomes platformitised. Using original data taken from a workplace inquiry into Mint, it will build an understanding of the ways in which the hospitality sector and gig economy interact. Through reviewing the employment practices of Mint, and collecting comments posted publicly on app stores, it builds an initial picture of the issues that workers face whilst using the platform. As students are Mint’s client base there is a need to also



tie together the ways in which changes and struggles in higher education produce exploitable subjects for the gig economy. International students make-up an increasing proportion of students in UK universities, and so it is important to understand how this specific form of migrant labour is utilised by platforms.

The rapid growth and integration of the gig economy in food delivery and private hire taxis, means it is important to map and understand emergent trends in the gig economy, such as the movement into face-to-face hospitality work. Understanding the ways in which fragments of society come to be drawn into the gig economy allows us to see trends and patterns in the way that capital operates in a complimentary fashion in different spheres of the economy and society. With labour shortages currently crippling the UK hospitality sector, Mint offers an important example of how this might be answered with precarious gig-work, rather than increased bargaining power for workers.

Collectives before Unions: Lessons from Mobilizations of Platform Workers in Berlin

Joanna Bronowicka (European University Viadrina, Germany)

The growing body of research on the agency of platform workers provides ample evidence of their ability to organise through long-standing unions, alternative or grassroots unions, as well as the self-organised, network-based or decentralised collectives (Vandaele et al., 2019). The novel and distinctive modes of collective action are often more informal, hidden from the public eye and build on data and technology as means to address the power asymmetries of algorithmic workplaces (Bronowicka & Ivanova, 2021; Chan & Humphreys, 2018; Chen, 2018; Wood et al., 2018).

In this paper, I will investigate why these novel modes of collective actions emerge in the context of the platform economy by drawing on a pilot study of Berlin yoga teachers involved in the Fair Yoga Initiative, as well as previous research projects with workers from the delivery sector. I will present the results of a survey of 48 yoga teachers – about half of them did not hold a German nationality - conducted from April to July 2021, so in the months following the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic. As the yoga classes moved online, three in four yoga teachers reported a decline in their economic situation and almost all of them expressed interest in collectively raising their wages. In fact, as the in-depth interviews with lead activists revealed, the increased economic dependence on the Urban Sports Club and Class Pass provided a catalyst for the group to formalise into an association and enter into direct negotiations with these platforms.

While these results can be seen as one of many examples of a “moral shocks” (Jasper, 1999) that workers experienced during the pandemic, which encouraged exiting their workplaces in unprecedented numbers (“The Great Resignation”) as well as mobilising through traditional union actions (“Striketober”), the question of why platform workers often mobilize differently, and outside formal organizations prescribed in labour laws, merits further examination. The goal of this paper is to contribute to this effort by hypothesizing three interlinked (and non-exhaustive) explanations grounded in labour process theory, socio-legal research, social movement research, migration studies, as well as more novel approaches to collective emotions. The three include: (1) a structural mismatch with labour laws which favour individual forms of agency or formalised institutions (Atzeni, 2016), compounded by (2) a preference for alternative affective arrangements of social collectives which abandon the hierarchies and rules associated with membership in formal organisations (Scheve, 2019) and (3) the importance of migrant leadership with diverse attitudes towards unions (Alberti & Però,



2018). Ultimately, I propose that the legal right to organise should evolve to accommodate the lived reality of platform worker mobilisations.

The Workplace Change Agenda at the Intersection of Decarbonisation, Covid Recovery and Digitalisation: Exploring Cross-national Responses

Michael Brookes (University of Southern Denmark), Elena Shulzhenko (University of Southern Denmark), Ian Roper (University of Essex), Uracha Chatrakul Na Ayudhya (Birkbeck, University of London), Rea Prouska (London South Bank University)

This paper will conceptualise the formulation of a new workplace change agenda in three institutional settings informed by an unprecedented confluence of forces. The forces in question are as follows: Decarbonisation. The emphasis on decarbonising, following COP26, has been on investment and consumption. However, decarbonisation will form an external factor as the basis for workplace change.

Covid recovery. Covid19 was another external factor driving unprecedented changes to workplace arrangements worldwide. Many have speculated that the changes adopted will be mainstreamed into a ‘new normal’.

Digitisation. Digitisation has formed the basis for workplace change in the peripheral workforce via the platform economy for some time. But digitisation also has the potential to influence workplace change within the core workforce.

The rhetoric of agile. The convergence of the three, above, factors consist of social, technological and sociodemographic influences. But workplace change, from within organisations, occurs through organisational imperatives defined by management ideology and the narrative of ‘agile’ appears well suited as a vehicle for mobilising and combining the three other external forces into action.

Extensive literature indicates that working practices are affected by national institutional frameworks. We seek to formulate a conceptual framework that will enable an exploration of the workplace change agenda as it unfolds and analyse (1) how national regulatory contexts shape different employer and worker (e.g. union) responses; (2) how these organisational responses affect worker outcomes; (3) worker resistance to change.

Denmark, the UK and Greece have been selected for this project because of the distinctiveness in their national institutional contexts. In order to contextualise these cross-country differences, the research will broadly utilise the varieties of capitalism to develop the analytical lens through which cross-national differences can be viewed. This typology dictates the choice of comparison countries included in the empirical analysis, Denmark exemplifies a coordinated market economy (CME) model, the UK being exemplary of a liberal market economy (LME) and Greece being exemplary of a Mediterranean (ME) approach.

An important aspect for comparative examination will be the adaption of the managerial narrative for change, since it is unlikely to be applied in the same fashion across different national institutional frameworks. ‘Agile’ has particular traction in the Anglophone world and the broad agenda of flexibility that underpins it is exemplary of LME HR practice. This may make the adoption of ‘agile’ alien to CME and ME organisational contexts and this will form the basis for contextualising observed changes in working practices resulting from the presence of digitalisation, decarbonisation as well as Covid-recovery.



Outsourced migrant workforce and algorithmic management against labour power. Ride-hailing platforms' model and workers' resistance in Paris and Brussels

Fabien Brugière (Université de Strasbourg, laboratoire SAGE)

Drawing on a fieldwork conducted in the ride-hailing sector in the Paris and Brussels regions, this paper analyses the dynamics of platformisation from an organizational perspective. Platforms' productive model is defined by the articulation of an outsourced labor regime with an algorithmic and data-driven type of management. This combination can be viewed as an attempt to reduce workers' "effort and mobility powers" (Smith, 2006) with the objective to raise profitability, which faces resistance in return. We will argue that the increased and now prevailing recruitment of migrant workers by ride-hailing platforms, already observed by several researches, is part of this strategy and needs to be interpreted in relation to it.

Although generally sharing a common condition of an independent contractors, that is however nuanced by the variety of the existing employment status, platform drivers are mostly unified in practice by their common "economic dependence" on platforms. This situation gives them the role of an adjustment variable in platforms' commercial strategy, lowering their effort power. The constant decrease of fares since the mid-2010s, which dramatically reduced their income and put many of them in a situation of indebtedness, has forced to progressively extend their working time given. In order to ensure a constant but flexible flow of workforce, platforms have favored the development of small intermediaries to outsource hiring and thereby skirt labor law and evade taxes. These small companies have played a strategic role in the recruitment of migrant drivers exposed to structural discriminations in the labor market, as they enable them avoid market entry barriers, in particular the access to a professional license and a registered vehicle. Despite a still relatively high turnover pace due to the hard working conditions and the very low incomes, the continuous influx of workforce is ensured by the recruitment of migrants that don't have many other options in the traditional labor market.

Workers' control is also enforced by a digital management model inspired by lean production and designed to intensify the work effort of a precarious and low-skilled workforce. The application is configured to operate as a device of technical and hegemonic control (Burawoy, 1979) that incorporates just-in-time and intensification commands. It is also a mean of standardisation and deskilling of work, which reduces workers' mobility power. Digital control is completed by the inclusion of a customer feedback system used to implement service standardization and worker's effort.

However, despite strong economic dependency and digital control, we will show how platform drivers manage to develop a large variety of resistance strategies, which range from the breaking of quality standards and the cheating of the algorithm's injunctions, to tax frauds and the building of their own clientele outside the platform.



Working conditions and strikes in industrial sector in Russia: independent trade unions and labour conflicts at Ford of Leningrad

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Foreign direct investment in the automotive sector worldwide has in recent decades been the best context for a resumption of trade union action, often outside the scope of official trade unions, but in countries where trade union rights are hardly protected if not entirely hindered when exercised by independent trade union.

It was the case in China during the Honda strikes, but in different forms and conditions in Central Eastern European countries rather than in Brazil. The case of Russia does not escape this trajectory. This country after having known in the 90s of the last century, after the implosion of the USSR, a strong dynamism of the trade union movement (CLARKE, 2002), although still strongly influenced by the experience of the official union, at the beginning of the 2000s has known the emergence of independent organizations especially in foreign companies, like those of the automotive sector.

Simultaneously with the end of the Yeltsin Presidency, the new trade unions were systematically submitted by the State to a strict normative regulation of trade union freedom (GERASIMOVA, 2015) and repressive action starting from the concrete exercise of the right to strike (AITOVA, 2015). The proposed paper draws on the empirical material collected during two investigations on the field in St. Petersburg and Moscow, in February and June 2019. On these occasions, interviews were conducted with a group of workers registered with the independent trade union MPRA of the Ford plant in Vsevolozhsk (Leningrad region), just before Ford closed it and some privileged testimonies (university researchers, trade unionists, experts of sector).

In the first part of our work, we will briefly deal the evolution of industrial relations in Russia between the end of the Soviet Union and the advent of the market economy and the situation of alternative trade unions recently born in industrial sectors (HINZ, 2018). Subsequently, after sketching a brief profile of the Russian automotive industry, we examined the case of the Ford plant in Vsevolozhsk (Leningrad region) in the last phase of its existence and its emergence in the context of trade union conflict in the auto sector due to the strong ability to mobilize by an independent trade union (MRPA), born as an alternative to the one affiliated with the main trade union confederation of the country, traditionally non-conflictual.

The case of the MRPA at Ford in Vsevolozhsk confirms, on the one hand, the vivacity of the independent trade union in a country where political and trade union freedoms they further decreased even more over the years, on the other hand it confirms the irreducibility of forms of conflict in foreign companies who have a more rigid management of the workforce, but also a tendential greater recognition of the trade unions due to their greater exposition at international level. At the same time the Ford case shows the relevance of state and judicial regulatory intervention in hindering or not the forms of union organization, especially if it is independent and more conflictual.



Transnationalism and labour precarity among migrant workers. Different relations in different Italies

Andrea Calabretta (University of Padua, Italy)

Since their emergence in the '90s, transnational migration studies looked at transnationalism as a way for migrant workers to resist the growth of precarious and underpaid employment in destination countries (Glick-Schiller et al., 1992; Rouse, 1992; Portes et al., 1999). Subsequent studies, however, challenged this interpretation by regarding transnationalism as a means for migrants to incorporate into shifting capitalism (Vertovec, 2001) thus questioning its “liberating effect” (Levitt et al., 2003). However, the invitation to delve into the economic consequences of transnational migration (Guarnizo, 2003) remained often unanswered and the relationship between transnationalism and migrant workers’ economic incorporation is still an open question (Faist and Bilecen, 2017).

Starting from these premises, the paper lies at the intersection between transnational migration and labour studies, shedding light on the intertwined relation between transnationalism and migrants’ labour incorporation. The aim of this paper is twofold. On the one hand, it investigates how the labour context of destination shapes the intensity and the modality of the transnational relation; on the other hand, it inquires whether and how transnationalism represents a resource for surviving precarious employments and crisis, hence questioning the role of transnational relations on migrants’ economic incorporation.

To better comprehend these dynamics the paper adopts a comparative approach by focusing on two Tunisian communities that have been long-term rooted in Italy, given that the migratory flow from Tunisia is one of the oldest in the country (Colucci, 2018). Therefore, the study draws on data from two research sites that exemplify the labour market segmentation and the internal differentiation of Italy (Pugliese, 2002). The first context of the research is Modena, a medium-sized city in Northern Italy where Tunisians found employment mainly in factories and in the construction sector (Daly, 1999); the second is Vittoria, the main town in the Sicilian agricultural economy of the “transformed strip” (Cortese and Palidda, 2020; Piro, 2021). The multisited research is based on 20 in-depth interviews (Corbetta, 1999) gathered between October 2020 and May 2021 with Tunisian workers that arrived in Modena and in Vittoria between 1985 and 1995. Interviews’ biographical dimension permitted to approach the interrelation between transnationalism and labour incorporation considering also some significant turning points such as the great recession (2007-2009) and the covid-19 crisis.

The study presents some interesting findings. First, the well-known differentiation between Northern and Southern Italy in terms of labour market structure, and thus of migrants’ economic incorporation, appears to have a significant effect on the transnational relation developed by Tunisian workers, leading to linear dynamics in Modena and to more reactive ones in Vittoria (Itzigsohn and Saucedo, 2002). Second, it seems that this difference feeds back into a different orientation of these transnational networks and into their uneven readiness in facing economic and employment crises.

In conclusion, the paper shows the complexity of the interrelation between transnationalism and economic incorporation of migrant workers, underlying the importance of gaining a deeper understanding of these questions in order to comprehend labour mobilities.



The impossible conflict of French auto workers

Juan Sebastian Carbonell (Gerpisa, ENS Paris-Saclay, IDHES)

Recent data shows that there has been a steady decline in the number of industrial conflicts over the last decade in France. This is particularly reflected in the French automotive industry, paradoxically considered to be the epicentre of industrial conflicts in the country. Indeed, apart from the conflict against the closure of the PSA plant in Aulnay-Sous-Bois in 2013, the sector has not experienced a major industrial conflict since 1989, despite layoffs, deteriorating working conditions and stagnating wages. This paper will attempt to put forward some explanations for the absence of major conflicts in the French automotive sector over the last thirty years.

A first element can be found in the decline of the French automotive industry. This decline is most often reflected in plant closures and in massive job losses. As a result, production volumes have been falling and the workforce has been steadily declining for the past ten years, as a result of the permanent restructuring of the branch. Thus, by creating uncertainty about the future of factories and jobs, constant restructuring inhibits labour disputes and disciplines unions.

A second element of explanation, in relation to the first, can be found in the structure of collective bargaining in the sector. Indeed, labour relations in the French automotive industry are very strongly centralised, with little to no negotiation taking place at plant level, moving discussions on working conditions and employment away from factories, a priori sites of labour disputes. It can be observed that, for the last ten years, the sector has seen the rise of new centralised collective agreements favoured by labour law reforms. This results in the fact that in automotive firms there is now mainly a regulation based on collective agreements envisaged as a means of lowering costs and increasing competitiveness. Moreover, recent months have shown that the Covid crisis has reinforced this tendency.

This paper is based on ten years of research on work and industrial relations in the French automotive industry. I investigated the two main French car manufacturers, PSA (now Stellantis) and Renault. I conducted 53 interviews between 2012 and 2017 with workers and union representatives at the PSA plant in Mulhouse and some national shop stewards in 2020. I also conducted 14 interviews between 2019 and 2021 with Renault union representatives distributed between the Cléon plant, the Sandouville plant and the firm's headquarters. Finally, I also collected internal company data and trade union documentation during the different periods.

From this study, I contribute to the literature on industrial conflicts by showing how transformations in collective bargaining and industrial relations negatively influence labour conflicts in the automotive industry in a context of economic crisis and industrial decline.

“Universal Credit and ‘in-work conditionality’” – employer perspectives on developments in UK Active Labour Market Policy

Calum Carson (Manchester Metropolitan University)

Recent welfare reforms in the United Kingdom have involved the ongoing introduction of “Universal Credit” (UC), a new form of social security support payment for working age social security recipients. UC is both an in- and out-of-work benefit and, significantly, may involve the extension of



‘behavioural conditionality’ to workers on a low income (in-work financial support was formerly provided through Working Tax Credits, without behavioural conditions). As part of the implementation of UC, the receipt of in-work benefits may begin to be conditional on claimants demonstrating their efforts to: increase their hours, look for ways to progress in their current workplace, search for additional work with a different employer, or take up alternative work elsewhere if forms of extra work and/or progression are not available to employees. These new expectations may be backed up by a combination of support (e.g., advice from the public employment service) and sanctions (reduced/suspended payment if claimants do not comply with work-related requirements). Whilst these requirements and conditions are applied to claimants, employer responses are key to the outcomes arising from active labour market policies (ALMP) such as these. However, employers have largely been excluded from both research and policy debates.

This project seeks to correct the omission of employer perspectives within and surrounding debates concerning the introduction of Universal Credit and its associated requirements for claimants, and what the implications of its implementation may be. As job creators, and those ultimately in control of the job opportunities individual claimants are seeking to access, this is an important research gap among the existing literature. Exploring how employers engage (or could engage) with local employment services like Jobcentre Plus is also critical given ongoing recruitment struggles in key industries across the UK, following the dual upheavals in recent years of Britain’s withdrawal from the European Union and the emergence of COVID-19. This project aims to generate empirical findings that will contribute to both policy debates concerning UC, and further knowledge and discussion among existing academic literature within this area.

The project adopts a qualitative approach, with in-depth, semi-structured interviews currently being conducted with a broad range of employers across the West Yorkshire and Greater Manchester regions of the UK, and with a particular focus on retail, hospitality and social care organisations. This paper will present preliminary findings from fieldwork research efforts for the project thus far, focusing primarily on employer perspectives on Universal Credit and ‘in-work conditionality’, including how they might respond to this new policy context if implemented. Employer voices on a number of other key issues will also be touched upon, including an exploration of how UC impacts on the recruitment, retention and progression of employees, how and why workers make the decisions they do on the hours of work they require/desire and in the factors that result in them leaving a role, and the broader perspectives of employers on the existing UK social security system and how it can best support claimants to secure (and transition between) new employment opportunities.

To Everything there is a Season? The Relevance of the Temporal Dimension in Labour Migration Studies

Anne Lisa Carstensen (Independent researcher)

Migration research underlines that migration is not a linear and coherent process nor is it accompanied by controllable and plannable procedures. Recently, the role of time and temporariness of migration has been pointed out (Barber/Lem 2018; Cwerner 2001; Griffiths et al. 2013). It has become clear that migration often creates situations that are conceived as transitional phases or temporary by those involved. Dealing with uncertainty and a lack of predictability therefore plays a central role (Anderson 2010; Wyss et al. 2020).



The perspective on time and temporality allows to shed light on some aspects of labour mobility and social conflict. Especially with view to labour market inclusion, migrants often experience the (assumed) temporal limitation and unpredictability of migration projects, work and residence permits and employment relationships. This temporal aspect is also of great importance when it comes to conflict-ridden negotiations over labour relations and working conditions. But also labour policies and sector-specific company structures and management techniques have a temporal dimension (time limits, seasonality, outsourcing schemes), which have effects on conflicts in and around work.

This paper argues that for migrants in particular, the (assumed) temporal limitation and unpredictability of migration projects, work and residence permits and employment relationships is of great importance when it comes to analysing conflict-ridden negotiations over labour relations and working conditions. But also labour policies and sector-specific company structures and management techniques have a temporal dimension (time limits, seasonality, duration of outsourcing models), which also have effects on conflicts in and around work (Dörre 2013; Holst 2017). This conceptual paper therefore further illuminates the migration-work nexus and contributes to a beginning debate in both labour studies and migration research on the role of labour market policies within migration regimes. However, a conceptual framework is discussed that allows to go beyond (national) migration and labour policies, and draw attention to the concrete design of working conditions and conflicts over them at the local/company level and the question if and how time horizons of employees with and without migration experience influence them. This conceptual framework draws attention to the concrete design of working conditions and conflicts over them at the local/company level and the question if and how migration-related time horizons of employees influence them.

Struggling for Agency while Working from Home. Digital Technology and the Emergence of (New) Practices of Remote Work

Tanja Carstensen (University of Hamburg)

In recent years, digital tools have allowed mostly office work to become more mobile and location-independent; however, many companies did not grant their employees to work from home on a regular basis mostly due to concerns of supervisors about not being able to sufficiently control the employees' work performance. This changed suddenly due to the Covid-19 pandemic, when working from home became the new normal for most office workers in March 2020. Digital infrastructures that allow collaborating, communicating and controlling work became more relevant accordingly.

Taking up on this recent development in digital work, I would like to outline a framework for analysing agency in digital work. Referring to labour process theory, practice theory as well as to different sociological concepts of agency, I differentiate three dimensions of agency: 1) practices with which individuals try to shape their everyday life; 2) practices in which individuals (sometimes unintentionally) act differently than expected, behave obstinately or resistively and evade demands; and 3) practices with which individuals develop social criticism and try to change social relations in a broader sense. After a short literature review of pre-pandemic telework in Germany, I illustrate various types of idiosyncratic use of digital technology while working from home. My findings are based on qualitative interviews with employees in German companies conducted before and during the pandemic. I show how employees compensate physical co-presence and collegiality digitally. Some interviewees report that they use video conferencing tools all day long, in order to keep in touch



with their colleagues. Some interviewees avoid being controlled by regularly sending emails, by strategically using presence functions (green buttons) or by participating in video conferences while doing other things. Finally, several new practices of showing or hiding caring activities while working from home can be observed.

Dealing with technology in the work process has always been shaped by tensions between standardizing and controlling actions on the one hand and enabling, assisting and facilitating work on the other hand. At the same time, technology always offers diverse varieties of usage; and by the use technology, new space is created to redraw boundaries, to assert subjective claims, and also to trick control mechanisms. The paper argues that the empirical results can be interpreted as struggles for agency, in which the use of digital technologies is a central tool. While using technologies, participation, control, time for care, and boundaries between different spheres are renegotiated.

Riding against the neoliberal tide. Union mobilisation, consumer solidarity and platform activism in the Greek gig economy

Vassilis Charitsis, Lefteris Kretsos (Brunel University London Brunel Business School)

While it is hard to determine the actual size of the gig economy, it is undeniable that the rise of platform capitalism has transformed production and consumption processes and remodelled labour relations (Woodcock and Graham, 2019). Proponents of the gig economy wax lyrical about increased flexibility and choice that empower consumers and workers alike. This celebratory discourse obscures the erosion of workers' rights and the abject exploitation of economic vulnerable populations (Zwick, 2018) that leads to economic and labour precariousness (Fleming, 2017). Put differently, the unregulated gig economy represents the ultimate neoliberal wet dream.

Advancing an ethos of rampant individualism, the gig economy does not provide a fertile ground for collective organizing (Wood et al., 2017). Yet, its rise has not remained uncontested as workers' organizing attempts have emerged across the world with varying degrees of success. This paper focuses on one of the most successful recent gig workers' mobilizations which took place in Greece. In September 2021 the management of e-food, the largest food delivery platform in Greece, notified delivery workers, who up to that point were contracted as temporary employees, that their contracts would not be renewed. Instead, delivery workers were asked to continue working as freelancers. The company's decision was met with swift and massive union counter-action but also with consumer outrage who actively expressed their solidarity to workers through various forms of platform activism. Under conditions of growing social pressure and brand asphyxiation, the management decided to accept the union's demands and to offer full-time and indefinite contracts to all delivery workers.

The victory of e-food workers represents an emblematic case of effective resistance in the so-called gig economy/ gig workers domain. This paper aims to provide a thorough understanding of what brought about such victory. We explore the interactions of the social and institutional setting with HRM and policy practices that are embedded in and shaped by the political economy and the modern transformation of Greek capitalism (Vincent et al. 2020). We further aim to examine how trade union interventions results in certain outcomes, processes and strategies drawing on insights by the trade union revitalization strategies literature and the mobilization theories for precarious workers, as well as on approaches of consumer activism and the role of social media as a lever of political resistance



(Frege & Kelly, 2004). Our analysis draws on in-depth interviews with delivery workers, union leaders and rank-and-file activists, in addition to social media data pertaining to consumers' platform activism.

Offshoring and Immigration in a Transnational Firm: A Labor Process Perspective of Software Services

Bhumika Chauhan (New York University)

There is a large body of evidence from quantitative studies about the impact of high-skilled immigration on local employment structures, and wages and opportunities for native workers (Pais 2013; Ottaviano, Peri, Wright 2013). Software firms, specifically software services (TCS, Accenture, IBM, Infosys, Cognizant, EY, etc.), are the largest sponsors of temporary work visas in the United States (Hira and Costa 2021). There is evidence that the same firms are also ones that rely on offshoring, leading many to interrogate the precise relationship between offshoring and immigration (Mandelman and Zlate forthcoming; Morales 2021; Ghose and Wang 2021; Glennon 2020; Altreiter, Fibich, and Flecker 2013).

The proposed paper uses detailed, firm-level qualitative data to provide a view from the ground. I use labor process analysis to explore how the dynamics of transnational production of software services encourages these firms to offshore certain tasks and keep others onshore. I ask if, and under what conditions, this division of labor creates an impetus for the firm to turn some of its offshore workers into immigrant labor.

The paper is part of an ongoing study with thus far 60 rich, in-depth interviews with software engineers and managers from a single software services firm, which I call GlobalTech. GlobalTech is one of the largest software services firms in the world in terms of employment, and one of the biggest sponsors of temporary work visas (H1B) in the US. I deploy a within-case comparison design, which leverages the best of the comparative and case study logics to systematically compare the work of onshore (US) and offshore (India) workers within the firm to map the transnational division of labor. To my knowledge, this is the largest cross-national interview-based study of a single firm, which significantly improves upon existing studies of the software labor process that seek to capture the transnational distribution of the labor process.

This labor process view yields a deeper understanding of the patterns of immigration we see on the macro-level, and in part challenges some conclusions from aggregate studies. Interviews with workers in India, US, and those who have worked in both locations provide a detailed view of complementarities and substitutability between offshore, native, and immigrant workers, which has repercussions for opportunities available to each. I also argue that the firm is not compelled solely by cheap costs. Rather, in its search for the cheapest and competitive skill-mix in its global workforce, it must also contend with local labor markets, the exigencies of service-based industries whose clients are primarily from the US, as well as the need for client-specific skills that come from long-term experience with client firms, which have increasingly come to reside offshore.



Sticky wickets for elite women cricketers: how do elite talents' mobility liminoid experiences impact upon their identity work?

Gwen Chen (Nottingham Trent University, UK), Carole Tansley (Nottingham Trent University, UK), Maged Shoukry (IT University Copenhagen, Denmark)

We draw upon the anthropological concepts of liminality and liminoid experiences to examine how English women cricketers' elite 'talent' survive in precarious jobs requiring frequent global and local mobility. Liminality, from the Latin word *limen* meaning 'a threshold', marks the middle stage of van Gennep's (1909) three stages of 'rites of passage': rites of separation where an individual breaks with previous routines; liminal or transition rites: when an individual transitions across the 'threshold' which marks the boundary between the first and last phases; and postliminal or incorporation rites, when the individual is re-incorporated into society with a changed identity.

Mobility has been studied in several forms: geographical, cross-functional, cross-business, long-haul (expatriates) and short-haul (e.g. project work, temporary assignments). During mobility, individuals inevitably engage in 'liminoid experiences' (Turner, 1974), meaning transitional moments in time. In cricket these include sporting events, such as attending the Olympics, cricket matches at international, national and county level and special forms, such as Twenty20 cricket (also called T20) and The Hundred. Mobility between such sporting events can also be classed as liminoid experiences because they require a person to be flexible in terms of time, ability and inclination to travel. All of these mobility liminoid experiences can involve identity work.

Our research question in this study is: how do elite talents' mobility liminoid experiences impact upon their identity work?

Using narrative inquiry, we analyse interviews with ten elite professional women cricketers aged between 19-32 who are/have been part of the England Women's Cricket team, a total of 28 professional players' social media accounts, media coverage and interviews. We identify aspects of their collective experience and their individual identity work during mobility, before and during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Our study highlights a number of identity tensions: 1) adopting the identity of an elite female athlete, whilst living liminally in work precarity; 2) adopting a team member identity, whilst being a member of several teams, being selected or omitted for tour; 3) reaping the benefits of an elite athlete's identity, whilst dealing with the cost of personal relationship starvation; 4) the desirability of mobility whilst dealing with travel-related risk anxiety.

Findings show that, as traditional (cricket) organisation becomes increasingly uncertain, taken-for-granted futures are thrown into doubt. However, the dissolution of order during Covid-induced liminality creates a fluid, malleable situation that has enabled new work and mobility practices to become established. Secondly, elite talent's liminoid mobility experiences are characterised by uncertainty and ambiguity, for example, because social relationships may temporarily or permanently dissolve. Thirdly, elite talent operating in liminality must gain 'liminality competence' in order to have a new way of being in the future. Fourthly, traditional 'appropriate identities' aligned with normative assumptions of both society and organisational management, need to change. However, because of major changes in organising structures during a pandemic, gauging what is an 'appropriate identity' might not be as straightforward as previously. Finally, lessons are drawn for the design of talent management interventions that take identity work liminality into account.



Wrestling with the platforms, contending for interests: driver's self-organized fleets in the ride-hailing industry in China

Julie Yujie Chen (University of Toronto), Wei Ding (Shenzhen University)

The rapid expansion of digital platforms in the economy has sparked considerable debates on the contemporary labor politics. The prevailing studies concentrate on the algorithmic organization of work and worker's struggles and resistance. There is scant attention paid to the co-evolution in worker's collectivizing efforts and the digital platforms and the internal dynamics in workers' self-organizing practices.

Focusing on the transportation sector in China, this article examines an overlooked history of self-organized fleets by taxi drivers before and after the emergence of the ride-hailing platforms from 2011 to 2021. Based on qualitative data (interviews, social media archives, focus groups, etc.), the authors demonstrate how drivers have informally organized themselves in networks of grassroots fleets to contend for their interests while wrestling with the evolving platforms. Specifically, strategies and tactics developed and deployed by drivers can be divided into three related categories: technological appropriations, community-cultivation, and self-governance. Externally, the technological appropriations are intertwined with the expanded social networks, self-management, sociality, and collective resistance, and altogether, they evolve to advance drivers' interests and mitigate precarity and vulnerability intensified by the technological improvement and business expansion of the ride-hailing platforms in China.

Internally, however, the grassroot and uninstitutionalized nature of the self-organized fleet allows for flexible organization and diverse ways in which workers exert their individual and collective agency on one hand, but on the other it also lays the seed of conflict between the morality-based self-governance practices and the strive toward rules-based quasi-trade association (which does not exist in China heretofore). Drivers eventually confront this inherent contradiction and other limitations of the informal organizing. The history of self-organized fleets shows the possibility, promise, and limitations of worker's alternative self-organizing in the absence of institutional power and resources. Ultimately, the paper contributes to the ongoing debate on grassroots worker organizing and the forms of workers collectives in the age of precarity and under platform capitalism.

The impact of Labour Market Intermediaries on Filipino migrant workers in Taiwan: migration infrastructure

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MENSE-PETERMANN (2020) argued that labour market should no longer be regarded as a dual structure of buyers and sellers. Recently, empirical studies found that intermediaries are actively involved in cross-border labour markets and reveal that the involvement of intermediaries transforms the dual structure into a relationship of three or more parties. However, previous studies of Asian migrant workers tended to compare pre-migration factors such as individual characteristics among different groups to get insights into the mechanisms through which migrant networks influence the migration process. And they focus on individual social networks rather than the impact of different



organisations and institutions of the labour market. As institutional barriers to international labour migration in Asia are high, particularly among countries at different levels of development and outside high-skill segments, labour market intermediaries (LMIs) are of great importance for facilitating the migration process. With the rising impact of LMIs as a migration infrastructure, migrant workers are enabled to move from node to node in global production networks (GPNs) easier than before. On the other hand, the need to rely on LMIs also increases power asymmetries for migrant workers and creates unequal networks.

Against this background, it is the aim of this paper to contribute to a better understanding of the impact of LMIs on migrant workers. This article draws on semi-structural interview with key persons and an original survey of 457 Filipino migrant workers in two clusters of the Taiwanese semiconductor industry, Kaohsiung and Hsinchu, to reveal the interaction between factors of structural transformations in labour market and LMIs, such as job-related factors and institutional factors. Logistic regression analysis highlights a statistically significant interaction between workers' first- and second- job with private- and public labour market intermediaries. For instance, the assessment of working conditions for the first job in Taiwan does not differ among those who found the job through public or private LMIs. However, the assessment of working conditions for the second job is worse for private LMIs than for public LMIs. These findings provide a better understanding for migration scholars about the impact of LMIs on the mobility of different groups in the labour market and career path in the destination countries.

Moreover, the study makes a theoretical contribution in the following aspects: Firstly, the study reveals the role of LMIs in GPNs, especially their function of responding to fluctuations in labour demand and its shaping of the local labour market. Secondly, it contributes to the understanding how the mobility of migrant workers is facilitated and constrained by different kinds of LMIs. Thirdly, the study demonstrates how LMIs exercise power in shaping employment relationship and segmentating the migrant labour market, which coincides with neoliberal labour market policies, such as precarious employment.

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Transnational Labour Activism and Multinational Corporations: the case of Amazon in Germany, Italy and the US

Riccardo Emilio Chesta (Scuola Normale Superiore, Florence), Casper Gelderblom (European University Institute, Florence)

The rising power of multinational corporations as drivers of globalization poses new challenges to labour organizations. The emergence of global value chains as corporations' organizational backbones has produced fragmented and geographically dispersed workforces, creating incentives for workers' movements to follow suit and globalize their strategies to effectively countervail corporate power. While instances of transnational activism are indeed increasing (Tarrow, 2005; Brooks and McCallum, 2017), the study of the nature, articulation, and effects of transnational activist connectivity at the local level remains relatively underexplored. In this paper, we aim to help advance



scholarly understanding of the relationship between the transnational and local spheres in cross-border labour activism through a comparative analysis of worker mobilizations at Amazon in three countries: Germany, Italy, and the US. Although Amazon is currently one of the defining players in digital capitalism (Zuboff, 2019; Casilli, 2018), most research on the corporation to date has focused on its organizational structure and business model (Berg and Knights, 2019) or its work organization (Delfanti and Frey, 2020; Massimo, 2019). Exceptions notwithstanding (Apicella, 2019), comparatively little research exists on the nature of labour organisations at Amazon – and even less on the transnational constellations in which some of them operate. Mirroring both Amazon’s own organizational structure and the aforementioned constellations, the orientation and concomitant methodology underpinning this paper purposely straddle the line between transnationality and locality, studying the processes of ideational and material exchange between organizers active at both scales, as well as their impact in specific localities. By focusing on three cases characterized by different institutional conditions and outcomes of mobilizations we try to make sense of the limits and potentials of these different scales of activism. Our unit of analysis is a comparison among labour campaigns that we construct through an empirically mixed qualitative approach (based on documents, observations at public meetings, interviews). We assess and compare three main aspects: activists’ predominant claims (i), power resources deployed (ii), and outcomes of mobilization (iii). Our analysis culminates in a preliminary assessment of the nature, role, and effectiveness of transnational connectivity in the context of a key multinational actor in digital capitalism.

Collective Action and Solidarity in the Platform Economy in India

Swati Chintala (New York University, Department of Sociology)

The organization of work in the platform economy has been theorized to be isolating and atomizing, separating workers from each other and from a common place of work where they might come together to articulate common material interests. By extension, it appeared that platform workers’ ability to exercise their agency collectively was severely curtailed.

However, recent work has shown that platform workers do raise collective demands - strikes, mass logoffs, online protests, and legal action against platform companies have all been recorded with increasing frequency around the world (Trappmann et al. 2020). Further, demands made by platform workers are concerned with issues like wages and working conditions (Frymorgen 2016; Lei 2021; Tassinari and Maccarrone 2017) - demands associated with the heyday of organized labour when production was concentrated in large factories.

In this article, I explore how platform work organization has changed collective action amongst informal workers in India. I use a combination of data from news reports of protests against platform companies, social media posts of platform workers and their unions, 20 interviews with delivery workers, drivers, and members of a platform workers’ union, and records of representations made by the union to state and federal ministries of employment, labour, and finance.

The record of low levels of unionization and collective action amongst informal workers in India (Agarwala 2006) might lead us to hypothesize a similarly bleak outlook for collective action amongst platform workers. However, I find that platform companies in India have been facing increasing number of protests over the last three years, particularly from drivers and delivery workers. As seen in platform labour unrest in other countries, workers’ demands are almost exclusively about income



and working conditions. I make three arguments that show how collective action in the platform economy is different from what is seen in the informal economy.

First, the nature of work organization makes the platform company visible to workers as an employer, thus making collective contention possible. In the informal economy, layers of middlemen obscure any meaningful employment relationship.

Second, this allows them to address their demands to two contenders – the employer and the state. Thus, platform workers articulate two types of demands – wage and incentive-based demands which are directed at the platform company, and welfare-based and advocacy demands which are directed at the state. In contrast, informal workers' unions, in the absence of an identifiable/single employer have traditionally confined themselves to addressing their demands to the state.

Finally, even though platform companies have been become visible as employers, and platform workers are self-identifying as employees, the legal route towards labour rights seems implausible. The state has officially defined platform workers as informal workers who 'performs work...outside a traditional employer-employee relationship'.

This position taken by the state will act as an obstacle in the way of platform workers' gaining employee status by approaching the courts. In the absence of institutional means, collective action will continue to be the more plausible strategy for platform workers to contest the conditions of their employment.

The Global Meritocracy Mirage: Exploring the Inequality Regimes of Online Labor

Katarzyna Cieslik, Debangana Bose (University of Cambridge)

Drawing on the theoretical frameworks of political economies of labor, platform capitalism, and intersectionality, this paper critically engages with the burgeoning debate on the equalizing capacity of platform work. Termed 'a planetary labor market', the gig economy platforms enable access to millions of jobs to be performed from almost anywhere on earth. Some scholars have praised the gig economy as the epitome of a 'global meritocracy' - an 'even playing field' upon which workers can rise to the position of prominence based solely on merit, regardless of their race, gender, age, nationality or education. We contend that the planetary online labour platforms, instead of promoting meritocracy, breed intersectional disadvantages based on race, gender, age, nationality, education, caste, religion, and migration status. We identify and examine the 'inequality regimes' within the gig economy understood as interrelated practices, processes and actions that result in and uphold systematic disparities over labour access, performance and outcomes. The inequality regimes include: (1) the digital divide, (2) differential access, (3) supply and demand disparities, (4) information asymmetry and (5) data discrimination.

We draw on qualitative field research among platform and gig workers in Nigeria and India and illustrative examples from Western Africa and South Asia from the existing scholarship. A large proportion of the platform/gig workers in Nigeria and India are internal migrants who migrate to megacities and small towns to earn a living through often temporary and informal work arrangements. These migrant laborers are doubly challenged compared to their local counterparts as they fall outside the radar of urban infrastructures of care and face multiple layers of discrimination by local residents due to their cultural-lingual differences.



Thinking from the Global South, we devise a novel framework of analyzing ‘inter-scalar’ and intersectional inequality regime in the gig economy that attends to the entanglements of the global and local geographies of power relations within the precarious labor markets. Our contributions include:

First, we identify and analyze the inter-scalar and intersectional regimes of inequality created or reinforced by the growing gig sector, ranging from infrastructures and access, to algorithmic control and datafication. In so doing, we dispel the mirage of meritocracy, arguing instead that exclusion, discrimination and bias transcend online-offline barriers and continue to seriously disadvantage individuals and groups with particular intersectional disadvantage within the structural political economies of labor precarity.

Second, drawing on critical development studies literature, we point to the impacts of colonial legacies influencing both the global and the local political economies of labour. The condition and experience of ‘Southern’ migrant workers are defined not only by the exploitative economic subordination but also by the externally imposed deregulation policies that are the core reason for growing informality and inequality. Even though more domestic platforms are emerging in Asia and Africa, the vast majority of jobs are outsourced by companies in the Global North to workers in the Global South, a phenomenon known to offshore scholars as labor appropriation.

Bureaucracy and Democracy: The Experience of DİSK (1967-1980)

Atakan Çiftçi (Boğaziçi University, Galatasaray University), Svenja Huck (Humboldt University of Berlin)

This study examines the historical experience of the Confederation of Progressive Trade Unions of Turkey (DİSK) through the concepts of union bureaucracy and democracy. The founders of DİSK were trade union leaders who split from the Confederation of Turkish Trade Unions (Türk-İş) in 1967 by, criticizing it as corrupt and no longer in the service of the Turkish working class. From its founding declaration until its closure by the military junta in 1980, union democracy and the working class’ right to political participation were DİSK’s determinant watchwords. However, passing beyond the rhetoric, could a genuine workers’ democracy be established within DİSK? How was the inner life in DİSK in terms of participation in decision-making processes?

Despite its crucial role within the Turkish working class history, DİSK remains an understudied theme within the social science literature, except for some academic works devoted to understand the relationships between political parties and DİSK. More specifically, they consider DİSK as a monolithic and a static structure and they do not take into account the internal fragmentation and stratification of this organization. They generally praise the progressive role of DİSK in the social struggles, making a chronology of worker’s mobilizations in which DİSK was involved during that period. In this study, however, we aim to shed light on the internal fragmentation of DİSK and we argue that DİSK was not exempt from the notion of trade union bureaucracy. We aim to contribute to Turkish labor politics and Turkish contemporary history literature with a more nuanced, differentiated perspective towards DİSK’s “contested legacy”.

We define bureaucracy as a privileged social layer which monopolizes the decision-making power within the organization. It is rooted in the fragmentation and stratification of the working class over time. In many unions which have intimate relations with state power and private corporations,



bureaucratic strata and mechanisms are more explicit. However, being an oppositional union does not guarantee the existence of union democracy. In those cases, we should focus on how union activity happens, how the relations among members and between officials and members are organized. Within this framework, we investigate the powers of union officials; the rights of rank and file on the decision-making processes; relations with the leaderships and the opposing groups; financial management and its accountability and political decisions of the DİSK leadership during critical political situations such as the massive workers' mobilizations of 15-16 June 1970 or the military coup of 1980.

This research is based on an archival research on DİSK documents and publications in TÜSTAV (Türkiye Sosyal Tarih Araştırma Vakfı), newspaper scanning and the examination of the secondary literature. Moreover, we have conducted three elite interviews with DİSK's union leaders during that period.

The Value of Labour-power and the Struggles for its Recognition. Insights from the Textile Industry and the Gig Economy

Lorenzo Cini (Scuola Normale Superiore, Florence)

In Marxist theory, capitalism is seen as that specific mode of production based upon the valorisation of workers' labour power. Labour power is central to the process of capital accumulation and the struggle over its value between capital and labour is considered as the essential operational dynamic of the capitalist social formation (cf. Marx 1867). Although sharing these assumptions, I present a slightly different argument: the tendency of capital is not only to capture and valorise workers' labour power, but first and foremost to invisibilize its value. The principal struggle in the capitalist mode of production is, therefore, about the value of labour-power and its recognition. In short, the invisibilization of its value is a key feature of capital accumulation process. In the paper, I show how such capital-labour antagonistic relation operates today in two apparently very different sectors of the global precarious economy: the textile industry and the gig economy.

To do so, I first need to revise the Marxian labour theory of value to offer a much more dynamic comprehension of such theory. By providing a critical interpretation of Marx of the first volume of *Capital*, with the support of contemporary critical studies, especially global labour history and feminist theories, I contend in fact that the value of labour-power is never given, but it is precisely the main stake constantly at play between capital and labour. In claiming so, I dismiss two of the main Marxian analytical assumptions on the value of labour-power, meaning, first, that the value of labour-power is always fixed in any given capitalist social formation and, second, that capital pays always its full value to workers (on the long run). In the Marxian terminology, I argue that necessary labour-time or necessary labour, meaning, the part of the day expended in the reproduction of labour-power is never fixed, but it is precisely the main stake of labour/capital struggle. In this sense, and drawing especially on the recent wave of Marxist feminist theory (cf. Mezzadri 2020), I show that there is also a central struggle over necessary labour time. On the workers' side, this means a fight for the full recognition of its value; on the capital's side, this means the constant tendency to invisibilize it. In the paper, I formalize such relation as a third form of surplus-value extraction, besides the relative and absolute forms of surplus-value, which are instead the only ones identified and theorized by Marx.



Identifying this process of labour-power invisibilization is also helpful to overcome the sharp and controversial analytical distinction between informal and formal labour (cf. Bieler and Novak 2021). Indeed, if we recognize the immanent tendency of capital to invisibilize necessary labour and that of living labour to fight it back, then the formalization of labour relations in a given society can only be understood as the result of such antagonistic relation. Overall, this framework offers a more interactive view of capital-labour relations, able to better grasp the transformations of the capitalist mode of production across time and space.

The Language of Solidarity: Translations, Lingua Franca and Humour in the Organizing Processes of Multi-Ethnic Migrant Workers

Gabriella Cioce, Marek Korczynski, Davide Però (University of Nottingham)

There are considerable language barriers facing the potential organization of multi-ethnic migrant workers. From the research literature, we know little about practices that might overcome these barriers. Based on an ethnographic study of the mobilization of S.I. Cobas multi-ethnic migrant workers in the Italian logistics sector, we point to three practices that help overcome language barriers – translation, lingua franca and humour. We theorize these three practices as constituting a ‘language of solidarity’.

Specifically, the article draws on ethnographic research carried out mainly between August 2017 and March 2018 as part of a wider research project on migrant workers organizing in the Italian logistics sector. Fieldwork was multi-sited (Marcus, 1995), and its major sites were Bologna and Milan. It entailed 120 participant observations, document examination and 75 interviewees involved in semi-structured interviews (N=44, N=26 recorded), focus groups (N=15) and informal conversations (N=31). Participant observation was conducted at union meetings and negotiations, demonstrations, helpdesks, strikes, picket lines, assemblies, and social events mainly organized by S.I. Cobas. Interviews and conversations involved migrant and native union members, S.I. Cobas organizers as well as Italian mainstream (CGIL, CISL, UIL) union officers and sympathetic actors.

Theoretically, a ‘language of solidarity’ contributes to an understanding of the possibilities of trade unions as participatory, multicultural projects rather than as assimilationist facilitators in the society of arrival. It extends research on the politics of organizing (Simms and Holgate, 2010) to include the study of types of integration promoted within labour organizations. This concept also helps to move beyond studies on the integration of ethnically homogeneous migrant workers within trade unions (Ciupijus et al., 2018) and enriches the emergent scholarship on migrant workers’ mobilizations through grassroots labour organizations (Alberti and Pero’, 2018).

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Migrant labour recruitment routes into non-compliant employment in Britain

Ian Clark (Nottingham Trent University)

Employment routes into non-compliant businesses are varied and diverse where a nuanced evaluation of these can contribute to what Vincent et.al. (2020) call for in contemporary research on work and employment and the labour process therein; an interdisciplinary kaleidoscopic approach that goes beyond positivist approaches centred on formal organizations. In following these steers this paper makes two contributions to new knowledge that mediate the study of migrant labour and the associated labour process. Firstly, demonstrating under theorization of routes into work and employment in non-compliant, informal and sometimes criminalized workplaces. Therein, it is often the case that mimicry of legitimate business practices and standards of operation hides and shields coercion and exploitation. Similarly, it may also be the case that the regulatory framework exhibits permissiveness in terms of enforcement. This is the case particularly where workers possess a level of agency in a decision to tolerate coercion and exploitation. It is sometimes the case that workers know they were being coerced and exploited but do not view interventions from University researchers or enforcement agencies who sought to ‘rescue’ them as helpful (see Kenway, 2021 who develops this argument across those sectors of employment prone to modern slavery and trafficking). A second contribution demonstrates the under theorization of alternative regulatory regimes empirically in a series of detail findings on small unit garment workshops, nail bars and hand car washes. In each case it is necessary to focus on the lived experience of workers where a sectoral context outlines informality and non-compliance.

Theoretical orientation - The theoretical orientation of the paper locates the labour process in wider mediating debates about migrant labour to focus on recruitment routes that originate beyond Britain.

Methodology – Detailed specification of the location of non-compliant informal workplaces combined with specification of workplace characteristics that surround the labour process.

Findings – These detail how nail bars, hand car washes and small unit garment workshops (among others) de-skill and degrade established sectors but the findings also identify how recruitment routes are under researched and how this limits critical evaluation of labour process characteristics in these sectors.

Contribution to Knowledge – This will illustrate how little is known about recruitment routes for nail bars and hand car washes and provide evaluation of differentiated routes into garment manufacturing for different categories of labour.

How this will advance relevant debates – This approach will help to refine debates about the relationship between de-skilled, degraded employment sectors where migrant labour pre-dominants and differentiate between labour market non-compliance, coercion and exploitation and modern slavery.

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In search of a Double Movement: The (Contested) Political Economy of Labour Regulation in Contemporary Britain

Ian Clark, Huw Fearnall-Williams, Richard Pickford (Nottingham Trent University, UK)

Over the past forty years a dialectical process of marketisation has witnessed the market dismantle the post-world war two settlement between capital and labour. The labour process is where value is created but in the contemporary period employers, labour market intermediaries (in both the legitimate and non-compliant economy) and landlords drain the dignity of labour, the associated strength of vocation (to instrumentalize work) and the strength of collective and individual voice. Therefore, contemporary British capitalism is characterized by disproportionate power over labour where a critical focus on commercial relations marginalizes a focus on labour exploitation, class struggle and collectivism in and around the labour process. Those who advocate improved regulation and more equitable distribution in and around the labour process must re-set the contested arena of labour regulation to mediate the low wage, low technology dynamic that dominates the British economy. To contest urban crisis city-based initiatives centred on municipalism may become the primary locus of production and service provision, capitalist extraction and collective experimentation to focus the local state over the central state (Barnett 2014, Thompson, 2021).

Theoretical orientation - Building on Polyani (1957) the theoretical orientation focuses on the search for an effective double movement in contemporary British capitalism.

Methodology – The paper reviews and ranges the arguments of six key books (Appelbaum, 2020, Lind, 2020, Cruddas, 2021, Miliband, 2021, Payne, 2021, and Skelton, 2021) that identify the imperative of a double movement to defend human values and dignity at work.

Findings – These are intuitive and centre on the imperative of re-shaping political projects to focus the defence of values and dignity at work. Can a return to Municipalism and an associated regulatory framework centred on good work become the corner stone of Metropolitan and city values?

Contribution to Knowledge - By association good work initiatives in Leeds, Manchester, Nottingham and Sheffield are subject to critical evaluation. This will assess the extent to which the aspiration of a fairer distribution in the labour process goes beyond political rhetoric to represent a real innovation to improve living standards, improve dignity at work and strengthen vocation and voice at work.

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Achieving a zero-carbon built environment: differing approaches to labour, stakeholder alliances and VET models

Linda Clarke, Melahat Sahin-Dikmen (University of Westminster)

The aim of the paper is to show the implications for labour of the different approaches taken to achieve a zero carbon built environment, including through retrofit programmes, and to present the elements of an effective model for achieving nearly zero energy building (NZEB). These approaches involve different coalitions of stakeholders, in particular the state, local authorities, employers, unions, housing associations and vocational education and training (VET) institutions and range from those in which the public sector and the unions play a key role to those largely relying on private sector initiatives. Very different approaches are also taken to educating, training and developing the workforce required, from long-term efforts to deeply embed climate and energy literacy into each and every construction occupational and qualification profile, or, more often, confined to short, even on-line, courses imparting the skills required to carry out single tasks. These differences are at the same time indicative of different approaches to labour, whether concerned, at one extreme, to enhance the value of labour power and, on the other, to devalue labour and even deskill the labour process.

The paper draws on the European part of research coordinated by the Canadian Building Trade Unions and funded by the Canadian government, seeking to embed climate literacy into the building trades and to identify good practice examples across Europe. The research involves interviews with stakeholders, in particular unions and training organisations, and visits to NZEB initiatives in Wales, Ireland, England, Scotland, Denmark, Sweden and Germany. Each case is evaluated in relation to the involvement of different stakeholders, above all the unions and the state, the VET model involved, and approach taken with regard to labour and the labour process, whether Taylorist or aiming to empower. At the same time the effectiveness of the different cases in reducing carbon emissions and energy consumption is assessed.

The findings indicate sharp differences in the importance attached to VET, labour and different stakeholders. A successful model, for instance for retrofit programmes, is one that is both politically accountable, including through – in the case of the UK – local authority direct labour departments, and provides a long-term future livelihood for the labour involved through comprehensive VET programmes – as in the programmes found in Denmark and Sweden. The paper concludes that valuing labour is also key to valuing the environment and combatting climate change.



The everyday ideological work of self-employment

Rachel Cohen (Department of Sociology City, University of London, UK)

This paper outlines the ideological role of self-employment in reproducing contemporary capitalism. It argues that this plays a societal role but is also intertwined with the everyday experiences of self-employed workers.

The figure of the self-employed entrepreneur serves as a bulwark, protecting and legitimating capitalist social relations in two distinct ways. First as a heroic poster-boy for meritocracy the self-employed entrepreneur is positioned as ‘a special breed’ (Collins and Moore, 1964: 244). The modern-day Horatio Alger rags-to-riches story of self-employment is replayed every-day, in the stories told by and about business leaders (Anderson and Warren, 2011) and in reality TV shows that promise wealth to those with a great idea and appropriate work ethic. The successful self-employed businessman (usually a man) evidences the meritocratic myth (Littler, 2017). Meanwhile, the ‘hard-working’ self-employed workers we encounter day-in-day-out embody an authentic ‘origin story’, even while the real origins of our most wealthy businessmen are typically far removed from the mundanities of the self-employed plumber, hairdresser or small retailer.

Second, self-employment is the archetype for the neoliberal individualism of the last four decades. Unlike the framing of entrepreneurs as especially heroic the neoliberal version of self-employment and entrepreneurialism is understood as universal: ‘everyone can be an entrepreneur’ (da Costa and Saraiva, 2012: 591) and there is an ever-expanding sphere within which entrepreneurial behaviour is valued. As such entrepreneurial activity becomes a model for other fields and we see entrepreneurs of every stripe appearing, from ‘norm entrepreneur’ to ‘social entrepreneur’ to ‘green entrepreneur’ resulting in the reconfiguration of the social person into the ‘entrepreneurial self’ (Bröckling, 2015). The paper suggests that the symbolic and discursive power of self-employment is important for public and for policy makers (as above), but it also impacts the everyday experience of self-employed workers, both attracting them to what might otherwise be seen as ‘bad work’ and imbuing this work with symbolic capital. Thus, we see plentiful evidence that self-employed workers choose to identify as self-employed, even while working in precarious contexts or roles researchers might characterise as ‘false self-employment’ (Cruz et al., 2017; c.f. Wood et al., 2018). These workers frame their self-employment with the language of ‘freedom’, ‘being my own boss’, or ‘flexibility’ often despite their lived-reality. The paper suggests that this is because when the self-employed reflect on their self-employed work they simultaneously reflect on what their previous or current other (waged) work is not. Thus, the language and reproduction of the ideological position of self-employment, exposes workers’ lived-experiences of the unfreedoms of capitalist waged-labour.

The paper argues that in the early 21st century, the ideological power of self-employment is perhaps increasing in importance, with new modes of extraction, including platform-work, drawing heavily on extant cultural frames. Yet these are also being challenged by new contention around self-employed status.

This paper draws on original and secondary qualitative interview data with self-employed workers, media and policy documents and self-help publications for and by the self-employed.



Unpaid Labour in the Platform Economy: A Typology of Wage Theft in the Digital Age

Matthew Cole (University of Oxford)

There are over 4.7 million gig-based platform workers in the UK. Many suffer from low-pay, poor working conditions, uncertain employment status, non-transparent management practices and a lack of collective voice. Additionally, most platform work falls outside of statutory employment protections or existing collective agreements afforded to employees. In this context, the legal basis for determining what is and is not unpaid labour is often obscured by the contractual classifications that platforms use, which allow them to abdicate their obligations, while evading what limited labour market enforcement exists in the UK. This leaves platform workers at substantial risk, particularly of wage theft and other forms of unpaid labour. Do digital platforms systematically rely on unpaid labour? Which platform policies, processes and practices facilitate unpaid labour?

Drawing conceptually from Marxist political economy, we argue that extant analyses of unpaid labour, in terms of unpaid overtime and the violation of labour laws, neglect not only the systemic dimension of unpaid labour under capitalism but also the emergent expropriation of workers' data as it is transformed into an asset. Through a detailed study of platform workers experiences of work, we develop a novel typology of unpaid labour and how the organisation and governance of platform labour processes facilitate these experiences. This talk will explore the different forms unpaid labour takes, such as unpaid training time, unpaid waiting time, travel between jobs, externalisation of costs of production, and expropriation of worker data as well as offer some solutions to this problem.

Immigrant children may work in American fields based on a cultural working-class matter

Soraya Conde (Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina - UFSC)

The USA is the richest country in the world, counting on a sophisticated economy, technology, and big investments in space research, 4.0 technology, and the war industry.

However, according to Human Right Watch (2015), around 350,000 children under age 18 are working in the USA, and the majority of them are immigrants in the fields, where it is common to find children working without any protection equipment during scorching summers. Following what our research discovered in Brazil (CONDE, 2016), the parents took their children to work because they need money to buy basic products and, in the USA, the laws allow child to work in the fields under their parents' permission.

From 2016 on, with Donald Trump in power, the conservative movement and the violence against immigrants and black people has grown in the USA. Overall, conservative movements, social media, and policymakers blame the USA's social problems on immigrants who arrived from Latin America looking for jobs, with children and family dependents. After 2016, the Trump administration started the zero-tolerance policy separating migrant children from parents and creating a special ICE (Immigration and Customs Enforcement's) section for the kids. This American tragedy, is an actual form of racism and colonialism.

This paper discusses the child labor in American fields based on the matter of work culture and how the concept of culture has contributed to naturalizing migrant children's exploitation in the USA and the urgency of another culture conception from the Marxist and Transformative Activist Stance



approaches (MARX, 1989; 2013; WILLIAMS, 1958; 1980; STETSENKO, 2016). Aiming that, we have developed: 1) field research in North Carolina and West Virginia during August and September/2020 with immigrant families who work in the tobacco fields; 2) analyzed the Human Rights Watch reports about child labor in the USA; 3) reviewed the literature on the relation between culture, nature, and human development; 4) interviewed immigrant child rights activists, farm owners, immigrant workers and had informal conversations with two kids (ages 12 and 15) who worked within tobacco culture. Individual privacy and human/child rights were respected in the research.

During our field and bibliographical research (in Brazil for the last 20 years and in our visit to the USA in 2020), it was possible to observe many political makers claiming the culture of work among families living in the farms and in inland towns as natural and with unchanged features: “this is a part of a family culture”; “work is better than stealing and being lazy”. Nonetheless, we advocate that the most important science task is not to understand human life but is to change the conditional misery of human life. In this research, we denounce the work's culture, since it is not an innate feature, as the liberals and conservatives claim, but this is from a social class context which is in movement that needs to be transformed according to our agency and intention to the world's future.

Changing work values: towards a more sustainable economy

Wieteke Conen, Paul de Beer (University of Amsterdam, Amsterdam Institute for Advanced Labour Studies, AIAS-HSI)

The various drawbacks of our current way of living and working, rooted in a traditional welfare concept primarily focused on economic growth, are increasingly debated in both scientific and popular media. The corona crisis seems to be fuelling this debate and it has been suggested the crisis may mark an actual turning point in people's attitudes and behaviour towards lifestyle and sustainability issues. The call for shaping a ‘new’ economy is getting louder and reflected in the upsurge of studies in the field of the ‘sustainable’, ‘doughnut’, ‘circular’ and ‘mission’ economy. Whereas scientists, policy makers, firms and social organisations have various platforms to express their thoughts on this topic, to date there is only limited insight into the views and support for changes among citizens and workers. Do individuals consider a simpler, more natural way of life an improvement in the current way of living? How do workers value material job facets such as pay versus opportunities for personal growth and the usefulness of a job for society? And how do workers value working for commercial, profit-oriented organisations vis-à-vis organisations without a profit motive and so-called social enterprises?

In this article, we analyse how work values and preferences for different types of organisations (with or without profit motive, social enterprise) differ between groups of workers and whether the corona crisis has impacted these values and preferences. We also examine whether and how these values and preferences relate to values regarding the current economic system. We find that women and younger workers are considerably more inclined towards sustainability-oriented and non-financial values. The effect of the corona crisis is currently under study, although our first analyses reveal that during the corona crisis the meaning of social impact has gained significance among various groups of workers. We analyse representative survey data from the Dutch Value of Work Monitor (N=3.490 in 2019 and N=4.008 in 2021). This monitor provides rich information on a wide range of values and job attribute



preferences, making it an ideal data source for the proposed analysis. Data were collected through a CAWI questionnaire completed by a representative sample of the Dutch population. A group of N=1.400 respondents participated in both years, allowing us to perform longitudinal analyses on this sub-group.

In this study, we add new angles to previous discussions on work values and preferences, by extending the more ‘traditional’ work values (such as good pay, security, autonomy and convenient hours) with values in the area of personal growth and social impact. In addition, it has been argued that within the ‘new economy’ social enterprises and the public sector will become more centre-staged than they have been over the past decades. If it is indeed the group of social enterprises and the public sector taking a lead in moving towards a more sustainable economy, then who is most likely to sign up for that mission?

The illusory nature of autonomy in hybrid working: before, during and after Covid-19

Hugh Cook, Irena Grugulis, James Brooks (University of Leeds)

This paper presents ongoing research with CollectCo investigating working practices, control and autonomy in a call centre-based debt collection firm. The project commenced in 2018 and ran through the first lockdown in response to the pandemic, where employees in this tightly controlled call-centre environment were sent to work from home. Labour process theory has a strong tradition of research in call-centre workplaces, in particular focussing on the nature of control and autonomy at work (Taylor and Bain, 1999; 2007). The literature has considered the nature of control over remote workers (Briken, Chillias, Krzywdzinski and Marks, 2017) and more recently has mapped the phenomena of control during pandemic lockdowns (Fana, Massimo and Moro, 2021). The paper seeks to explore the changing dynamics of autonomy throughout the pandemic lockdown and return to work.

Our methodology allowed us to track the unique effects of the Covid Pandemic on this call-centre workplace and on the experiences of its employees utilising qualitative and ethnographic data across three panels of data: before, during and after the pandemic. The first panel comprised of sixteen focus groups with c100 employees and ethnographic observations of 62 calls followed by snap interviews, providing detailed insight into management practices, and observed experience of the nature of the work. The second panel comprised Zoom video diaries with 17 participants, repeated monthly through the Covid-19 lockdown (February to July, 2020), with some attrition. Five in-depth interviews were also conducted to explore home working in greater detail. This provided a unique opportunity to explore employees’ experiences of shifting from a tightly controlled office work environment to working from home. The third panel of data is ongoing and seeks to explore the post lockdown emergence of hybrid working.

Initial data portrayed a tightly controlled call-centre with a significant proportion of staff encountering significant mental health problems stemming from the nature of the work: collecting long standing debt from vulnerable customers and the associated exposure to their highly emotive life stories during calls. Mental health problems were exacerbated by management KPIs which sought to maximise the amount of debt collected and by intense monitoring of all activity within the building. During the first Covid-19 lockdown, employees transited from this highly controlled workplace to the relative freedom of home working. Many welcomed this move because some systems of control



were absent, such as timed toilet breaks and blocking of mobile phones. Colleagues would work with Netflix on in the background or paint pictures while talking to customers, while those affected by poor relationships with managers thrived in the newly distant relationship. The ongoing stage explores the hybrid working system where previous tools of control in the office have been dropped as they can't be replicated at home. However despite this, autonomy remains illusory as performance monitoring persists around KPIs. This study is developing a nuanced picture of developing perceptions of autonomy set against the backdrop of ubiquitous KPI monitoring.

AI value chain: A case study on labour displacement, value chain opacity and workers invisibilisation

Maxime Cornet (Télécom Paris, Institut Polytechnique de Paris), Clément Le Ludec (Télécom Paris, Institut Polytechnique de Paris)

The development of artificial intelligence (AI) systems is increasingly scrutinized by social scientists, computer scientists, regulators, and even within large digital companies. In sociology several studies describe how AI systems are produced and the effects of the production process on users and workers (Hoffman,2017;Jaton,2019;Crawford,2021;Joyce et al.,2021). In parallel, digital labor studies show how machine learning algorithms rely on Internet users, platform workers, and especially on micro-workers to collect and annotate the data that they require to function (Ekbja and Nardi,2017;Gray and Suri,2019;Casilli,2019).

While, some announce the "end of work" as a consequence of the development of AI systems(Frey and Osborne,2017), we assume on the contrary that those technologies are instead displacing and transforming labor towards a workforce reconfiguration that becomes more globalized, more precarious and more outsourced. Focusing on the value chain of an AI service, from data labour to the final product, we wonder how data labour value chains are organized? In what context ? What are the effects on service production chains? Relying on the sociology of work and on global value chains studies, this work aims to provide elements on the constitution of the diverse work groups involved in the making of AI systems in a context of globalization and digitalization of work (Glucksmann,2009; Huws et al.,2014)In order to study this evolution, we propose to study the data labour value chain of a French start-up offering machine learning systems applied to video-surveillance. Their system rely on computer vision to detect thefts occurring in supermarkets. When theft is detected, the system alerts the cashiers and security agents employed by the supermarket. They are subsequently dispatched to stop the robber. The startup advertises its system as a "fully automated theft detection mechanism". Preliminary fieldwork however shows that their system relies heavily on subcontractors located in the global south, who intervene in real-time in the theft detection process. To work on this case study, we conducted 19 interviews with workers of one of this Malagasy subcontractors. We also analyzed secondary web sources. Through this case study, we show how AI companies are reconfiguring the whole "chain of workers" producing video-surveillance services, along a North/South postcolonial value chain. On one side of the value chain, we show how the jobs of different workers (cashiers, security guard) are modified by the introduction of this tool with a delegation of news tasks (AI verification and surveillance for cashiers). On the other side, we show how the production of video surveillance is undertaken by malagasy workers, subjected to strong managerial control. We finally show that the particularity of this AI production chain is to fragment



and invisibilized work in such a way that the actors at various points of the chain are unaware of the other workers intervening in the production process.

‘Removing it from the draw’ – worker resistance and engagement with new technology in social care

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The neo-liberal agenda of austerity-driven public expenditure cuts on social care (Gillingham & Graham, 2016; Dowling 2021), has included digital technologies in its suite of cost saving tools. Such technology has mainly been used to deliver management goals of efficiency, savings, and forms of control. Biomechanical devices substitute for labour to cut costs, impacting on service and job quality, and significantly reducing relational, face-to-face interactions between workers and service users which cannot be replaced or even augmented by remotes, sensors and robots (Hester, 2018). Work surveillance and monitoring tools lead to the further ‘Taylorisation’ of work. Digital devices increase time and task discipline, intensifying work and disassembling the relational elements of care into measurable outputs (Rubery et al, 2015; Hayes & Moore, 2017; McDonald, et al, 2019). The market-oriented use of technologies must also be viewed against a highly gendered and increasingly racialized workforce, and the ongoing framing of care as a naturalised female characteristic (Baines et al, 2016; Fraser 2017). There are various points at which workers have agency in work place struggles, one is when workplace change is first introduced. Workers frequently employ coping, delaying and disruption strategies and may simultaneously build collective resistance through trade unions. Little is known about worker compliance and resistance in the roll out of social care technologies. Available studies point out that research on technology acceptance needs to focus on contextual factors, e.g. fit with care delivery (Jansen-Kosterink, et al, 2019).

The purpose of this paper is to explore changes to work, worker attitudes and behaviors towards the introduction of new technology, the basis of their resistance and where it can succeed to prevent degradation in employment conditions. The study is the result of a three-year longitudinal, qualitative evaluation of change management in a social care organization. The type of technology under focus are digital devices that are associated with introducing time and task discipline, work surveillance and monitoring, and the ‘Taylorisation’ of work. It reveals how despite two years of efforts and investment of financial resources, management time and training, outside of a few teams, large groups of workers steadfastly ignored and refused to engage with the technology. A postscript to this longitudinal study, however, is that management reinvigorated their efforts to introduce technology once the pandemic hit. This led to workers literally removing the technology from the draw and engaging with it. The paper is concerned with exploring the reasons for worker resistance to introducing technology, whether the successful effort from the start of COVID-19 represents a continuation of intensification, surveillance and degradation in relational elements of care, and what role the gendered nature of the sector might play as a contextual factor..



‘Just Like a Mum’s Place’: Defining ‘Mother’s Work’ in a Hazelnut Atelier in Turkey

Kubra Dal (Giresun University), Aleyna Nur Cemile Temel (Giresun University), Ilayda Ugurlu (Ordu University), Ayse Zere (Giresun University)

This research explores how gender ideologies shape and are shaped by the ways of generating consent of women workers in a hazelnut atelier in the Eastern Black Sea Region, Turkey. Drawing on participant observation in the production line that hazelnuts are cracked and selected to be processed as chocolate, oil and paste for export, as well as informal interviews with women workers, it demonstrates that ‘women’s work’ turns into a ‘mother’s work’ within the production relations of the workplace.

The feminization of labour literature suggests that global production asks for female workers as they are seen as ‘perfect employees’ for the boring, repetitive work with their natural patience and manual dexterity (Elson and Pearson, 1981; Fuentes and Enrenreich, 1983, Philips and Taylor, 1980). Femininity, therefore, is a desirable feature of the global factory production (Ngai, 2005; Salzinger, 2003). However, the studies on women’s work in Turkey challenge the argument that femininity is seen as productive for the production and argue that it is, to the contrary, seen as an impediment and is dealt with discursively through the organization of the labour process mostly by deploying the familial ideology (Dedeoglu, 2010).

In this paper, we explore the ways of turning ‘woman’s work’ into the ‘mother’s work’ within the production relations and argue that ‘working as a mother’ ‘in a mother’s work’ rather than ‘working as a woman’ in ‘a woman’s work’ is the primary reason of women to generate the consent. This is because they convince ‘others’ and also themselves that they do not abandon their familial responsibilities as well as the workplace is suitable for ‘honourable woman’ who is a mother or is a potential mother. The atelier organises the labour to construct and maintain this discourse by offering flexible working hours and days, women only working place, city centre location, the lunch at home option, the mother-daughter management team and so on. In addition, the natural patience and manual dexterity of women are considered of mother’s natural features not of woman’s. This give us a workplace regime that the image of ‘mother’ is at the centre of it. While demonstrating this, the study argues that feminization is not always the case for global production, ‘motherization’ could also be a way of pulling the women workers to the production lines. The research also contributes methodological debates on factory work by following classical factory ethnographies (Glucksmann, 1982; Kondo, 1990; Ngai, 2005; Pollert, 1981; Salzinger, 2003; Westwood, 1984) and do participant observation but it also differentiates them by working in the production line as a group of researchers/workers.

Bits and Bytes: Transforming Labour into Information in Long-term Care

Tamara Daly (York University)

This paper explores how care labour is transformed into information. It examines how the documentation of discreet “bits” of frontline care labour -- how much each older adult in long term care care has eaten, drunk, slept, excreted, mobilized, activated and emoted – are recorded. This process reveals the dynamics of control, consent and resistance⁴ in a unique space, contextualized by



public funding, private profits and personal data. Care work provided in this data driven context requires care workers to enter discreet care tasks into data systems that aggregate metaphorical “bytes” of information and apply algorithms that interpret and rank this data. Regulators, owners and managers manage and extract surplus as a result. This process reveals the ascendancy of global, corporate, portable, wired and algorithm-based documentation systems that are a proxy for quality care. The paper asks what implications transforming labour into information² has on the quality of care and of work, what it reveals about working conditions, and what potential there is for care workers to resist as a way of providing good quality care.

This paper draws its evidence from comparative case studies conducted in long-term care and home care organizations in Australia (New South Wales, Victoria); New Zealand (Auckland); Scotland (Glasgow) and Canada (Ontario, Nova Scotia, Alberta and British Columbia) between 2017 to 2019. The studies involve rapid team based ethnographies¹ conducted by 4 to 9 researchers doing work observations, key informant interviews (n=343) and thematic analysis.

The findings show how this “transformation” is practiced with a discursive precision in some jurisdictions and not at all in others, and reveals how the intricacies of everyday life may be quantified to evince not only managerial control of care work’s content, timing and tempo but also to aide regulatory oversight of care work and to determine funding and governance decisions. It situates this labour beyond the local workplace-centric context and reveals the gender order⁴. It also raises questions about the data that are produced through services that are publicly funded but that are housed privately and out of public scrutiny and oversight.² It questions how new algorithms applied to the data are transforming care work and leading to calculations of care that are led by algorithms and mathematical rules. It explores data bias, and how measuring this task based care makes the bodily needs of older adults “the product”. It concludes by reflecting on what the digitalisation of care work reveals about the labour process.

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The gap between legal procedures and practices in posting rule enactment: a comparative analysis

Sonila Danaj (European Centre for Social Welfare Policy and Research, Austria)

The posting of workers is a topic that has attracted a lot of attention among the research and policy communities due to the tensions created by the different levels of regulation, governance, and enforcement. In this paper, we investigate how the interplay between the Posting of Workers Directive (96/71/EC) with other EU and national rules and regulations (such as labour law, migration law, social security, and health insurance) influences posting companies’ practices, and how that



might lead to potential inequalities, unfair competition, and exploitation of posted workers. Our results based on a review of the regulatory frameworks and insights collected from 93 interviews with employers, public authorities, social partners, and non-governmental organisations in 2019-2020. The research takes a comparative cross-national approach with eight European countries that include six EU Member States (Austria, Hungary, Italy, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia) and two candidate countries (Serbia and North Macedonia). Our findings indicate that while posting regulation is designed at the EU level, the understandings of what the rules mean and how they are embedded in national legal frameworks vary. This has resulted in significant differences in the transposed national regulatory frameworks for posting and the other related rules we analysed. Some of these differences have led to ambiguities and enactment challenges in terms of interpretation of rules, their implementation and enforcement, as well as the validation of national enforcement and protection mechanisms and strategies. The differences in the legal frameworks across countries are faced by enforcing public authorities and posting companies. Our research indicates that while there are different categories of posting companies based on whether they abide by the posting rules or break them, the latter category is not a clear-cut category of law offenders but is comprised of abusive companies as well as those entangled in the complex transnational regulatory framework and the regulatory differences across countries. The complexity of the regulatory framework, enforcement structures and protection mechanisms are also transferred to workers, which combined with personal factors results in the underreporting, lack of detection, and hence insufficient preventative or reparatory interventions on the side of the authorities and the social partners.

Labour processes and worker's politics in contemporary Bollywood

Priyanka Das (Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, Indian Institute of Technology)

The Hindi film industry, Bollywood, is a challenging subject of industrial analysis because of its unconventional products of cultural, social and political dissemination in the audio-visual format. The cinema industry's history goes back to the colonial days in India as an anti-establishment initiative. Its difference from the otherwise heavy-duty industries, led to a continued void of State support even post-independence, including an absence of capital and labour regulations. Without the legitimacy of an 'essential' industry for 'development', the State only censored and taxed Bollywood. Bollywood grew large in Bombay, but precarious, and has been a long-ignored prototype of today's new economy; a difficult mix of formal, informal, corporate, and gig economies. It is the largest producer of films in the world and employs lakhs of migrants and labourers. Curiously, research on its labour processes has only begun (Kaur, 2020). This paper addresses this lacuna in research and attempts to throw light on the labour processes and workers' politics in the Industry. It uses the ethnographic accounts of Bollywood's technicians, workers and unions, post a strike in 2017, that foregrounds flashpoints; for example, the absence of insurance of sets, payments delayed or denied, long working hours etc., pointing to Bollywood's workers' crises. However, a notorious repute of the union of workers, projected as a breeding ground of illegality and corruption, trivialised their acts of resistance. This paper exposes that the phenomenon of militarisation of workers is an offspring of workers' dispossession and the invalidation of unionisation. Following contemporary scholars of labour like Atzeni, 2021; Gallas, 2018; and Nowak, 2021; this paper attempts to go beyond the Fordist imagination of an industry which assumes a non-porous antagonism between capital and labour.



With the mounting pressure of liberalisation, Bollywood managed to get a state certificate of ‘industry status’ almost five decades after independence. The political climate had changed to favour capitalism based on ‘consumption’, from the previous centrist-socialist policies focused on a regime of ‘production’. This paper starts with a review of literature on the ‘industry-status’ of Indian cinema that problematizes its formalisation in the 1990s, when deregulation was the norm. Bollywood went on to embody a new public culture, with the big budget family films, that celebrated globalised patriarchy of the merchant caste-communities. Also, its own close-knit informal networks of capital, with the official status, connected to the formal and global economies of finance and entertainment. This paper juxtaposes this performance of formalisation to the increasing informalisation of Bollywood’s labour processes. It investigates the contradictory practices of ‘industry-ness’ in Bombay cinema, and traces selective regulations and deregulations mediated through the changing politics of the Indian State. While these disparate practices increase the precarity of the worker, this paper also documents the worker’s conflicting attempts of, both, embracing and resisting the culture of its neoliberal processes. It argues that precarity and militarisation of unions can be a political strategy used both by the state and the capital in a neoliberal setup.

Theorizing the Gig Economy - A Systematic Review of Literature

Prakriti Dasgupta, Ronan Carbery, Anthony McDonnell, Stefan Jooss (Cork University Business School, University College Cork, Ireland)

Rationale:

The use of algorithms for high scalability, optimisation of work, and control of worker performance is a key characteristic of work in the gig economy, making it an emerging area of active inquiry. Work arrangements in the gig economy allow platforms to safely distance themselves from conventional employment liabilities and yet manage the entire life-cycle of workers from entry to exit (Duggan et al., 2020). Gig work has become an increasingly researched and debated topic owing to several features which distinguish it from other variants of temporary work, giving rise to a nascent body of scholarship over the past decade, across multiple disciplines. However, there remains a lack of consensus amongst researchers on definitions or a universal framework for analysing the breadth of employment / work formats that classify as gig work. Addressing this lacuna, we have undertaken a systematic literature review to

1. Report the dominant theories and definitions that have been used to understand the gig economy and gig working arrangements.
2. Theorize by synthesising different paradigms (Post et al., 2020) to propose a robust, multidisciplinary approach for examining the organic outcomes of work in the gig economy.

Design:

A systematic literature search was conducted utilising three widely acknowledged databases: EBSCOhost, Scopus and Web of Science. After consultation amongst the author team and consideration of extant literature, we identified 27 search terms. We were only interested in peer-reviewed journal articles published in English language, and therefore, excluded publications in other formats or languages. The remaining records were reviewed for duplicity; article abstracts and full texts were scanned for relevance to ensure rigor of this review. Subsequently, a coding template was



used for documenting the study details, which was validated for inter-rater reliability and supported the undertaking of a bibliometric analysis and content analysis.

Findings:

Indicative findings from the analysis show burgeoning research on gig work being undertaken since 2011. This has resulted in multiple conceptualisations and categorizations of gig work (e.g., Duggan et al., 2020; Howcroft & Bergvall-Kåreborn, 2019; McDonnell et al., 2021) and the use of varying theoretical paradigms (e.g., Brawley, 2017; Bucher et al., 2021; Gandini, 2018; Heiland, 2021; Newlands, 2021; Walker et al., 2021; Wood et al., 2019). We find that the majority of empirical studies are situated in developed economies with limited research in developing countries. There is a clear dominance of qualitative studies in this area, though we also see strong trends for quantitative and mixed-method studies, over the last couple of years. While there is no dominant theoretical frame for examining work in the gig economy to date, there is potential for greater integration of various literature streams and frameworks.

Implications:

From a research perspective, we advance theory through an integrative analysis, offering suggestions for future research that prompts active engagement and seeks synergies between different theoretical underpinnings. From a practical perspective, assimilating the heterogeneity of gig work through this systematic review is imperative for evidence-based policy making. This also has implications for the new era of digitally-mediated HRM practices in organisations.

How We Contracted Labour Inequality: Two Remedies for the Gig Economy

Todd Davies (Technical University Munich)

The gig economy has revolutionized the taxi industry. This contribution is a conceptual analysis of how the disruptive entry of gig economy firms has altered the structure of the taxi market. These changes in market structure are shown to redistribute power between different actors within the market. It proposes two integrated policy remedies, which aim to enhance market competition and safeguard working conditions.

The first half of the paper describes how gig platforms have exploited the permissive regime of the prevailing Law and Economics movement, which privileges efficiency and consumer welfare above other socioeconomic concerns. The structure of an idealized conventional taxi firm is compared to that of a taxi platform in the gig economy. Two problems are identified. First, gig platforms circumvent labor protections in order to reduce costs, which degrades working conditions for gig workers. Second, competition between conventional firms with internalized labor costs, and gig platforms with externalized labor costs, is fundamentally unfair.

An increasing number of critical scholars argue that many of today's socioeconomic challenges stem from legal institutions that are overly focused on efficiency. These critiques have coalesced under the banner of the Law and Political Economy (LPE) movement. Broadly, they argue that the law has focused so much on efficiency, that it has become blind to other concerns, such as power, equality and fairness. Building off such critiques, the second half of the paper proposes two policy remedies. The first, inspired by the German health insurance system, ensures a minimum level of working conditions for gig economy workers by mandating that a portion of workers' wages is contributed to a 'relief fund'. The second promotes competition by introducing a layer of interoperability into the



taxi market. As such, each consumer-facing taxi app would be able to order taxis from any taxi firm, and each driver-facing taxi app would be able to receive ride requests from any consumer-facing taxi app. These two proposals come as a package because of the integrated nature of their respective problems; degraded working conditions are a symptom of unfettered market competition, and unfair competition results from unevenly applied minimum labor standards.

Free to Enjoy a Precarious Ride - On Entrepreneurial Game Playing in the Platform-Based Food Delivery Sector

Floris de Krijger (UHasselt, Belgium)

How do food delivery platforms operating in the gig economy control their workers, given that they do not hire employees but assign gigs to freelance delivery couriers? Drawing on the Labour Process Theory (LPT) of “work-games”, which stresses that autonomy can play a key role in establishing managerial control, my analysis challenges the idea that digital platforms control the labour process by stripping workers from as much autonomy as possible. Based on the cases of Uber Eats and Deliveroo in Amsterdam, I instead show that food delivery platforms grant couriers a set of carefully confined decision-making opportunities that allows them to navigate the food delivery market themselves. This policy gives rise to a work floor dynamic in which (semi)autonomous, yet severely underpaid delivery couriers continuously employ game-like strategies to maximize their hourly wage – i.e. the number of delivered meals per hour. Informed by ethnographic data on managerial operations, participatory observations of work practices (92,5 hours) and interviews (n = 19), this paper argues that food delivery platforms establish control over the labour process by digitally regulating and continuously changing the rules of this work-game. In the short run, the work-game yokes couriers’ interests with those of the platforms by incentivizing couriers to be available during diner time, circle around popular restaurants and bike as fast as possible. Hence, when the interests of both parties do not appropriately align, food delivery platforms do not dictate couriers’ behaviour directly but, instead, modify the conditions under which couriers are invited to “play” – i.e. changing piece rates, introducing surge pricing, expanding the labour pool. In the long run, the work-game disguises the capital-labour relation that underlies couriers’ bogus freelance status by redirecting hierarchical conflicts between the platform and couriers onto the restaurants and by contributing to the idea that the low wages are the result of individual performance, as opposed to the low piece rate set by the platforms. My findings develop LPT by showing how managerial control is established in the absence of formal authority between capital and labour, and enrich anthropological research on work floor culture by describing a platform-mediated work-game in which strategically acting upon market dynamics determines ones success.



Robotic displacement: virtual migration and digital automation

Alessandro Delfanti (University of Toronto)

“Virtual migration” is a well-established concept put forth by sociologist Aneesh Aneesh in 2006, and used to analyse the use of telecommunication tools to move labour across borders without moving the workers. It was developed to discuss industries such as call centres, coding, or content moderation, which rely on the free transnational movement of data and money while the workers remain in their country of origin. So far, this phenomenon was limited to industries based on the production and distribution of information. But a new technological trend promises to expand virtual migration to realms such as manufacturing and warehousing. Indeed, robots can increasingly be operated remotely. Thus the workers who operate them can reside in geographical areas where the cost of labour is lower and worker rights weaker. This form of digital outsourcing is not new per se. From surgeons performing operations remotely to unmanned drones whose pilots reside thousands of kilometres away from war zones, the work of operating robots has already been decoupled from physical proximity between worker and workplace. In this research, I am studying the expansion of remote robot operations to occupations ranging from food delivery robots zipping in the streets of major cities to warehousing at companies such as Amazon and Ocado. The rise of automation in these industries does not do away with the need for living labour, but rather allows capital to displace the labour force both geographically and in terms of adaptation to a changing labour process. Science fiction imagined this form of remote work: in his 2008 movie *Sleep Dealer*, American director Alex Rivera depicted a world in which Mexican workers hired by maquiladoras in Tijuana operate robots working in constructions in the United States. The materialization of this fantasy would allow capital to import labour without having to deal with the movement of bodies who have traditionally migrated to take up jobs in construction, farming, warehousing and manufacturing. To approach this quickly evolving phenomenon, I rely on two methods. Interviews allow me to delve into the lived experiences of this new class of outsourced workers. Analysis of patents owned by selected companies advancing automation technology provides a glimpse into the future capital desires and invests in. Labour process theory and science & technology studies provide the theoretical framework for the study of this new relation between work, automation, and space.

What is a modernised mine? Fourth Industrial Revolution and the labour process in South Africa

Mattia Dessì (University of Leeds)

The South African government has identified the so-called fourth industrial revolution (4IR) as one of the solutions to sluggish economic growth and unemployment. In the mining sector, this discourse has been translated into a focus on digitalisation and automation as the pillars underlying the idea of the “modernised mine”. However, as in some of the literature around the 4IR, the sensationalistic narrative supporting the spreading of this idea does not say much about the motives behind specific technological choices and the effects of their implementation at the workplace. In order to fill this gap, this study focuses on the case study of the South African platinum groups metals sector (PGMs) and uses a revised version of Labour Process Theory (LPT) to understand what a modernised mine



is, how it differs from a conventional operation and, specifically, how it impacts the relationship between capital and labour. The study is based on a mix of secondary and primary data sources, including analysis of webinars with solution providers, company reports, podcasts and remote semi-structured interviews with union officials in South Africa. Ultimately, it argues that 1) to revise LPT with Italian Operaismo allows us to re-position class struggle at the centre of capitalist development, generating a better understanding of specific technological trajectories, 2) that technological development in the PGMs sector is specifically designed and practically deployed as an attempt to neutralise the threats to the valorisation process represented by organised labour, and 3) that, notwithstanding these attempts, the “modernised mine” is neither devoid of contradictions nor passively accepted by the workforce.

Organising the Unorganised: India's experiment with unionising the Gig Workers.

Dipsita Dhar (PhD Scholar)

Platform Economy or Gig economy as its popularly known has raised newer challenges to the trade union movement across the world. The displacement of common workspace and the supposed flexibility of work, was enough to question the traditional imagination of labour. It took time for even the trade unions to respond to this theoretically and also in practice. Nevertheless, with due time, the primacy of profit maximization and exploitation of the so called “independent contractor” were enough to motivate the workers to form union. Unlike the West where legal proposal like Proposition 22 at least could reach till the voting in California demanding the recognition of Gig workers as workers, the scenario in the Global South particularly in case of India is far from anything to be called decent. The Indian state has passed few new labour codes amid the pandemic without a proper discussion in parliament. It has the potential to take away the basic rights of 8 hours of working hour, paid over time and even the maternity leaves among many other pivotal workers’ rights. Amidst the wholesome attack it was interesting to see, how the Indian Left leaning trade unions have found inroads to organize the most unorganized, the Gig workers. This paper looks into two specific case studies from India where traditional trade unions were able intervene in organizing the workers engaged in the platform economy during the pandemic and substantial demands were accepted by the companies. The first case being the unions among OLA, UBER drivers and delivery persons working for Swiggy, Zomato who regularly holds protest demonstration not only dealing with the companies but also the state. The other is a latest development where people working with Urban Company, an online salon and home service app, called for a strike for ten days, demanding transparency in commission system. Keeping in mind, the nature of these jobs and India’s rigid caste-based occupation, a large number of these workers would come from marginalized caste groups and women. The article thus tries to bring in the strategies deployed to organize the diverse set of people under the umbrella organization named All India Gig Workers’ Union and how it negotiates the existing challenges. Whether these mobilizations can be categorized as example of solidarity unionism or are they just the refashioning of old school trade unionism? A detailed ethnographic survey was conducted among the people participating and its key leaders during agitations to visibilise the nuances, for analyzing the quantitative data the help of statistical tools were taken. This article does not stop at the workers vs neo liberal state negotiation, but also drives further into the internal complexity of workers as pressure group and how unions can help them binding politically.



Labour Unrest in China: an ever-changing decade.

Dario Di Conzo (Scuola Normale Superiore, Pisa, Italy)

Labour unrest in China is one of the most striking and ever-changing research fields nowadays. The size and the activism of the Chinese working class, ingrained in the fastest rising path ever occurred in economic history, made China's industrial relations a unique case study.

China's acquired status as "World's factory" and the industrial upgrading in the global value chains (GVCs) entailed flourishing qualitative studies on workers conditions as well as on their capability to steadily claim surging wages, welfare and safety improvements in workplaces.

So far, the debate on the Chinese workers bargaining power is quite polarized between those who argue a progressive working-class subjectivation and empowerment (Ngai, Chan, Chan, 2010; Ngai, Smith, 2018) and those who label this hypothesis as "false optimism" and record a growing success of Chinese administration in tempering workplace disputes and favouring Chinese capitals owners (Lee, 2016).

I contend that both these stances contain partial truths; on one hand, throughout the XXI century, Chinese workers have achieved meaningful improvements both in legislative and remunerative terms (Franceschini, 2016; ILO 2018). On the other hand, China's employment is marked by exploding cleavages, such as urban-rural and internal-coastal divides deployed in a labour market environment permeated by the employers' systematic circumvention of laws.

Moreover, the provincial-based system of citizenship (Hukou) has imposed an artificial internal hierarchy between Chinese domestic migrants and native workers creating a layered labour market deeply differentiated concerning wages, welfare provision, education opportunities and the overall social security system.

I investigated labour unrest in China by adopting a quantitative approach through a granular study of the two most significant existing databases focused on workers strikes.

The first one has been built by the labour NGO, China Labour Bulletin (2011-2019), while the second database has been produced by Professor Manfred Elfstrom (2003-2012).

My work has overlapped these two sources creating a unique database containing 13.316 episodes of strikes occurring between 2010 and 2019. In addition, I carried out a detailed re-coding of all variables within the dataset in order to make it compatible with the classification used by the National Statistics Bureau of China (NBSC) in releasing socio-economic data.

Even though it is still ongoing, my empirical work is already able to show three main shifting trends detectable in the last decade: firstly, a geographical homogenization of the labour unrest; secondly, a shrinking role of the manufacturing and foreign firms as a source of unrest; finally, an increasing centrality of the tertiary and private sectors as a new major field of struggle.

Decision support systems for the public sector – What is next for social science?

Fredrik Dolve (Faculty of Health, Welfare and Organisation / Østfold University College, Norway, Centre for the Study of Professions (SPS) / Oslo Metropolitan University, Norway)

Decision support systems (DSS) for decision-makers in organisations have existed since the seventies, with the aim of enabling human actors to overcome heuristics towards more rational



decisions. These systems are usually software in which the input comes from different sources, analysed by someone with formal training in statistics and mathematics. The scope of the problems these systems were set to solve earlier is limited compared to in this day and age; the DSS should assist and not replace the manager in decision-making. In the era of ‘big data’ or ‘fast data’ organisational management see the potential for performance enhancement in an increasing array of new and complex data sources (Rashidi et al., 2018), such as data generated by the employees’ everyday use of technologies in their work (Klievink et al., 2017).

In line with the increasing complexity in the data utilized in decision-making, Data Science emerges as a new academic trans discipline (Power, 2016, p. 345) in organisations’ DSS. The role as a data scientist differs from the traditional business or data analyst role. As IBM (2014, as cited in Power, 2016, p. 350) says: “Good data scientists will not just address business problems, they will pick the right problems that have the most value to the organization.” In other words, technocrats are now set to find areas for improvement to a greater extent than before. A central question is therefore what impact do these DSS, and new forms of DSS input, have on other professions in the same organisations, in terms of autonomy, control over their work and potential alienation?

This is a scoping review article, identifying knowledge gaps in the research (Tricco et al., 2016) on Decision Support Systems for public sector managers, in relevant social science journals. Central findings are that DSS use is connected to a strong belief in rationality. Much literature thus focus on new types of data and their potential for improving DSSs, implicating betterment is done by making these systems more rational (Power, 2016, pp. 347-348), in a techno-optimistic narrative (Vydra & Klievink, 2019). This may lead to the knowledge derived from data science competing with the knowledge of the professional workers in decision-making. When and how to include the often tacit knowledge of professional workers in DSS processes is still an open question. More case studies of actual DSS implementation are needed (van der Voort et al., 2021, p. 9).

Gender and Class Inequalities in Italy Under COVID-19 Lockdown: Theoretical and Methodological challenges. Lessons from a Non-Directive Visual Research

Annalisa Dordoni (University of Milan-Bicocca), Anna Carreri (University of Verona, University of Hasselt)

The COVID-19 pandemic has affected the management of productive, reproductive and social activities in our new everyday lives (Plotnikof et al., 2020). Moreover, it has presented new challenges when doing research about work and labour processes, from a both theoretical and methodological point of view. It has highlighted, as ever before, the theoretical necessity to overcome the binary distinction between work and life as two ontologically separate and static domains, which fails to grasp the intertwining of productive and reproductive processes and the permeability between the public and the private, as already pointed out in the literature (Glucksmann 2005, Fleetwood 2007, Ollier-Malaterre 2010, Özbilgin et al. 2011) and as belied by the domestic experiences of the lockdown lived by who worked from home.

This research aims to overcome this problematic conceptualisation and contribute to the recent and more critical strand of work-life research (e.g., Carreri, 2021; De Coster and Zanoni, forthcoming), by exploring the (de)construction of boundaries during the lockdown period. We pay special attention to some macro-structural drivers of work and family life, specifically gender and family composition,



social class and housing conditions, and their links to the micro-level experiences and power dynamics, which have become more clearly evident during the pandemic emergency, albeit being pre-existing.

The blurring of the work-care-life boundaries in a single confined time-space during the lockdown has raised some questions about the structural interdependencies between work and ‘non-work’, with relevant ontological and methodological implications yet to be explored. In order to face the challenges of doing research during the pandemic, and in order to observe working from home experiences without assuming a binary vision and without influencing participants’ representations, we chose to conduct a qualitative study using non-directive techniques, technological tools and visual methods.

The empirical material, collected during the first Italian lockdown, consists of ten video-interviews focused on academics (Carreri and Dordoni, 2020) and seventy participant-generated images (Balomenou and Garrod 2016) sent to us by workers of different sectors. We used the native image making technique (Warren, 2019; Pauwels and Mannay, 2019), which allowed us to observe reality as experienced by social actors and investigate private and public boundaries overcoming pre-set logics (De Coster and Zanoni 2019). The images were collected in April-May 2020 through an online form where we asked to upload “a single image that best represents working from home in this period”. In addition, participants were asked to provide a reason for their choice and some socio-demographic information (age, sex, family composition, profession).

Regarding the findings, the participants' heterogeneity allowed us to observe the axes of inequality. Data show relevant different forms of disarticulation and re-articulation of time, space and relational boundaries in working and family life, connected to gender and class differences, linked with housing, family, care and work conditions. The analysis is still being carried out using the Maxqda and Atlas.Ti softwares, in a continuous intersubjective and remote mode, mediated by technology exchange, with the purpose of sharing analytical-interpretative categories to allow us to do research during the pandemic.

The collective regulation of remote-working: a sectoral analysis

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Once limited to a small amount of workers in Italy, the use of forms of remote-working exploded following the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic in spring 2020 and the connected containment measures. Preliminary analyses of companies’ future orientations show that this phenomenon is here to stay, at least in part, and that workers have highlighted both positive and negative aspects of this form of work organisation, raising the issue of its regulation. This contribution will present the first findings of an ongoing research project dealing with the collective regulation of remote working in different sectors and its evolution over time, especially with regards to the transformations triggered by the Covid-19 pandemic. Through the analysis of semi-structured interviews with trade unionists and officials of employer organisations, and of collective agreement at company and sectoral level, we will present a typology of forms of collective regulation of this phenomenon, and show how they are significantly affected by sectoral characteristics.



The Good, The Bad & The Women: A gendered analysis of European labour migration regimes in the Fish-processing sector, Scotland

Paula Duffy (University of Aberdeen)

This paper will present an analysis of the changing labour regimes of European labour migrants employed in the fish processing industries of the Northeast of Scotland. Whilst migrants from across Europe are included within this study, the results represent primarily labour migrants from the Baltic states (Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia). The paper explores the transcalar nature of Scotland's Industrial Fishing and fish processing sector through the migrant labour systems which support them, and how these have changed over time.

The research presented is taken from a qualitative mixed-method case study design, sampling three coastal towns and villages in Scotland, UK. The three case study locations are representative of the three dominant types of coastal places from the Scottish Typology of Coastal Communities (Duffy and Stojanovic, 2018; Scottish Government, 2020). The mixed-methods approach included data from (1) In-depth Interviews, n=36, with migrants, employers within the sector, the local community, and key informants across the local government organisations and third sector support services. Secondly (2) Ethnographic data collected in-situ over a period of 11 months, and (3) supplementary documentary analysis from local and regional policy documents, and NGOs supporting migrants within the Northeast of Scotland. This paper focuses on the results from one of the three case studies - Peterhead, the UK's number one - and one of Europe's largest- white-fish ports, which is of particular importance to the migrant labour in question.

The finding presented in this paper offers an understanding of the changes in the mechanisms of migrant labour flows in the sector from pre-accession until the early stages of the UK's withdrawal from the European Union in 2016 and 2017 (also known as the Brexit process). The findings show how these mobility practices have resulted in the social (re)production of perceived waves of labour migration within these coastal spaces through the shift from international recruitment agencies to informal recruitment practices which relied on existing migrants' family and community networks. The paper explores the impact of this shift on the social, demographic, and gendered aspects of the migrant labour flows and lived experience of migrants in Peterhead. In doing so the paper explores how shifting mechanisms of employment recruitment impact the role of, and settlement intentions of migrant women.

Front-Line Manager and Union Representative Roles in a Labor-Management Partnership

Adrienne Eaton, Justin Vinton, Phela Townsend, Rebecca Givan (School of Management and Labor Relations Rutgers University)

It has long been recognized that labor-management partnerships present significant difficulties for front-line managers. These managers are often expected to learn and practice a different approach to managing employees, such as engaging with the union in strategic and workplace level decision-making, and facilitating employee participation. Front line managers thus have their traditional roles and status potentially challenged. At the same time their interest in and acceptance of worker input is essential to the success of the worker involvement aspect of partnership. Front line managers may be



asked to partner with union representatives in ways that can challenge their experience of and views about the role of the union itself. These dynamics are relatively understudied in the partnership literature.

Similar changes in roles and modes of operating are expected of union representatives involved in partnership whether it be at the strategic level with top management, the mid-level with middle managers, or the worksite/unit level with front-line managers and workers.

These changes to the roles of middle managers and union representatives that require more relational and collaborative interactions between management and the union (and its members) can create significant obstacles to implementation of partnership structures and processes. For example, extant research has evidenced that partnerships may fail or impede organizational diffusion across lower levels due to a lack of middle managerial support and facilitation (Kochan et al., 2008; Eaton et al., 2004). Similarly, the “mutual gains” model that partnership theory has offered (Cooke 1990; Kochan & Osterman, 1994), in which both parties have the potential to benefit from the arrangement (e.g., positive employee/union and organizational outcomes) has found mixed support empirically (Guest & Peccei, 2001; Bacon & Blyton, 2006; Danford et al., 2014; Evans et al., 2012; Dobbins & Gunnigle, 2009; Kelly 2004). One source of fragility in partnership implementation and diffusion may be best explained by focusing on these mid-level roles and relations involving middle managers and their social interactions with the union and its representatives.

This paper will explore these issues in the case of a hospital system located in Worcester, Massachusetts in the U.S. This hospital system is the home of a labor-management partnership involving a union that represents clerical, technical, lower skill healthcare occupations. The union has long been committed to involving the union and its member in improving patient care and work processes. The current partnership began with union involvement in creating and managing a huddle/suggestion board system that provided front-line workers input into process and other improvements and has since moved on to union involvement in managerial decision-making at the strategic level and in other organizational change efforts.

We have conducted interviews with approximately 30 front-line managers and are in the process of interviewing a similar number of union leaders, activists and staff. The questions explore the respondents view of the other group and their organization and the origins of their view, the challenges presented by their role and the partnership arrangements and their view on the contributions to improving work and the management of work of front line workers.

Third path of Turkish trade unionism: Islamic trade unionism and the Hak-İş (1976-2019)

Isil Erdinc (Université libre de Bruxelles)

This work studies Islamic trade unionism in Turkey departing from the analysis of the Confederation of Real Trade Unions (Hak-İş), founded in 1976 by the Islamist movement from which the main founders of the Justice and development party (AKP), in power since 2002, came. The article answers the question “To what extent the Hak-İş created/creates a new kind of trade unionism in Turkey?” First, we will study the place of trade unionism in Islam and the history of Hak-İş in order to understand what “class” means and how are the labour-capital conflicts perceived in Islam and how could it be possible to create a trade union in a belief where the notion of religious community prevails. The trajectories and profiles of union leaders and affiliate workers at Hak-İş are analyzed



through biographical accounts. The second part is devoted to the analysis of the union strategies and practices of the Hak-İş to regulate conflicts between the employers and the workers. We'll state that the Hak-İş confederation has a broader strategy that includes not only the "production space which means the factory and the company level" but also the "reproductive space which means home, family, private space, education, social services, politics, socialization circles". Working at the workplace becomes less and less important than working outside the workplace in order to recruit more members and find a solution to their members. This research is based on a doctoral and postdoctoral survey carried out between December 2011 and October 2019 and which is based on observations in unions, coupled with 50 semi-structured interviews with unionized workers and union officials in Hak-İş.

Labour Mobility and Social Rights in an already Mobile Sector: Posting in Road Transport and the European Transport Workers' Federation

Isil Erdinc (Université libre de Bruxelles)

This paper analyzes the strategies of European Transport Workers' Federation and its relations to the European Trade Union Confederation, the European parliament, the European Commission and the trade unions of transport sector on national levels in France, Germany and Belgium. How does posting create a new working environment, a mobile workplace? How do new digital technologies (applications to control via GPS the location of the truck driver, online systems to register working hours etc.) propose to the employers' and work inspectors new possibilities to control and regulate posting in Europe?

Based on the postdoctoral fieldwork (interviews, legal regulations, statistics, observations) conducted during 2018-2019 in Belgium (Brussels), France (Paris) and Germany (Munich), this presentation proposes a general view to the issue of posting of workers in the transport sector, mobile work by its nature.

European countries are facing with different problems related to mobile workers. The fragmentation of the status, profiles and experiences of mobile labour force has resulted with the necessity for trade union to adopt new strategies vis-à-vis workers' mobility. France, Germany and Belgium are the top countries that receive most cases of posting coming from Eastern Europe as well as the Netherlands. Although there are recent reforms of the European Commission when it comes to the rules and regulations related to posting, the problem of taxes, social rights, collective bargaining coverage, residence and work permits and the working and living conditions of the drivers (international and cross-European truck drivers and bus drivers working for companies like Flixbus or Blablabus) in the road transport sector remain unsolved. Social dumping becomes a crucial issue in the European Union member states. Thus, this paper aims to study the trade unions' strategies about the issue of posting and social rights in the road transport sector. How do the trade unions, more specifically the European Transport Workers' Federation in Brussels, implement strategies, campaigns and projects in order to assure the access of these mobile workers to social rights and the European welfare system with equal conditions.



‘Hazelnuts Govern Us’: Climate Crisis and Changes on the Hazelnut Production in Turkey

Emine Erdogan (Giresun University)

Drawing on participant observation on the hazelnut plants during the harvest season in 2021 and in-depth interviews with the producers and workers, this research explores how climate crisis causes the changes on the material conditions of work in the hazelnut production and hence the organisation of labour in Turkey.

The country is one of the largest producers and exporters of hazelnuts in the world. A small area on the north coast, known as the East Black Sea region, produces more than 60% of the world’s fresh hazelnut supply (TUIK, 2020). As one of the least industrialized regions of the country and with a high unemployment rate, hazelnut production by small farming families is an important source of income. In the last years, however, the region and, therefore the hazelnut production have been badly affected by the climate crisis as it causes sudden temperature changes, more rainy harvest seasons, changes in season periods and times, severe floods, and so on. The research argues that these do not only result the decrease in productivity which in turn deteriorates the working conditions but they also affect the way of doing the hazelnut work and by whom doing it. For instance, producers encounter difficulties in finding workers: seasonal migrant workers (mostly Kurds, Georgians, and Afghans) are getting more reluctant to work in the region because the harvest season gets more rainy and cool. Considering that they earn daily wages, it means that they have to stay in the region longer but they earning less money. Therefore, employing the local workers with higher wages becomes the only options for producers. The decrease in productivity and profit also causes producers to cultivate new plants on very sloppy lands. This makes working on the plant is too risky for falling down and getting injuries as well as its being too tiring as even standing on foot become a challenge.

By building upon new materialism and labour process theories and demonstrating that climate crisis has a tremendous impact on the labour force composition, the form of the hazelnut plantations, the working conditions (payment, working hours, health and safety etc.) and the organisation of labour as a whole, the research reveals the interconnections between the nature, the material, work and us as humans.

Routine-biased technical change can fail: Evidence from France

Marta Fana (Joint Research Center-EC, Seville), Luca Giangregorio (Unviarsity Pompeu Fabra)

The paper studies the determinants of wage differentials over time within jobs in France, testing simultaneously the contribution of tasks performed by workers and organisational methods at the firm level, labour market institutions and individual characteristics. Theoretically, we depart from the Routine Bias Technical Change hypothesis in that the production process is not a self-determined mixed of inputs interacting in a black box, but rather an organization characterised by social relations embedded in the hierarchical division of labour (Thompson & McHugh, 1995), mechanisms of command and control over the labour force (Dosi & Marengo, 2015; Edwards, 1982) which are historically and institutionally dependent (Dosi, 1995). According to this critical assessment, grounded on both the evolutionary approach (Dosi et al., 2001) and the Labour Process Theory (see Braverman, 1974; Edwards, 1982; Knights David & Hugh, 1990), the technical content of the



production process goes hand in hand with work organization made explicit in a set of procedures and standards, i.e., organizational routines (M. C. Becker, 2004; Clegg, 1981; Coriat & Dosi, 1998). Moreover, we refine the measure of routine as it appears in Fernandez-Macias and Bisello's (2021) framework by detailing the concept of routine between bureaucratic and technical control, strictly following Edwards (1982). In order to account for ICT deployment at the workplace, we also distinguish between digitally-enable machines and application-type ICT.

The empirical analysis exploits a unique database at the worker level, the French *Enquête Complémentaire Emploi: Conditions de travail*, between 2005 and 2016, which covers all covariates of interest including monthly wages. Given the richness of our database, an important contribution of our paper is its ability to consistently measure tasks changes within and between jobs over time. All in all, this is the first paper which studies wage inequality dynamically exploiting data at the level of workers, not occupations, which uses consistent time variant measures of tasks, contrary to most of the literature on the relationship between tasks and wages (among all, Autor & Handel, 2013; Biewen & Seckler, 2019; Fortin & Lemieux, 2016; van der Velde, 2020). Furthermore, our study is carried out within jobs where both occupations (at the three-digit levels) are combined with economic sectors, rather than just occupations, therefore capturing heterogeneity which may spur form the horizontal division of labour.

The econometric exercise relies on the contribution of Firpo, Fortin and Lemieux (2018; 2011) which allows, by means of a Recentered Influence Function (RIF), to estimate the effect of a set of covariates (tasks, individual and institutional characteristics) on monthly wages beyond the mean.

According to our findings, individual tasks and organisational methods play a marginal role in determining wages along the wage distribution and the use of ICT tools has a positive and monotonic impact on wages although this is not the case for any type of tool. On the contrary, labour market institutions, proxied by contractual arrangement and working time, together with experience within the firm are the principal determinants of individual wage. Overall evidence run against the main argument of the Routine Bias Technical Change hypothesis.

Working youth in traditional retail trade: management, control and resistances

Francisco Nicolás Favieri (Gabinete de Estudios e Investigación en Sociología (GEIS), Instituto de Investigaciones Socio-Económicas (IISE), Universidad Nacional de San Juan (UNSJ))

Flexible working conditions together with new emerging forms of control and management of work process have contributed to the creation of new forms of employment, being service , particularly, retail trade one of the most diversified in recent years. In San Juan, Argentina, a high percentage of young workers are employed in retail trade. Besides the difficulties to entering and keeping in the labour market, this population group have to deal with precarious jobs. The strategies and actions adopted by the workers to change these situations seem to be insufficient, especially when attributing a position of passivity, inactivity and submission to youth. Based on a case study, this article analyses the dynamics of work in the traditional retail trade, characterizing its ways of management and work control, the expressions of labour conflict and the resistance undertaken by young workers from Gran San Juan (Argentina), on the assumption that they are constantly struggling to improve their working conditions and that new forms of resistance are taking shape in their expressions. Among the findings,



it is highlighted that working youths deploy various strategies and actions of resistance, reconfiguring the expression of conflict at work, although they are unable to improve their employment conditions.

Temporary work agencies as corridors of mobility and manufacturers of workers' consent

Olena Fedyuk (University of Padua), Tibor Meszmann (Central European Labour Studies Institute)

In Central Eastern European countries more temp agencies became prominent, powerful and indispensable actors in providing labour to user companies in electronics and automotive sectors, a role that even fortified during the Covid-19 crisis. In explaining the success of temp sector and temp work in CEE, we go beyond a broader production/regulatory environment that provided a fertile ground to the rise of temp agencies. Understanding temp work as formal employment, we highlight and question not the coercive or control element in the employment relationship but the worker consent element, as a necessary condition for the rise of the sector. That is, while acknowledging also the literature that looks more into or highlights the control and coercive element behind labour sourcing we still argue that for the success of the sector, workers' consent was also necessary. We concentrate on disentangling the exceptional success and function of temp agency work from the point of view of temporary agency workers, especially coming from Serbia and Ukraine, who were employed via temp agencies in Hungarian electronics and automotive user companies. To understand workers' consent in this employment regime, we turn to labour process theory. Our starting point is that agency work became a corridor of mobility for these very workers, operating with the promise of legal employment and high wages for those who are willing to sacrifice and "work hard." As such temp agencies became powerful actors that shape specific forms of gendered working subjectivities, and facilitate particular forms of social reproduction with short term benefits and long term vulnerabilities. Our analysis is based on 5 years of field research, interviews, field notes and discussions with temp agency workers in six newly industrialised regions in Hungary, dominated by large multinational user companies. Our paper argues that apart from providing mobility and complex feelings, and utilizing a 'dual reference' for workers' assessment of their position, temp agencies also provide attractive short term benefits to contracted workers, which is the central element of worker consent.

A Planet on Fire Fell into the Sea: Working-Class Environmentalism and Industrial Decline in Porto Marghera, Venice

Lorenzo Feltrin (University of Birmingham)

On 15 March 2019, thousands of students flooded the narrow streets of Venice – a symbol of global warming due to its vulnerability to rising sea levels – to join the first Global Climate Strike, demanding 'System change, not climate change' and a transition out of fossil fuels. The Climate Strike movement underlined the intrinsic connection between 'environmental' and 'social' justice, pushing debates on just transition higher in the political agenda. The concept of just transition refers to the transformation or closure of polluting industries coupled with the protection of their workers'



livelihoods. As such, it is a way out of the ‘jobs versus environment dilemma’, i.e., the necessity of sacrificing health and environmental standards to protect employment. In Venice, such issues had been fought over for decades, most notably in the context of working-class environmentalist struggles around Porto Marghera’s industries, located in the less famed mainland side of the council area.

This article explores the challenges faced by working-class environmentalism through the case study of the industrial decline of one among the most important petrochemical complexes in Europe. It argues that, in analysing experiences of working-class environmentalism, it is useful to distinguish between workplace-centred and community-centred struggles. The convergence between mobilisations on the two terrains is a critical step in the construction of alternatives to the jobs versus environment dilemma. The article thus contributes to environmental labour studies – which have traditionally focused on workplace-centred disputes – with an analysis of the interplay between workplace-centred and community-centred working-class environmentalist struggles.

The first section develops a theoretical perspective – building on the existing literature – to analyse community-centred struggles within the framework of working-class environmentalism. The second section introduces the two working-class environmentalist perspectives, one workplace-centred and the other community-centred, that emerged to address Porto Marghera’s environmental degradation. The following section explains how the court case against managers of the companies Montedison and Ente Nazionale Idrocarburi (ENI), which began in 1997 to judge on industry-induced health and environmental damage, highlighted the divergences between the two camps. The final section tells how the community-centred and workplace-centred camps clashed in the 2000s over Porto Marghera’s ‘chlorine cycle’, with the former demanding a just transition away from chlorine-based production and the latter campaigning for a just transition within it.

This research is based on original fieldwork in Porto Marghera, including twenty semi-structured interviews with fenceline community activists, industrial workers, and experts as well as extensive research in Marghera Municipal Library’s Augusto Finzi Workers’ Archive and Luciano Mazzolin’s AmbienteVenezia archive. This is the first academic article using these archives for the period under examination.

Old inequalities in new jobs: class and gender differences in platform work in Argentina

Mariana Fernandez Massi, Julieta Longo (Idihcs-Conicet)

One of the debates in the literature on digitalization is about whether platforms mitigate certain inequalities in the labor market. Some studies indicate that although forms of direct discrimination based on gender, race, or class are attenuated, digital platforms also enhance other mechanisms related to inequalities in the access and use of these technologies. The main goal of this study is to analyze the impact of platform work on inequality in labour markets characterized by strong heterogeneities, as is the case in Argentina. To do so we considered two kinds of platforms: on-demand digital platforms, where tasks are locally performed; and online crowdwork platform, where tasks can be done from any part of the world.

Delivery platforms in Argentina have grown spectacularly during the last few years, particularly since the arrival of new platforms in 2018. Furthermore, this period features a remarkable deterioration of the labour market: first, due to the 2018-2019 economic recession and then, because of the covid-19 pandemic. In this context, the number of individuals doing platform-mediated work has increased



dramatically. Platform-mediated work means a prompt way of earning some money within a general context of reduced labour demand. In a scenario of increased unemployment, this possibility—even figuratively speaking— means an extremely fast and efficient way of escaping unemployment and earning an income. In the case of online work, the convenience of using these platforms is determined by the exchange currency rate and the possibility of being paid in American dollars in a context of depreciation of the Argentine peso and tightening of exchange controls.

Following the results of qualitative research based on interviews and social media—posts in social networks, tutorials, podcasts, blog entries—, this paper draws on a comparative study case among workers performing different kind of tasks using platforms. On the one hand, we consider delivery couriers; and on the other, graphic designers. The research is carried out in Buenos Aires (Argentina) in 2020-2021. The guiding question of this research is how digital work processes have changed the main drivers of gender and class segregation.

The analysis reveals that the reproduction of inequalities persists in platform work through different mechanisms. On one hand, speaking and writing in English, a critical class indicator in Argentina, become a barrier to entry to online work. Combined with this, having family safety nets allows middle/upper-class youth to dispense with the stability and social coverage of formal employment and to lead a nomadic lifestyle, for which online platforms are a good alternative to work. Thus, we observe class segregation in terms of the type of platform that can be accessed or the type of proposal that can be taken. On the other hand, differences on time availability, due to the unequal burden of care tasks, restrict the number of hours and time slots in which women with children at home can work on platforms, and therefore, also restrict their access to better paid tasks.

The Pandemic Space of Italian University Students. What Job Prospects?

Stefania Ferraro (UNISOB)

Starting from a theoretical analysis of the space government (both public and private) during the pandemic, this paper examines the first results of a comparative research on the opinions of Italian university students relating to the “coronavirus emergency”, particularly analyzing their disorientation relating to job prospects and to economic situation of their family following the pandemic.

Looking at the structural difficulties that affect young Italians with regard to employability and future prospects, the aim of this paper is to deconstruct the stereotypes that characterize the narration of youth behavior in Italy during the pandemic, through the analysis of some data processed during the aforementioned research, entitled SaNaMi. Opinions and behaviors of students at the time of the coronavirus.

This research started during the period when the course of the epidemic led political authorities to adopt provisions limiting certain rights, with the so-called lockdown phase. A survey was implemented for this purpose and it aimed at four students from two universities in Lombardy (Milano Bicocca and the Milan Polytechnic) and two in Campania (Napoli Suor Orsola Benincasa and Salerno). This questionnaire was handed out during the lockdown period and partial re-opening of activities. The sample is composed by about thousand subjects.

These surveys mainly explore the following aspects: the economic conditions of the relative families before, during and after the pandemic; objective living conditions during isolation and “resources”



available to deal with it (surface area and quality of the home, technological devices owned etc.); subjective perception of isolation and, in general, the health, economic, social and political consequences of the pandemic; resulting future expectations; from a behavioural point of view, levels of personal acceptance and observance of the restrictions issued by the authorities; use and set-up of personal time, with particular reference to remote learning related activities; degree of involvement in social and political activities (volunteering activities, taking part in online forums, petitions, flash-mob); degree of trust in political institutions (respectively at a national, regional and local level) and specific State structures (health staff, law enforcers); general political direction of travel as regards variables such as the centralisation/decentralisation of decisional processes etc.; specific vote related direction of travel; quantitative and qualitative relevance of individual information tools (various radio and television stations, press bodies and individual social channels) in the opinion forming process.

Data on student behaviours as regards a) relationships with other family members, friends and colleagues, b) aspects of daily life, but also the epidemic and related decisions taken by the authorities and c) remote learning activities was collected using the time balance method. Each student was asked to complete a spreadsheet listing activities carried out in a day during lockdown and partial re-opening including timings. This made it possible to assess how much time students actually spent studying, working, playing and in recreational activities during these various periods.

Flexibilisation policies and labour market structures in France

Lucile Franchet (SOAS)

This work is part of my doctoral research on labour market flexibilisation policies in France. This project breaks from the mainstream literature by proposing a class relational perspective on flexibilisation policies. As such, I define labour market flexibilisation as part of the transformation in social relations of production that have allowed the rate of exploitation to increase in many countries. The French case is analysed to highlight peculiar forms that these policies took in France, in particular the expansion of collective bargaining coupled to a decrease in union density. This work also proposes a conceptualisation of power and class as its aims at analysing power redistribution between capital and labour. This will be done firstly through a socio-historical analysis and secondly through a case study analysis. The case study is about the 2016 French Labour laws, as this allows for flexibilisation policies to be analysed from different angles. On one hand the labour side of the struggle, by looking at the Nuit Debout movement. And on the other hand, the capital side of the struggle, looking at the state as an agent of capital and the role of employers' organisations, large exporting companies, and the European Union in advocating for this law.



Working time norms and the Covid pandemic: Organisational trials of the shorter working week

David Frayne, Brendan Burchell (University of Cambridge)

Commentators widely suggest that the Covid pandemic has prompted a disruption to worker expectations and organisational norms, particularly in the area of working time. A number of think-tanks and publications have made the case for a shorter working week, achieved through a combination of firm-led innovations, collective bargaining, and state-led working time reductions in the public sector. In the UK, governments in Wales and Scotland have also been debating the prospect of national shorter working weeks, and the Trades Union Congress have backed demands for a four-day working week, without a loss in pay.

Against this backdrop of interest in the shorter working week, this paper reports preliminary findings from a study-in-progress, investigating businesses and third-sector organisations that moved to a shorter working week during the Covid pandemic. Drawing on open-ended qualitative interviews, the study explores the motivations, power dynamics and practical challenges involved, with a particular interest in why some organisations maintained the shorter working week as a permanent feature, where others abandoned it.

First automate, then delocalize: work process and Industry 4.0 in GKN Driveline

Francesca Gabbriellini (Scuola Superiore Sant'Anna, Italy)

The contribution investigates the relationship between the introduction of Industry 4.0, defined as automation and digitalization artefacts, and the organisation of the work process in a very peculiar automotive factory facing the threat of plant closure: the GKN Driveline's firm in Campi Bisenzio, near Florence.

GKN Driveline is a multinational company leader in axle-shaft production for the automotive sector. It provides products and services to car manufacturers with its systems and transmission solutions for the automotive industry. In addition to the ex-Fiat Chrysler Automobiles group, the company is also a provider for Maserati and Ferrari, that is quite niche and luxury car producers. In 2018 the private equity fund Melrose Industries acquired the company and in July 2021 the property abruptly communicated the decision to close and delocalize the production. Together with this acquisition, the period between 2016-2020 was interested by a so-called Piano Quinquennale meant to increase productivity and volumes, by introducing highly automated production lines and assembly areas. This resulted into a multiplicity of artefacts, like robots and cobots (collaborative robots), new Additive Manufacturing Process enabled by a 3D printer, dedicated to the production of production tools, and also a new quality control system labelled "Vision". The digitalised control system is able, by means of an algorithmic detection process and five high definition cameras (a sort of "body scanner"), to analyze each produced piece before shipment, automatizing the final quality check phase.

Given this context, the scope of the paper is to examine the effects of technological innovations related to Industry 4.0 on the production process and the changes that have occurred in the organisation of work, including the ensuing transformations of working conditions at the factory level. Areas of investigations primarily entail the space of workers decision-making authority and control over the production process resulting from Industry 4.0 adoption, with particular attention to the higher tendency of occurrence of production errors recorded since the adoption of the Vision software system. Considering the case of a factory under the current threat of plant closure, therefore in a context of delocalization, accelerated by the financial nature of the property allows to better understand the relationship between automation, digitalization and delocalization, the latter being the major challenges faced by automotive firms.

The research design started with plant visits, a series of focus groups among researchers, workers and union delegates (most FIOM members). At the current stage we are reconstructing firm layout, workflow, workers' tasks and the dominant organisational culture, together with workers identity. We intend in a second phase to carry out semi-structured interviews investigating tasks and work processes, human-machine relationship, quality of formal and informal training related to the technological adoption, workflow changes in terms of timing and quality control, unions and other forms of representative organisation, contractual framework and firm-level agreements. We expect our results to be subject of generalization beyond the single GKN case and to be informative of the state of the automotive sector in Western countries at large.

Using the unions. Healthcare struggles in Italy and Spain between trade unionism and self-organization

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Studies of the relationships between social movements and trade unions often focus on how allying with social movements contributes to the revitalisation of trade unions (Tattersall 2005). In labour revitalization studies, the field of investigation in which scholars have developed heuristic concepts such as social movement unionism (Turner and Hurd 2001) to analyse these relationships, there is a widespread tendency to assume that unions are the primary organ through which labour can be revitalized (Levesque and Murray 2010). In contrast, other scholars have emphasised how labour can engage in collective action through groups of self-organized workers completely independently of trade unions (Atzeni 2010; Granberg 2014).

We adopt a third perspective, exploring the crucial area between trade unionism and social movements or workers' self-organisation. We do so by looking at mobilisations occurring in the national healthcare services of two countries - Spain and Italy - during the pandemic. Mobilisations analyzed are related to either working conditions and organized by the healthcare personnel or to access to care and organized by users. We draw on observations of mobilisations (both in their daily organizing and in their contentious actions), on unstructured interviews with activists and trade unionists as well as on the analysis of documents produced by the mobilizations and their social media presence.

We show that, while none of the mobilisations analyzed was primarily organized by unions, nonetheless unions were always involved in some capacity. More specifically, we argue that both workers' and users' groups organizing the mobilisations were able to pragmatically use the tools available to unions (for example legal protection) and their expertise while pursuing an agenda born outside of unions as well as building a community external to them.

We contribute first to the literature on the evolving forms of collective action of professionals caught between contradicting trends of professionalization and proletarianization (Szabó, 2020). Second, we contribute to the literature on forms of organizing occurring "around the union form" (Atzeni, 2021, p. 2). Finally, we bring insights about struggles occurring in fields of partially socialized social reproduction such as healthcare, in which the working class can organize both as users and as workers.



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What is 'neo-craft' work, and why it matters?

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Existing research has highlighted a return into fashion of craft and artisanal work across the turn of the century, described as a “third wave of craft” (Jakob, 2012: 130). Inspired by the work of Richard Sennett (2008), this strand of studies largely understood craft and artisanal work as a semi- or non-market form of creative work that represents the epitome of ‘good work’ and a countercultural practice set to ‘pragmatically resist’ capital accumulation (Luckman 2015). However, the revival of craft and artisanal work has exuded the boundaries of the creative industries and become relevant in a variety of productive sectors of the market economy, particularly (albeit not exclusively) the food and hospitality industries. These have been labelled as ‘neo-craft’ industries (Land, 2018; Bell et al., 2018); epitomised by craft brewing (Fox Miller 2019; Wallace, 2019); these consist of small-scale producers that combine “a traditional craft imaginary, concerned with the skilful production of high-quality products, with innovation in both product and process” (Land, 2018: np).

Of particular interest in this context are the cultures and practices of work. 'Neo-craft' industries are connoted by an imaginary of ‘coolness’ which promises “a less alienated form of work” (Land, 2018: np), which carries the promise of ‘good work’ that is distinctive of craft work but embedded in a new and complex set of discourses and practices (Bell et al., 2018). In particular, neo-craft occupations embed an original conception of social status; akin to creative work in the early 2000s, neo-craft work is connoted by a notion of ‘passion’ which makes it an appealing career prospect particularly for young workers of a middle-class background who have found themselves excluded from, or have explicitly rejected, traditional pathways to work (Ocejo, 2017).

This paper provides a theoretical contextualization of the rise of ‘neo-craft’ work in 21st century capitalism. Adopting a labour process approach, and using ethnographic data, I argue that neo-craft work with its promise of meaningfulness and ‘coolness’ constitutes an appealing option for highly-skilled knowledge workers who have been marginalized by the mainstream knowledge economy, and



thus pursue a quest for social status by putting at value their skills in a context of material ‘hand’ work.

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Constructing a transnational care bricolage: childcare arrangements of Chinese migrant families in Italy

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Existing literature on the nexus of transnational family and childcare arrangements has been mainly focusing on the migrant parents' care-work reconciliation in the host society or care solutions that rely on caregivers in the sending society and the related preoccupations about the quality of the care alternative to the parental one. Both of the strategies underwrite a tough negotiation process that leads seemingly inevitable compromises. The former strategy is usually portrayed as a concession to migrant parents' care heavily constrained by the demanding and precarious work regime in the host country. The latter is more often analysed as a combination between parental geographical separation and relatively more stable and affordable care resources offered by other caregivers in the sending country. These two literature trends have not paid appropriate attention either to some migrant families that circulate caregiver parents or care-receiver children back and forth between the sending and receiving country or to some affluent migrant families that are capable of affording stable parental care in the host country but still choose to send their children back. Based on the in-depth interviews with 46 Chinese migrant families in Italy and multi-sited ethnographic observation in China and Italy, this work does not interpret migrant families' care arrangements simply as a difficult reconciliation between appropriate childcare and parental geographical proximity. Instead, it aims to highlight the agency of transnational Chinese migrants in the care-work negotiation process by incorporating a vast variety of care arrangements of Chinese migrants in Italy under one theoretical perspective: transnational mixed embeddedness. Because in most cases, the care-work negotiation process of Chinese migrant families involves frequent reconsideration and consequent adjustments according to the care demands of the children at different ages, the care resources and state-promoted care



infrastructures in China, the migration regime in Italy, and migrant families' transnational social networks. The author argues that by constantly valuing and mobilising all accessible care resources embedded in the social, economic and institutional context of the localities concatenated by their mobility, Chinese migrant families construct a transnational care bricolage that is resilient to the changing care supply-demand status influenced by the age of the children and the dynamic availability of care resources in the sending and receiving society.

Feeling desired, privileged and "at home": commodification of physical appearance and emotions in the hospitality industry

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How is a service produced? What happens when we consume a service? In this presentation I will explain how hospitality workers make use of their own aesthetic and emotional qualities to attract and maintain customers. I apply an ethnographic approach in order to get to know the waiter and waitress' perspective with work experience in different types of premises (bars, pubs, cafes, restaurants, discos, fast food). I focus on the employee-client's interactions and how employees interpret them. In this way, I use the in-depth interview and participant observation as the main data production techniques.

I rely on concepts such as emotional labour, understood as the worker's ability to manage their own emotions as well as those of the client; and aesthetic labour, understood as the use of the employee's physical appearance to produce benefit for the company.

The main result of this work is the identification and description of some of the strategies that waiters and waitresses use to create a bond between customers and premises. To develop these strategies, workers put into play their own physical appearance and their abilities to handle emotions. At the same time, they use these strategies to affect the emotions of the clients and make them feel, depending on who they are and the type of premises, desired, privileged or "at home".

Following, I will explain what the strategies are and how they are developed based on the feeling that workers want to arouse on clients. In the first case, to make the client feel desired, the employee-client interaction focuses on producing a sensation of flirtation. This sensation is mediated by the continuous consumption of a product by the client. In the second case, in order to make the clients feel privileged, workers show them that they are receiving special treatment by, for example, recognizing their tastes, lowering the price of certain products or gifting them with little presents such as shots. Finally, to make the client feel "at home", both the staff and clients have to be regulars in the place. In this kind of premises, strategies are aimed to establish close bonds between employees and customers. It is about producing a shared experience between the actors that lasts over time and becomes part of their day-to-day life.

This research is inserted in and aims to expand the field of knowledge that analyses the emergence and development of forms of work that involve the selection, commodification and consumption of the bodily and personal qualities of workers.



Women and Work in Puerto Rico: Intersections Between Productive Activities and the Reproduction of Labor Force

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In this paper we present a research on: Women and Work in Puerto Rico: Intersections between Productive Activities and the Reproduction of Labor Force. The main purpose of this paper is to expose a broad analysis on work and women in Puerto Rico that includes productive labor and the reproduction of labor force. Also, to present how global and local factors affect women in Puerto Rico in a differentiated way, not only in respect to men, but also in their diversity. In this documentary research, we analyzed the content of recent academic publications on work and women in Puerto Rico and other regions; and statistical reports on labor published in Puerto Rico and United States in 2019 and 2020, the year the COVID-19 pandemic initiated. We specifically analyzed: 1) labor precariousness including unemployment and underemployment indicators, 2) wages gap between women and men, 3) levels of poverty by age, ethnicity and head of households, 4) occupations by gender, 5) formal education requirements for women being incorporated in the labor force, among others.

Global factors include the structural crisis of the capitalist system from 1968/1973 to the present and globalization. At the local level, we examined the socio-economic and fiscal crisis in the last two decades, the Fiscal Emergency policies implemented in 2009 and 2014, the Labor Reform approved in 2017 and the Fiscal Oversight Board policies. The latter was imposed since 2016 in Puerto Rico by the United States government. We evaluate how these policies have had an impact on labor precariousness with negative implications on women, within age, households activities and ethnicity limits. We framed the above analysis from the perspectives of the global systemic crisis of capitalism, decolonial and gender theories.

The findings suggest that young black women who are head of households experience the highest levels of poverty. A wage gap between working men and women in Puerto Rico is punctuated; and occupational differences based on traditional gender. Also, more formal education is required when recruiting women, that leads to gender discrimination; barriers for women who want to occupy higher hierarchy positions are still evident; underemployment manifests in quantitative and qualitative indicators; as well as in the double and triple working days women engage in, as part of the productive activities and the reproduction of labor force of this population.

Among the contributions of this paper are: 1) There are few recent studies in Puerto Rico that address women's productive activities and the reproduction of labor force. 2) This interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary research creatively articulates various theoretical and methodological approaches to understand how the intersections of gender, heading households, ethnicity and age mediate the labor precariousness and vulnerability of women. 3) The analysis of productive activities and the reproduction of labor force highlights the inequality and discrimination that women face in Puerto Rico in the XXI century, within their social diversities. 4) The approach used in this research could be applied to other regions in the Global South.



Status of Gig Workers in India

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The adoption of e-commerce combined with the shrinkage in formal jobs and the increased demand for online retail business particularly during the Covid-19 pandemic from 2020 has paved the way for Gig-economy. The Economic Survey of India 2020-21 notes that India has become one of the largest markets for “flexi staffing” in the world. Various organisations such as Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry of India (ASSOCHAM), Boston Consulting Group (BCG) and Michael & Susan Dell Foundation observe that the covid-19 pandemic has accelerated the growth of Gig-employment and the GIG economy may employ over 130 million workers in India by 2024.

While Gig workers experience the advantage of flexibility that helps them in feeling independent, having access to opportunity and work-life balance, they also suffer from Lack of job and social securities, unfavourable working conditions, and unstable financial benefits. Until 2020 technology and BPO sector used to employ the largest number of Gig workers in India. But it is expected that the services, followed by FMCG –Pharma and manufacturing, will lead in employing the Gig workers by 2024.

Given this context, this paper makes an attempt to: a) analyse the status of employment of Gig-workers critically with emphasis on their wages, occupational safety and working conditions particularly in the transport sector and the FMCG sector; b) discuss how the employees perceive the Gig employment in the cities. Important is to highlight that drivers of OLA/UBER have faced unprecedented challenges and loss of jobs/income whereas, the delivery workers of companies like Amazon, Flipkart, Zomato and Swiggy have experienced growth in income owing to the lockdown and containment measures of Covid-19 contagion. Therefore, this paper brings the comparisons and contrasts of employees’ perceptions within the service sector of Gig-economy. Finally, c) it argues that despite having provision of flexible employment and potential to garner the skill and talent of India’s labour force, the existing challenges of informal sector is further intensified and in the process of Gig employment, the responsibility of employer is slowly but systematically diluted through the labour welfare policies adopted by Government of India in the recent times. In this light, the recent codes on social security in India are critically discussed in this paper.

Given the paucity of available data, the paper depends on information from various secondary sources with government and non-government agencies such as Economic Survey 2020-21, Labour Department of States/Ministry, ASSOCHAM and other industrial association. In addition, it also uses information collected through in-depth interviews of drivers of OLA, UBER and delivery persons of Amazon, Swiggy, Zomato and Bigbasket from two cities – Kolkata and Ahmedabad – in order to develop cases of employment and working conditions as well as workers’ perceptions on various aspects of employment. While the need for formalisation and social securities for the Gig-workers is gaining recognition, it is important to observe that the labour rights are slowly fading away in absence of any identifiable employer.



The Invisible Network: organising labour in unregulated spaces

Olga Gheorghiev (Charles University, University of Jyväskylä)

This paper suggests an imaginary of economic migration to the Czech Republic by taking the point of view of economic migrants as fundamental. The sovereign politics of migration control in the Czech Republic rely largely on a narrative of economisation, which views labour migrants as mobile individuals that seek only temporary settlement conditioned by the workforce demand on the Czech labour market. Mobility is thus governed based on principles of productivity and efficiency from employers' perspective, which subsequently inform national regulation principles. The same principles of efficiency, however, encourage a deregulation of recruitment procedures, allowing for the large masses of working bodies to auto-organise within informal spaces, leading to the proliferation of a dual labour market, precarity and exploitation.

Situations of crisis such as the COVID-19 pandemic create unprecedented situations for these unregulated spaces, which, placed outside the effect of national management, support and relief schemes, must develop their own contingency plans that reflect their objectives, experiences and roles they play in the informal regime of migration. In this context, it is important to adapt an analytical approach that allows for an understanding of ungoverned or ungovernable mobile subjects from the perspective of their own mode of existence. Naturally, this involves departing from approached grounded in methodological nationalism and taking instead the perspective of working mobile bodies as fundamental. In this sense, this paper is inspired in its analytical approach towards subjective experiences of migrant workers by what became known as the autonomy of migration, as presented in what follows.

In order to reconstruct an ontology of moving people, both in mundane situations and as it unravels in situations of crisis, this paper relies on twenty in-depth biographical interviews with economic migrants in the Czech Republic and adopts an analytical approach inspired by the autonomy of migration in order to explore understandings of migration that go beyond the knowledge typically grounded in methodological nationalism. Taking the perspective of migrants as fundamental implies the study of experiences that transcend national borders and nationally categorised barriers and opportunities. Autonomy of migration shifts the perspective from sovereign control to the primacy of migrants' mobility, rather than the opposite. Of course, this is not to say that mobility is unaffected by control. In fact, even the way in which mobility experiences crises is affected by how these crises are defined and managed by institutional control. The assumption here, however, is that the influence is mutual and that in this sense mobility represents a constituent force for social life.

Programmed Obsolescence, or Fungibility by Design? Unpacking Design Objectives in the Platform Conjuncture: Evidence from Connected Worker Platforms

Abigail Gilbert (Institute for the Future of Work, London School of Economics)

As platform businesses gain 'superstar' economic status with tearaway returns to capital over labour, scholars from varied academic disciplines have argued that we are entering a 'platform conjuncture' – a moment in history in which the platform, as a cultural object, works in and through society to make material specific representations of value.



This paper analyses a new genre of ‘AI as a service’: Connected Worker Platforms, drawing on a novel empirical analysis of 30 products, interviews with nine CEOs, one investor, and three workplace case studies examining their implementation in practice through COVID-19. It demonstrates that such tools are being downloaded from the app store, importing new business models into firms across industries in which frontline workers labour on systems and machines. These tools provide a form of algorithmic management, yet as is openly shared by the developers of these systems, the productivity offer of adopting the tool is not, in the main, the replacement of managerial labour, but rather the strategic devaluation – and enhanced fungibility – of frontline workers.

This paper analyses how Connected Worker Platforms seek to make labour fungible, through documenting work methods: indirectly via surveillance, and directly through workers inputting notes and photographs. This information is codified to provide ‘GPS’ style instructions, which combined with predictive task allocation and partnerships with ‘liquid’ workforce providers could enable transition to an inexperienced, lower paid, ‘gig’ based workforce.

The brazen communication of these objectives is analysed as, in part, an outcome of common-sense readings of ‘technology without politics’ in neoclassical theories of disruption. This paper argues that such readings are central to the regulation of value in the platform conjuncture.

The paper also reflects on how the platform conjuncture is shaped by current paradoxes in the development of technology, arguing that while connected worker platforms seek to directly overcome Polanyi’s Paradox, through their strategic devaluation of labour, Moravec’s Paradox could become further exacerbated. This cycle, supported by wider institutional forces, could come to ‘fix’ fungibility by design in the ‘platform conjuncture’.

Producer Democracy or New Managerial Class Interests of Tech Workers? Strategic Projects of Technical Design as Class Movements of IT-Professionals

Felix Gnisa (Friedrich-Schiller-Universität Jena)

In recent years, labor conflicts emerged in Big-Tech-companies, with IT-professionals developing new forms of interest politics. Walk-Outs at Google or Amazon and the foundation of Alphabet Workers Union were driven by IT-professionals claiming the overcoming of domination by technology such as the manipulation of users or algorithmic discrimination. These developments are challenging insights of Labor-Process- and Class-Theory, which characterized technicians as aligned with managerial interests of control over workers. In contrasts, they are echoing a class-theory, which saw in them a New Working Class (Serge Mallet), who, by claiming power in corporate decision-making, used professionalism as a source for producer-democracy.

The contribution explores, to what extend on the course of digitization a new form of technical professionalism is emerging, which is refreshing this idea of producer-democracy, neglecting managerial interests on technology and building class alliances with those exploited by technology. It is based on 20 biographical interviews with IT-professionals dealing with the technology-bundle of Platform-, Internet-of-Things- and Machine-Learning-Systems and compares those developing user-related-technologies in Big-Tech with those developing worker-related-technologies in industrial workplaces. The data is interpreted by Documentary Method to reconstruct tacit professional self-images and orientations towards technological design.



By means of narrative data about the design of technology, firstly the functional class position, thus, the function of IT-professionals in a hierarchical division of labor is analyzed. For that, class-theories of the New Middle Classes are related to the diagnose of “Distributive-Forces” (Sabine Pfeiffer), which understands the development of market-organizing technologies as the core of digitization and a major shift for the capitalist labor process. The contribution assumes, that while the relation between technicians and those exploited by technology has changed, because technology in Big-Tech don’t subordinates servile workers, but regulates stubborn users, their basic function in the division of labor is still one of a professional managerial class.

Second, by biographical narrative data the constitution of professional class consciousness is explored, which is in line with Serge Mallet understood as a strategic ambition to influence technological design under autonomous professional criteria. For that, the research refers to power approaches of a sociology of profession (e.g., Eliot Freidson), which are analyzing the constitution of those ambitions by differing market, corporate bureaucracy and professional organization as institutional contexts influencing the strategic capacities of professionals. It is inferred, that while IT-professionals mainly working in professional organizations such as industry related research centers and in industrial corporations make the most consistent professional claims on the course of technical progress, they are highly influenced by managerial class interests. In contrast, IT-professionals who mainly sold their services in market environments have a mere instrumental relation to their profession and don’t follow consistent projects to influence technological progress. But since their distance to the centers of professionalism, they develop a non-technical understanding of their work and critical counter-ambitions towards their functional class position. The contribution concludes, that the new political movements of technicians in Big-Tech is rising – ironically related to the thesis of Serge Mallet – at these edges of technical professionalism.

Effect of Deagrarianization at the household level on the scale and nature of Female WorkForce Participation in rural India

Sapna Goel (South Asian University, New Delhi)

Female labour force participation (FLFP) rate in India has continued to fall from 2004-05 to all-time low levels of 18% (rural India) in 2017-18¹ despite robust economic growth performance during the same period. A significant percentage of women are engaged in agriculture in India, mostly working in small family farms along with male members. However, in recent years, we observe deagrarianization at the household level in terms of a significant decrease in the percentage of households that earn their primary income from agriculture as well as the withdrawal of women from agriculture. Given the importance of family farms for women and the argument that women’s workforce participation is a residual decision that occurs in relation to the labour allocation of the rest of the household, it becomes important to examine the effect of deagrarianization at the household level on female workforce participation outcomes. This study contributes to the growing literature on understanding the dynamics of female workforce participation by examining the effect of structural transformation and consequent household level movement out of agriculture on the scale and nature of female workforce participation. In this paper, we examine the Indian economy using the two rounds of the India Human Development Survey (IHDS) data set, the only available pan-India panel data set over the high growth period between 2005 and 2011-12 to first map the change in female employment



as the households undergo deagrarianization, focusing on alternative trajectories of women either moving out of the workforce or transitioning to non-agrarian occupations. Second, we use a probit regression framework to analyse the extent to which various household and individual level characteristics including caste, religion, the level of education and size of landholding determine the different outcomes for women in face of deagrarianization at the household level.

We find that a substantial proportion of women have transitioned to non-agrarian occupations in the face of deagrarianization at the household level. We also see a regeneration of dependence of women on the agriculture sector as a significant proportion of women transition back to the agriculture sector as their main activity². Further, we find that as the household undergoes deagrarianization, it negatively affects the likelihood of a woman staying in the workforce and factors including age, caste, education and religion are significant determinants of the likelihood of women staying in the workforce vs moving out of the workforce.

1. As per Periodic labour force survey 2017-18, estimated according to Usual status (Principal activity status + subsidiary activity status)
2. Main activity is the activity in which an individual spends majority of their time.

Impacts of labor reform, free trade and covid in the automotive industry in Mexico

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The labor model that prevailed for several decades in Mexico, where the worker was not a citizen within their union and whose leaders were allied with employers and the political class based on their own interests, was framed by legislation and an environment institutional that, in fact, placed the worker in a defenseless situation. Currently, the world of work in Mexico faces a new challenge derived from institutional change that aims to redistribute power towards workers, which entails a transformation of relations between the State, unions and workers.

The Labor Reform implemented in 2019, the entry into force of the Mexico, United States and Canada Agreement (T-MEC) and the COVID-19 pandemic tend to change the rules in the automotive environment, leaving the big question if a new space to achieve a better and more democratic representation, creating favorable institutional environments for workers. These changes require labor representations to adapt their practices to democratic parameters, so these adaptation processes will depend on how they are at the starting point. These are steps that should move the new Mexican labor model away from deep-rooted and widespread state corporatism and union simulation and that mean new bargaining opportunities for workers.

One of the most relevant events since the implementation of the labor reform in Mexico was carried out by the workers of the General Motors company located in Silao Guanajuato, where after a series of grievances and violations of labor rights, the workers organized to vote against the collective bargaining agreement that the union belonging to the CTM had agreed with the management without consulting the workers. Once this process concluded, the workers formed a new Union to dispute the ownership of the collective contract.

The threats from the management, the intimidation of the union linked to the strongest corporatism in the region and the ineffectiveness of the labor authorities, have been a constant that the workers have had to face so that their union can claim ownership of the collective bargaining in The GM-



Silao plant, along with the technical stoppages derived from the lack of microchips, have generated great uncertainty among workers, at the same time that the threats of dismissal are becoming more visible.

Hierarchy in Project-based Organizations: a Critical Approach

Sara Gonçalves (Advance/CSG, ISEG Lisbon School of Economics & Management, Universidade de Lisboa)

New organizational forms are spreading. Some have a pre-established temporary nature. Project-based organizations, for example, are collectives of inter-dependent individuals and/or organizations pursuing ex-ante agreed upon activities and goals, within a predetermined time frame. These organizations are expected to have different organization features when compared with “traditional” organizations.

How project-based organizations with the sole purpose of providing technological innovations to the market are organized? This is a general goal of a research currently underway. In this paper, I propose to focus on a particular organization feature: hierarchy.

On the one hand, the literatures on organization, in general, and on project-based organizations, in particular, suggest that this organizational form adopts a flat and networked structure as it fits better with 1) the sole purpose of conceiving and building up a particular technological innovation, 2) the characteristics of the labour carried out which involve mainly technical-scientific experts, and 3) the flexibility required to deliver an innovation in a short, pre-set period of time (e.g., Bakker et al., 2016; Sydow & Windeler, 2020).

On the other hand, according to critical management studies literature, hierarchy remains an enduring feature of organizations, even in the latest organization forms. Although reductions in the number of hierarchical levels can be found, hierarchy as an instrument of power and control within organizations prevails in “traditional” and “post-modern” organizations (e.g., Child, 2011; Diefenbach & Silince, 2011).

The proposed paper addresses the apparent paradox described through critical management studies perspective, particularly Labour Process Theory. Drawing on a 12-month ethnographic study involving 6 project-based organizations with technological innovation purposes, where data is collected through interviews, participant observation and documentary analysis, I shed light on the role of hierarchy in those organizations, its mechanisms, and the effects on labour processes and workers’ autonomy.

Despite being an enduring feature of all organization types, recent literature on hierarchy in the field of management is very narrow or virtually non-existent. More than contributing to reducing this gap, the proposed paper aims to critically address hierarchy as an under-challenged instrument of power and control by bringing to the spotlight how are hierarchies implemented in “post modern” organizations, its motives and its implications on labour and workers.



Labour share and class conflict - Why hasn't the labour share fallen in Australian manufacturing? A Kaleckian analysis

Richard Gough (Victoria University, Melbourne), Ruth Ballardie (University of Greenwich), Jamie Doughney (Victoria University, Melbourne)

This paper builds upon our previous work on monopoly capitalism and class conflict in the Australian mining and finance sectors which addressed the significant decline in labour share in these industries over the past 40 years. The paper considers these dynamics in relation to the Australia manufacturing sector which unlike the other two sectors did not demonstrate a fall in labour share from 1990-2020. We draw upon Kalecki's model of degree of monopoly, which argues that in oligopolistic industries companies are able to increase the profit share. He also argues that the profit share is also affected by the level of class conflict, in which unions can claim part of the increased profits due to the degree of monopoly. Applying Kalecki's model the labour share in Australian manufacturing industry the paper argues that a range of interacting institutional characteristics of the industry including its diversity must be considered with regard to the outcome of labour share.

The paper uses Australian Bureau of Statistics data on productivity growth, employment, shifts on occupation in manufacturing, the degree of monopoly, labour share as well as a union density and an analysis of collective bargaining agreement in manufacturing over the period 1990 to 2020 to understand the labour share in manufacturing. In Australian manufacturing from 1990-2020 there is no secular decline in labour share, but only oscillations which start with 65% in 1991, go down to 57% in 2003, up to 60% in 2018-10 and finally to 66% in 2019. These fluctuations reflect, in part, economic cycles over the period. Given the productivity growth over 1980-2010 in manufacturing it is apparent that Labour shared in the growth in labour productivity.

A key finding is that sub-sectors of manufacturing have a significant degree of monopoly and that while productivity grew 1980-2000 and union density was falling 1980-2020, up until the 2000 union density remained significant (40% in 1994 falling to 31% in 2000) and the major and quite militant unions retained sufficient power to share in productivity increases over this period. In 2018 25% of non-managerial employees were covered by union negotiated collective bargaining, with 50.1% on individual contracts, however the latter predominate in small manufacturing companies but with unions still present in the large manufacturing companies, (the top 100 of which have 36.5% of the manufacturing workforce and 77% of the revenue – 2020 ABS data).

The paper argues that Kalecki's model of the interaction between degree of monopoly and class conflict is applicable to Australian manufacturing since the 1980s.

Financialisation and the Rise of Atypical Employment

Giorgos Gouzoulis (University of Bristol, School of Management), Panagiotis (Takis) Iliopoulos (University of Oxford, School of Geography and the Environment)

Over the last decades, employment insecurity has grown dramatically across the globe. Involuntary part-time and temporary employment has been rising significantly, with approximately 60 per cent of employees working under such employment contracts (ILO 2015). While the literature on the



drivers of atypical work stresses the importance of the broader business and economic environment, the links between non-standard employment and financialisation remain relatively understudied.

One of the key dimensions of financialisation that has been identified by political economists and industrial relations scholars is shareholder value orientation. In highly financialised firms who are largely owned by shareholders, the main goal of management is to maximise dividend payments to them, hence, the process of achieving this entails rising financial costs, which, in turn, result in squeezing labour costs (Froud et al. 2010; Lazonick and O’Sullivan 2000; Medoff and Harless 1996). Additionally, there is strong supportive evidence that beyond wage cuts, the financialisation of non-financial firms also affects negatively labour management and increases employment instability (Appelbaum et al. 2013; Appelbaum and Batt 2014; Cushen 2013; Cushen and Thompson 2016; Darcillon 2016; Thompson 2003, 2013).

Nonetheless, financialisation is a multidimensional process that, beyond non-financial corporations, also affects other vital parts of the economy. A striking shortcoming of the relevant literature is the lack of research on how the financialisation of households/everyday life affects the labour process (Thompson and Cushen 2020), and particularly the dynamics of non-standard employment. Inspired by the recent literature that shows how increasing financial commitments for households induce them to be more disciplined, thus, undermine labour’s bargaining power and decrease the labour share (Gouzoulis 2021; Wood 2017), this paper theorises and explores empirically how the financialisation of everyday life contributes to the growth of atypical work.

We argue that household debt and pension fund financialisation can increase employees’ compliance to non-standard employment and/or increase the demand for atypical work. More specifically, we discuss how household debt commitments can induce employees to accept non-standard employment contracts and/or potentially seek additional atypical jobs to cope with financial pressures. Further, indebted employees may become more competitive against their peers as they struggle to secure their employment, thus, try to be more productive and/or work more hours than they are obliged to, which can, in turn, decrease employers’ demand for labour. Concerning pension fund financialisation, this can incentivise older employees to remain or return to the labour market under atypical contracts to deal with relevant financial difficulties. To assess the combined effects of corporate and household financialisation on involuntary part-time and temporary employment, we use a panel dataset that consists of all OECD economies for which there available data for our key indicators and other well-established determinants of atypical work for the period 1997-2020. Our estimations demonstrate that household debt, the volume of stocks traded, and pension fund assetisation increase non-standard employment rates for the total workforce and women. The findings for employees over 65 years old are mixed, which potentially reflects different skill profiles and different forms of engagement with the processes of financialisation.

Double Framings: Accounting for Insecure Work, from Platform to Classroom

Kathleen Griesbach (Postdoctoral Researcher Max Planck Institute for the Study of Societies)

While research highlights the negative impacts of temporal uncertainty, fewer examine spatial uncertainty, though work is increasingly untethered to a workplace. Many insecure workers, scholarship finds, individualize risk and uncertainty. This paper draws on 120 interviews with agricultural and oilfield workers in Texas and university adjuncts and on-demand delivery workers



in New York City to ask, How do workers account for temporal and spatial instability, or positional uncertainty? How do the stories they tell, about work and the self, square with prevailing accounts of cultural individualism? What do they portend for a politics of solidarity? I find workers make sense of uncertainty through a double framing: they tell anchoring individualizing stories alongside critical stories pointing to refusal or highlighting structural inequities. Most stories ultimately sit between consent and refusal, acceptance and resistance, as workers struggle to settle on a narrative about themselves and knit a coherent story about how past, present and future fit together. I show how the configuration of positional uncertainty and position in social structure correspond to particular double framings, and the harmful consequences of insecure work for identity.

Inside the Black Box of Works Council. Management Relations

Yolanda Grift, Annette van den Berg (Utrecht University School of Economics)

Both in HR and in IR literature researchers still struggle with unravelling the internal processes between management on one side and employees and their representatives on the other, and the effects that this may have on organizational performance. In all probability, there is a mediating factor between having a works council in place and reaching any (favourable) organizational outcome. In other words, an internal mechanism through which these advantages could materialise, runs from sufficient information provision by a supportive management to cooperative works councillors, endowing them with sufficient facilities to exercise their function well, enabling them to develop a substantiated, knowledgeable opinion in order to come up with valuable advice.

Our study contributes to the (quantitative) works council literature, in which to this date the focus still is on empirically estimating works council's effects on organizational performance either via a dummy variable for works council presence or by using a simple works council typology.

First, we explore existing studies of sociologists and labour economists that already (tried to) distinguish between works council types and workplace relations regimes. Some excellent qualitative studies exist on German, British and Polish management – works council relations respectively, that give a clear indication of the characteristics that should be included in a quantitative model (not mentioned below due to word limit).

Second, we briefly turn for inspiration to the HR literature that has a much longer tradition in investigating internal processes inside organisations, searching for the inner workings of a so-called black box. In HRM, the underlying aim is to find out what motivates individual employees to put in effort. The analogy with our own study object is: Which mutual attitudes and processes contribute to an effective representation of employees, leading to an improvement of firm performance?

Based on the insights of both aforementioned streams of literature, we have built a conceptual model that can be tested with larger data sets (unfortunately this submission form does not allow us to include the figure).

Third, in the empirical part of our study, we apply structural equation modelling via which we establish the (potential) contents of the black box concerning management – works council relations. Subsequently, we estimate the resulting construct in an illustrative model that explains the impact of works councils on company decision-making. Our results indicate that the inclusion of the black box construct is the most important factor in both our country models, Germany and the Netherlands: a



good relationship with management is imperative for having influence as an employee representation body. This finding confirms the results of the earlier mentioned qualitative studies.

We conclude by arguing that the framework of our model can very well be employed by other scholars: the contents of the black box may easily be extended or adjusted by researchers in order to accommodate for the specific (country or sector) setting of their own data.

Exploited by design? On domestic cleaners, digital platforms, and working “holidays” in Berlin

Katarzyna Gruszka (WU Vienna University of Economics and Business, Vienna-Austria, Institute for Ecological Economics), Madeleine Böhm (University of Erfurt, Germany International Relations), Anna Pillinger (WU Vienna University of Economics and Business, Vienna-Austria, Institute for Ecological Economics)

Platforms mediating domestic and care work are a crucial infrastructure in the ongoing crisis of social reproduction (Altenried et al., 2021). While it became increasingly difficult for people to find cleaners and care-workers in their neighbourhood, platforms opened up their world to a workforce that seemed to be readily available for cheap rates. Many workers are needed to preserve this image of the inexhaustible pool of profiles and workers to choose from. Especially for newcomers, these platforms seem to offer a likewise easy opportunity to connect with clients quickly. The platforms, then, can function as a stepping stone into the job market and a new city due to the low entrance barriers, easy onboarding processes, and high flexibility. However, what appears “easy” at first for most workers, turns into an ambivalent process for many: bureaucratic regulations are unclear, securities aren’t given, and there is very little space to manoeuvre oneself through an unregulated jungle while being rendered (in)visible. After all, these platforms operate in a sector characterised by precarious working conditions and a high share of informal labour, overwhelmingly often carried out by women and/or migrants - all in the privacy of households.

This paper zooms in on a group of people attracted to the opportunities platforms seem to offer - though often being aware of the exploitation at hand: Namely, young people from Latinamerica coming to Berlin, Germany, on a working holiday visa and taking on domestic cleaning work via Helpling - currently a key platform in the sector on the German market. We centre stage this particular group of platform workers in a Berlin/Helpling case study and ask a set of questions: Who are the workers, and how does their experience reflect on the connection between social relations, social reproduction and a platform’s business model? What can we learn about the co-construction between an individual’s sociolegal status and performing platform-mediated cleaning through the (in)visibility lens?

By building on an analytical framework of (in)visibility of/in platform-mediated labour developed elsewhere (Gruszka & Böhm, 2020) and feminist approaches on intersectionality, we base our work on qualitative interviews with domestic cleaners and focus on unpacking the institutional (in)visibility of their work and them as workers. Preliminary results from the interviews indicate that platform companies benefit from the sociolegal status of people with working holiday visas and manage their platform accordingly, while workers navigate through a complicated and unknown field. We analyse this relationship and ask how the worker’s (in)visibility is affected and with which consequences. Thus, we speak to an audience working interdisciplinary on platform-mediated labour within the broader framework of platforms’ social consequences. By doing so, we contribute to debates on the



challenges platform workers face with a clear analytical framework and highly up-to-date empirical material.

Re/productive multidimensionality of precarity: a comparative analysis of farmworkers and Amazon workers' mobilizations in pandemic Italy

Federica Guardigli (University of Macerata), Irina Aguiari (Scuola Normale Superiore)

Covid-19 pandemic has exacerbated the inequalities and contradictions already engrained in the neoliberal capital accumulation system. Labour conflicts have reignited all over the world, on the part of the most unprotected and yet the most essential workers along the international value chains. Strikes and demonstrations against the lack of sufficient anti-Covid protection at workplace translated into broader critiques of labour and existential precarity in the pandemic context. As such, the pandemic represented a critical juncture for bringing back to the spotlight the re/productive multidimensionality of precarity.

Starting from this assumption, we innovate existing debate by advancing a conceptualisation of precarity capable of expanding the observation of the neoliberal deregulation beyond the industrial relations field. In particular, we argue for the multidimensionality of precarity as stemming from the convergence of the productive conflict between labour and capital and reproductive conflict between capital and the biophysical world. From a theoretical point of view, we support our assumption by putting forward an interdisciplinary approach. Specifically, we integrate labour and eco-precarity by merging more traditional interpretations of productive precarity from economic sociology with its reproductive elaboration as advanced by postcolonial and eco critical sociology.

This theoretical framework is empirically applied to analyse the reproductive multidimensionality of precarity within the Italian agrifood and logistic struggles during the Covid-19 pandemic based on two case studies: the farmworkers mobilization and the Amazon workers' demonstrations since March 2020. From a methodological point of view, we conduct a comparative critical discourse analysis of the political representation of precarity as elaborated by three typologies of social actors involved in the case studies. Indeed, the sample comprises different types of documents (online petitions, press releases, declarations, interviews and letters) by grassroots campaigns – *Siamo qui! Sanatoria subito* for the agrifood sector and *#makeamazonpay* petition with regard to the Amazon case - confederate unions (CGIL, CISL, UIL) and base unions (SI COBAS and USB).

The choice to focus on the political representation of precarity is particularly relevant as it allows us to underline how the very act of representation of precarity is discursively precarious. For discursive precarity, we mean a series of discursive choices in which the precariat is not directly represented but its representation is mediated by other privileged subjectivities. In this sense, we defend that discourses and material reality are interconnected and they can influence themselves either in progressive or conservative terms determining further precarisation or allowing for emancipation of the workers.

The analytical results provide a comparative understanding of the political representation of precarity between sectors and between institutional and non-institutional actors. They show how, during the pandemic, the multidimensionality of precarity fostered the convergence of extra-labour issues within the frame of workers' protests leading to the construction of new forms of collective identification beyond the workplace.



From Istanbul to the South Coasts of Turkey: Seasonal Employment as a Coping Strategy for Restaurant Workers During the COVID-19

Esra Gulec (Duzce University)

Tourism is characterised by a single main season in many regions and in some entire countries, with the hotels, restaurants and other facilities closed or operating at reduced customer potential over the remainder of the year (Ball, 1988, 501). Seasonality, which is one of the main features of tourism sector, seems as a major problem for management as it introduces instability in terms of demand and revenues (Krakover, 2000, 461). It also makes an insecure working environment and future more uncertain for its employees. In parallel with the global trends, seasonality is a common feature of tourism sector in Turkey. Particularly in the southern regions, where the dominant form of tourism is sun, sea and sand, there are greatest number of seasonally operating hotels and restaurants that employs mostly seasonal workers (Çelik ve Erkuş-Öztürk, 2016, 433). This paper examines how seasonal employment has used as a strategy by restaurant workers to copy with the effects of COVID-19 pandemic. In-depth interviews were conducted with four frontline service workers of luxury restaurants in Istanbul and they were asked for sharing their working experiences during the pandemic. For the most time, restaurants have stayed closed to table service, in accordance with the measures taken by state to struggle against pandemic in Turkey. They have subjected to various restrictions when they could be opened, so it prevented them to work at full capacity and this situation has negatively affected the workers as well as the enterprises. Since there were no customers to be served at the table for a long time, service workers have lost their basic function as service providers in the organization of restaurant and have taken new tasks such as taking orders and making packages. The daily routines of workers have changed completely after the pandemic as their job descriptions have become different and uncertain. Although some of them have benefited from the wage support given by the state, they all have lost a significant part of their income because of not getting any tips from customers. The unpredictability of how long the pandemic process will last has also created a situation of uncertainty in which workers did not know how long they have to struggle with these negative effects. Under all these conditions, the interviewees who were long time employed in Istanbul have preferred to go and work in the western or southern coasts of Turkey as a form of seasonal employment, where they would not have to worry about the closure of their workplaces and the number of customers, where they could return to their work routines and get tips even if it would be for a short time. It is not an exception to go to the holiday regions in Turkey to work during the summer season, as said earlier. However, what is meant to be in this paper is that the pandemic has expanded the scope of this phenomenon and forced many employees to seasonal employment, who prefer to work full-time in the same workplace normally.



Solidarity and collective action among migrant delivery workers. The case of Latin America

Francisca Gutiérrez (Universidad Alberto Hurtado, Centro de Estudios del Conflicto y Cohesión Social), Pablo Pérez (Universidad Alberto Hurtado, Centro de Estudios del Conflicto y Cohesión Social)

The business of digital delivery platforms has experienced significant expansion around the world during the pandemic of COVID-19. This expansion has fostered academic debate on different aspects of the labour process in this sector, such as the particularities of the control regimes and workers' resistance practices. However, empirical research remains mainly concentrated in the Global North, where labour rights and unions are generally more institutionalised than in the Global South. This bias has given little visibility to the role that different local labour regimes play in the labour process of these digital platforms.

In this conference, we propose to discuss this role focusing on Latin America. Specifically, we are interested in investigating the different forms of solidarity and collective actions that digital platform delivery workers, most of them migrants, have developed in this region. We will rely on two types of analysis. Firstly, a descriptive analysis of a database on forms of resistance by digital delivery platform workers in Chile, Argentina, Brazil, Mexico, and Ecuador, which we constructed based on a systematic press' and social networks' review. Secondly, a qualitative analysis based on 50 semi-structured interviews and 16 virtual "shadowing" with delivery workers operating in the capital cities of Chile and Argentina.

As we will argue, local labour regimes affect the resistance of delivery workers, despite the global characteristics of platform work and the internationalisation of their struggle during the pandemic. Migration laws that define the legal status of many of the delivery workers and labor laws and trade union tradition are relevant variables in explaining differences in solidarity practices and barriers to collective action.

Precarious conditions and health of workers doing platform-mediated online work. A mixed methods analysis

Barbara Haas, Marcel Bilger, Maddalena Lamura, Dominik Klaus (Vienna University of Economics and Business)

This conference paper presents the research design and first results of a current mixed-methods project (2021-2023) that focuses on the challenges of digital work from the perspective of German-speaking workers. The main objectives are the questions: What exactly makes online work attractive or not? What about the impact on health and well-being?

Based on the definition of precarious work by Kalleberg et al. (Dunn 2020; Kalleberg/Dunn 2016; Kalleberg/Vanas 2017), we examine the particular situation in the triangular relationship between the platform, the worker and the employer or client. A closer look at the issues of control and transparency of communication should give us a more differentiated picture of the platform-mediated online work process. As a result, we can extend the traditionally studied dimensions of working conditions (e.g. working hours, pay, contracts, degree of workers' control over their work) by examining the role of platform management. We assume that digital control over workers, their work experience and star



ratings matter, but the key determinants of crowdworkers' health or well-being are an empirically open question. In this regard, qualitative research will allow us to deepen our understanding of the workers' perspective and gain a better understanding of what the real impacts are on their positive (mental) health and negative (mental) illness.

Purely virtual online jobs can be very different and the whole spectrum is considered in our study: from highly skilled, demanding tasks (macro work) to repetitive, monotonous click work (micro work). In short, crowdwork is used as an umbrella term for micro and macro tasks. As current research focuses mainly on low-skilled click work, we begin to explore a broader range of skilled tasks and activities by analysing 100 profiles of macro platform workers. Conducting qualitative problem-centred guided interviews with workers of different skill levels aims to conceptualise the heterogeneity of tasks and precarious conditions.

In a next step, we will test these empirically based hypotheses by conducting a quantitative online survey (n= 2,000 crowdworkers) as a work assignment on selected micro and macro work platforms. Furthermore, these quantitative results allow for a better selection of the final interview partners to deepen still open questions. The constant interweaving of quantitative and qualitative results in the sense of a convergent and complex embedded mixed-methods design (Creswell/Creswell 2018) enables us to better ground empirical findings on the potentials and risks of digital work in German-speaking countries.

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Morally disengaged managers and customers on the service front-line: Evidence from the Greek tourism and hospitality sector during the pandemic

Anastasios Hadjisolomou (University of Strathclyde - Scotland, UK), Fotios Mitsakis (Nottingham Trent University – UK), Amairisa Kouki (University of Piraeus – Greece)

Customer abuse remains a pervasive social problem that is widespread across the service sector, which has been exacerbated because of the Covid-19 pandemic, affecting employee wellbeing (Hadjisolomou and Simone, 2021). Worryingly, authors argue that customer abuse has become a social norm (Taylor, 2019) which is developed, facilitated and strengthened by service cultures within which the customer 'is always right' (Korzynski and Evans, 2013). This reinforces the perception that customers may abuse service workers, without evident penalties for their (mis)behaviour whilst management tolerates such behaviour. This uncomfortable truth poses important questions regarding morality in the service employment relationship that warrants further and theoretical and empirical attention. This paper, building on Sayer's moral economy framework, discusses moral disengagement



by managers and customers within the triangular employment relationship in the Greek hospitality and tourism sector. Sayer (2007) reports that humans are ethical social beings who evaluate behaviour and actions that affect well-being, whilst Bolton and Laaser (2013), reflecting on Sayer's focus on human flourishing, stress an essential sociological inquiry: if and how capitalism dehumanizes workers. This paper contributes to this enquiry exploring customer abuse in a period of socio-economic crisis.

Drawing on a survey conducted during the Covid-19 period, research findings indicate that customer abuse continued during the pandemic, whilst respondents have emphasized the inactive role of management in protecting workers. Specifically, 53% of respondents have reported that they have experienced abuse and 67% witnessed abuse in the workplace, with the customer being identified as the main perpetrator. Alarming, however, from those who have reported the abuse to management, only 20% have reported that action was taken and only for the 19% reporting has improved the situation. This shows that front-line employees are part of social and employment structures that are ethically problematic, especially in a period of crisis. Arguably, customers are morally disengaged detaching themselves from moral actions when interacting with service workers, whilst they rationalize abuse and the abandonment of moral principles drawing on the 'customer is always right' culture found in organizations (Yakut, 2021). Along similar lines, management is morally disengaged by tolerating, and neglecting abuse on the front-end and failing to act and protect workers.

The paper reveals another level of complexity in organizations which is related to the notion of power imbalance within the service triangle and its impact on morality and workers' wellbeing (Sayer, 2011). Accepting Sayer's (2011) argument that organisations are 'important 'moral arenas' for their members, this paper questions morality on the services front-end and within the service triangle, where the powerful and immoral acts of customers, which violate employee wellbeing, are being tolerated and neglected by management. Managerial actions to protect workers are limited within a customer-oriented culture that is driven by market dynamics (Hadjisolomou and Simone, 2021). This reinforces Sayer's argument that markets are the major force weakening the moral economy and driving moral disengagement within organizations. Understandably, market pressures, especially in a period of crisis, force management and customers to act, 'if not immorally, then at least amorally' (Sayer, 2000; 91).

Automation, Informal Labour and the Future of Work in India

Anita Hammer (University of Essex, UK)

This paper addresses contemporary debates on the implications of new technologies for the future of work (e.g., Brynjolfsson and McAfee, 2014; Frey and Osborne, 2017). Specifically, it contributes to current discussions on the impact of automation within the automotive sector in India.

The impact of new technologies on work and workers is an understudied area, especially in relation to emerging and developing economies (Hammer and Karmakar, 2021 for India; Lima et al., 2021 for Brazil). This paper assesses the debates on automation through an examination of the automotive sector in India. India has a high potential for advanced automation and there has been considerable hype around the potential for the automotive sector to drive India's 4IR. At the same time, India is a surplus labour economy marked by underemployment, with the vast bulk of the workforce within the informal economy and informal employment. The World Bank (2019) estimates 69% of existing jobs



in India are threatened by automation, raising deep anxieties around the potential for widespread unemployment and job polarisation.

Extreme positions about potential for progress and prosperity and threats from new technology are tempered by academic scholarship rooted in Marxian political economy and labour process analyses. Automation is not a new phenomenon, and fears about technological transformation of the workplace and its effects on employment date back a long time (Marx 1976; Braverman, 1974). This scholarship underscores the need to focus on the politics of production and the importance of power relations for the form, direction and outcomes of new technologies (e.g., Spencer, 2017; Huws, 2014), which are most likely to impact on the nature and quality of work, rather than replacing it (e.g., Thompson and Briken, 2017; Thompson, 2020).

Using labour process as an analytical lens, this study pays attention to how existing modes of production and social relations are being shaped by new technologies in the automotive sector in India. It argues that the adoption and impact of new technologies on work are mediated through relations of production in specific workplace and societal contexts. Technology is not free from the wider dynamics operative in the world of work and any claims about the transformative or disruptive potential of automation need to be examined in the reality of work.

Evidence presented suggests there remain considerable barriers to the adoption of automation resulting in its concentration amongst the top layer of Original Equipment Manufacturers (OEMs) and limited capacity for its diffusion throughout the Automotive Supply Chain (ASC). Firms have been adopting automation to alter capital-labour relations and informalise the workforce, without the gains of rising productivity. The paper concludes that India's path of automation is likely to be piecemeal and with uneven implications for labour. It ends with some reflections on policy.

Digital technologies in care work. The quest for quality, autonomy and meaning in elderly care.

Agnete Meldgaard Hansen, Sidsel Lond Grosen, Annette Kamp (Roskilde University, Department of People and Technology, Denmark)

The current influx of new digital technologies in all sectors of the labour market has raised concerns about the degradation of work in terms of worker autonomy, meaning and quality in work in the face of e.g. 'algorithmic management', robotization and new forms of surveillance in work (e.g. Galière 2020; Smids et al. 2020; Spencer 2018). Drawing on studies on the use of 'welfare technologies' in the elderly care sector, this paper shows how the implementation of new digital technologies also holds potential to improve experiences of autonomy, meaning and quality in work. In policy discourses on welfare technologies, care workers are often represented as reluctant and resistant users of new technology. Our empirical findings from a four-year ethnographic study of different digital technologies in use (virtual homecare, automatic toilets, sensor floors and tele-medical monitoring) counters this assumption. Studying the micro-processes of technology-implementation in care work, we illustrate how care workers', in some cases very enthusiastic, day-to-day work of developing the use of welfare technologies in practice, contains new possibilities for development of autonomy, meaning and quality in work. Drawing on Pols & Willems (2011), we show how care workers involve themselves in the 'taming' and 'unleashing' of new technologies in practice, adapting technology use to specific clients and situations, and furthermore in 'entrepreneurially' developing both the quality and character of care services. In this process care workers potentially exercise new forms of



autonomy in work, and develop their occupational identities as well as experiences of meaning in work (Hansen and Grosen 2019; Kamp and Hansen 2019). However, as these new practices take place in a field historically marked by New Public Management-inspired rationalization efforts, where care time and relational work are under pressure, we also observe how these aspirations involve what Banks (2016) terms ‘ethics work’; marked by ambiguity and emotional stress.

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Finding meaning in digital service work: Differences among skill-levels

Friedericke Hardering (Muenster University of Applied Sciences, Germany), Mirela Ivanova (Uni Basel, Switzerland), Felix Nickel (Muenster University of Applied Sciences, Germany), Helene Thaa (Uni Basel, Switzerland), Oliver Nachtwey (Uni Basel, Switzerland)

In the context of the digital transformation of work, there are various discussions about whether digital work is accompanied by new forms of work alienation or a lack of meaningfulness at work. For example, discussions of digital Taylorism or microtasking platforms ask to what extent such forms of work organization restrict employee’s autonomy and limit their experiences of meaningfulness at work (Kost, Fieseler & Wong 2018). Consistent with older theoretical and empirical studies on alienation, the focus of the debate is on understanding low-skilled work. In contrast, little is known about variances in the experience of meaningfulness across different skill levels.

To fill this gap, this contribution explores, how service workers at different skill levels construct meaning at work. It also investigates in experiences of alienation service workers face. In doing so, it contributes to the understanding of work experiences in the digital economy as well as to existing research on meaningful work (Bailey & Madden 2020) that focuses on differences in the experience of meaningful work across different groups of workers (Bailey & Madden 2015; Lips-Wiersma, Wright & Dik 2016).

Firstly, we explore conceptual issues of the experience of meaningfulness at work and barriers to the experience of meaningfulness and alienation. Then we present the results of an empirical study on



"Digital alienation and appropriation of work: experiences of alienation in digital service work" (funded by DFG/SNF).

Methods: A total of 45 interviews with employees from Germany and Switzerland working in the digital economy were conducted, 17 of them with high-skilled (programmers), skilled (search engine optimization specialists, 15) and low-skilled (content moderators, 13). The interviews were transcribed, coded and analyzed according to the Grounded Theory Methodology. The evaluation focused on the experiences of meaningfulness at work and alienation.

Findings and Contribution: Regardless of their qualification level, all employees experience meaningfulness in their work. Even under stressful and demanding conditions, employees can find meaning in their work. At the same time, they suffer from the restrictions of their autonomy and from the surveillance of their work. Highly skilled workers also experience work alienation, but the forms differ at skill levels. Experiences of meaning and alienation are not mutually exclusive; despite alienating work, employees can find individual aspects of their work as meaningful.

Digital technologies play a mediating role, and it turns out that they moderate the experience of meaningfulness or alienation depending on their function in the labour process. It is shown that severe restrictions of employees' autonomy through digital technologies can cause experiences of alienation for employees. The article offers theoretical insights into the interplay between the concepts of meaningful work and alienation, and presents empirical findings on the impact of digital technologies on alienation experiences with a view to social inequalities.

Nannying through Covid-19: professionalisation, polarisation and divergent collective strategies

Kate Hardy (Leeds University Business School), Katie Cruz (The University of Bristol), Xanthe Whittaker (Leeds University Business School)

The occupational category of the 'nanny' began in the British Empire, when women worked as servants in large, typically aristocratic households and usually reported directly to the lady of the house. In the contemporary UK, there are approximately 33,000 (ONS) nannies working across households from the middle classes to the super-rich. Yet there is a dearth of research assessing their employment conditions and experiences at work. This presentation will draw on two cross-sectional surveys with nannies in 2020 (527 respondents) and 2021 (449 respondents) and longitudinal qualitative interviews with 30 nannies from a wider project on the impact of Covid-19 on the childcare sector in England and Wales. We argue that the nanny labour market is highly polarised, with 'Professionalised nannies' on the one hand and 'Precarious Nannies' on the other. The former is more likely to be white, British, degree educated working and employed by a family with attendant employment protections, while the latter are more likely to be working informally, and so precariously self-employed and/or with insecure migration status. Nannies across both categories frequently report 'job creep', which has intensified during Covid-19 as requests expanded (expanded to include food preparation and delivery to isolating families), nannies were given fewer breaks and less down time, and working from home gave employers near constant surveillance of nannies' labour. Professionalised nannies expressed concern with government Covid-19 guidance and about the lack of social recognition of their work, and in line with this most nannies want government



funded training for nannies. Such polarised labour conditions is reflected divergent strategies for organisations seeking to mobilise nannies in order to improve their employment and conditions of work.

Always on: exploitation through last minute scheduling in the modelling industry

Abigail Harrington (University of Amsterdam, The Netherlands, University of Birmingham, England), Kobe De Keere (University of Amsterdam, The Netherlands)

Recently, the rampant exploitation of fashion models has finally drawn public attention. Following the #metoo campaign, fashion models also shared their experiences on social media using the hashtag #myjobshouldnotcontainabuse. Despite this, there has been limited academic research on labour exploitation in the fashion industry and how such exploitation is made possible. Although there has been academic work identifying several ethical issues concerning the job of a fashion model, most research was geared towards either, theorizing how the modelling industry belongs to a ‘cultural economy’ characterized by specific mechanisms of valuation, or investigating how fashion models experience their aesthetic labour. This study, on the other hand, aims to unpack how organizing the ‘daily schedule’ in a last-minute-manner enters as a powerful managerial technique that allows for systematic exploitation. The ‘daily schedule’ is the main contact a fashion model has with their agents (i.e. gatekeepers). It is typically sent by email each night to inform the model of what they have on the next working day.

This research contributes to three areas of research. First, it speaks to classical labour theory concerned with how the organization of workers’ time is a managerial technique that can potentially harm employees’ autonomy. Second, it contributes to work on cultural production, as it looks at how labour and time are organized in the creative industry while taking into account field specific dynamics. Third, this research contributes to the expanding body of literature concerned with the ever-growing informal sector, and last-minute, opaque scheduling that is typical in the gig-economy. This qualitative study draws on 26 semi-structured interviews with male and female models. Throughout this research four different types of exploitation are identified: time, financial, bodily and sexual exploitation. This study demonstrates how these four types of exploitations are, for a large part, facilitated by a last-minute scheduling system. This managerial technique decreases the autonomy of the worker by systematically withholding necessary information and obstructing future planning. Similar to how scientific management (i.e. Taylorism) was not only introduced as a way to boost efficiency but simultaneously served as a means to take away control from workers and minimize the possibility of resistance (as was argued by Harry Braverman), automated last minute scheduling systems (e.g. Cdsglobal) which are employed by fashion agencies, also limit the autonomy of models. The findings indicate that for all participants it appeared difficult to resist this type of scheduling without risking consequences to their career. However, a comparative analysis revealed that some models are in a better position to mitigate these risks, or are more able to risk their modelling careers than others, due to factors such as, field position, tenure, age, education, networks, gender and citizenship.



In and out of inter-firm networks – Conceptualizations of insourcing processes

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Since the demise of the putting-out system and the system of internal contracts in the late 19th century much attention has been paid to labour in vertically-integrated firms. The vertically-integrated firm as the locus of value creation and appropriation was the focus of research in an era of Fordist mass production. In the 1980s, this trend changed as companies restructured internally and externally. Internal decentralization in, for instance, in form of profit centers, went hand in hand with new forms of inter-firm collaboration in, for example, inter-firm networks and (onsite) subcontracting as new forms of post-Fordist production forms and flexible specialization (e.g. Piore/Sabel 1984; Newsome et al. 2015). The dissolution of the vertical-integrated firm in a mixture of market- and network-like relations stimulated a trend towards outsourcing and of the decrease of value creation in a single firm. While various management scholars pointed out the limitations of outsourcing (Williamson 1984; Di Mauro et al 2018), “outsourcing failures” (Cabral et al. 2014) were addressed in very few studies. Studies in the international business literature analyse processes of “backshoring” after an offshoring (Bals et al. 2016: 104; Wiesmann et al. 2017; Heikkilä et al. 2018; Barbieri et al 2018). Most studies are based on qualitative methods and/or media reports tackling the questions of contexts, motives and consequences of insourcing and rely on a low number of cases or case studies (Stentoft et al. 2016; Santangelo et al. 2016; Hartman et al. 2017; Theyel et al. 2018). Studies on “outsourcing failure” (Cabral et al. 2014) are rare: „Only a few comprehensive failure stories have been reported“ (Moe et al. 2014) and these are mainly based on single case studies. With regard to the conceptualization these studies mostly rely – if any explicit conceptualization is applied – on concepts of business administration like resource-based view of strategic management (Wernerfelt 1984) or industrial economics (Porter 1983).

The paper proposed here is of theoretical nature and pursues the following question: what are specific contributions of different economic and sociological approaches for a(n) (better) understanding of insourcing processes? For this purpose, we define insourcing in a broad as well as a narrow way: as the re-integration of formerly outsourced economic activities in the same workplace (narrow definition) or its reintegration in the corporate group of the outsourced workplace (wide definition). We discuss the mainstream business concepts mentioned above as well as transaction cost economics, political approaches like micropolitics and the new institutionalism in organisational sociology. We conclude that all concepts can contribute to a better understanding, but also lack a comprehensive framework. Therefore, we suggest to use a more open-ended approach that focuses on a relational perspective, strategy-as-practice, which can integrate the strength of these conceptualizations into an overarching perspective on insourcing decisions and practices.

Our contribution is based on a literature review that we prepared as a conceptual basis for a more comprehensive research project on insourcing processes that started in 2020. It is funded by the Hans Böckler-Stiftung, Düsseldorf.

References not integrated due to word-limit



Contradictions in the Software Labour Process

Ian Hill (Loughborough University London - King's College London)

This paper seeks to explain variation in the use of standardisation and autonomy as managerial strategies for work organisation in software development. The paper will critically assess the contradictions managers face whilst also providing an explanation for variations across differing organisations. The paper is part of an ongoing PhD which utilises 49 semi structured interviews along with field notes from 14 days of direct observation, to inform its results. The paper, using the work of Vidal (2021), argues that a tension exists between ensuring discipline and harnessing creativity. This manifests itself as a contradiction between standardisation and autonomy.

The paper takes the stance that managerial optimisation is impossible (March and Simon 1958). This is because managers lack the cognitive ability to rationalise every possible outcome. Instead, satisficing can occur where the minimum requirements necessary to achieve a particular goal are carried out. With the assumption that optimisation is impossible, the paper argues that levels of satisficing are more likely.

The results illustrate that management face tensions between standardising work organisation and enabling autonomy. The results show that when managers harness creativity through employee involvement practices that enable both individual and collective autonomy, efficiency gains can be made. However, the results also illustrate that levels of satisficing occur. This depends upon contingencies such as the type of team, size of organisation and ownership structure.

Disability and Food Delivery Work

Renyi Hong (Communications and New Media, National University of Singapore)

In 2021, Grab, a leading superapp platform in Southeast Asia, initiated a campaign to promote the economic empowerment of disabled food delivery workers. A video made explicit the inclusion of disabilities within this food delivery workforce—workers with missing lower and upper limbs were featured, as were others with dwarfism and hearing impairment. Such work was publicized as the “first earning avenue” for a quarter of Grab’s disabled workforce, a number tagged at 1100 in 2020. This study examines disabled food delivery workers to address a gap in the literature around geographically tethered platform gig work. Although criticism and activism in the past decade has significantly eroded claims to the public good of platformized gig work, Grab’s reference to the disabled underscores the ongoing ambivalence about what geographically tethered gig work can do. As example, even amidst widespread concern about the sustainability of delivery work in Singapore in 2019, a Facebook post of Sumaiyah Ghazali, a wheelchair-bound cerebral palsy GrabFood delivery worker, gathered over a million views and thousand comments, many thanking Grab for providing her with a livelihood. Though problematic in their suggestion of charity—these platforms profit off the labor of disabled and abled in ways alike—these sentiments reference the difficulty of employment suffered by the disabled. Coupled with for its anti-welfare stance, Grab represents one of the few opportunities of economic survival in Singapore.

Contextualized in Singapore, and based on historical research and 20 interviews with disabled food delivery workers, I analyze intersections between disability, Grab, the State, and financial capitalism.



Beginning with the analysis of accessible infrastructure in the 1980s, I offer that infrastructure was construed as the key answer to the problem of the employment of the disabled in the country. The belief is that accessible intermediating connections (home to school, to workplace) could rehabilitate the disabled, changing them from economic liabilities to productive citizens, without altering the State's anti-welfare stance. It is this infrastructural imaginary that makes Grab more than a commercial platform. Grab is significantly backed by Singapore's sovereign funds, investors who claim to be convinced by its founder's Christian values and his purpose of creating "economic empowerment for everyone." Stipulated to open as the largest listed equity offering by a Southeast Asian company (almost \$40 billion) by the end of the year, the astronomical rise of Grab cannot be disentangled from government support and its willingness to fulfill what public infrastructure was meant to do for the disabled—to provide work.

But does food delivery work really resolve the exclusion of the disabled? Interviews reflect a more ambivalent bargain, where the promise of economic rehabilitation is coupled with attrition, precariousness, and on occasion, debilitation—a compromise that the disabled also have to suppress to keep themselves within the parameters of being employable. Moving through factors, like low pay, accidents, wheelchair loans, and limited accommodations, I show how platforms can serve as a vehicle to culturally recognize but leave the workers to chronic neglect.

How managers in the UK food manufacturing sector attempted to cope with Brexit

Benjamin Hopkins (University of Birmingham, United Kingdom)

The decision of the United Kingdom to leave the European Union, commonly known as Brexit, has created a significant economic shock. The substantial changes to freedom of movement of goods and people has led to many challenges, as the (widely predicted) shortages of both of these have impacted on the supply chain in the UK. One area that has been very visible to the public has been issues related to food supply, with shortages in many areas from milkshakes in McDonald's to turkeys for Christmas.

The food manufacturing sector is the largest manufacturing sector in the United Kingdom, and employs around 430,000 people and contributes £28 billion to the economy. It is characterised by low skill and low paid jobs, with a large reliance on temporary and fixed term workers. Many of these are sourced through an agency and as a result there is a high proportion of migrant workers in this sector. This means that food manufacturing is a sector which has been both quickly and significantly impacted by Brexit, with these issues rapidly gaining attention in public consciousness owing to shortages of some types of food in the UK. Although some previous work has endeavoured to understand how these changes have been experienced by workers in this sector, particularly migrants, what is less well understood is the role of managers in shaping some of those worker experiences.

This research took a case study approach, and data were collected at six case study firms from the food manufacturing sector. All were based in the United Kingdom. Two firms were selected in each of the meat, grain, and vegetable sectors. Within each sector, both a large and small organisation was selected. Research took place over a two year period from March 2018 to March 2020. In addition to observational data and informal discussions, in-depth interviews were recorded, transcribed, and thematically coded. By examining commonalities across the six case study companies, the workplace impacts of this economic shock are explored, and the roles of managers in interpreting these macro



level changes into organisational policies and the effect on workers of these changes is examined. Managers are shown to be acting very much on a reactive rather than strategic basis, and this creates uncertainty and worsened workplace experiences for those in the sector. In turn, this leads to fewer people wishing to work in the sector, further exacerbating the issues created by the more tightly restricted freedom of movement created by Brexit. Future impacts and issues for the sector, and those who work and manage within it, are also investigated.

The Dark Triad: How the Welfare State gave rise to a new Precariat during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Sidsel Hove (University of Southern Denmark, Department of Business & Management)

During the past decades a general increase in scholarship concerned with the adverse effects of precarious employment has emerged. Structural and economical changes in the developed world have led to labour market transformations causing the need of explanatory concepts to develop accordingly – Precariat (Standing, 2011) being one of them. Studies concerned with this matter point towards how such labour market transformations affect well-being amongst employees.

The empirical entry point of this paper offers a so far unexplored context to investigate the consequences of precarious forms of employment in a labour market characterized by ‘flexicurity’ and in particular its implications on physical and mental health.

The paper is based on an ongoing case study of how a Danish Government Agency during the Covid-19 pandemic hired hundreds of temp workers through a temp agency with the purpose of administering the state funded financial aid packages. The pandemic prompted a so far unprecedented use of temporary office workers employed on fixed-term contracts without opportunity for sick pay, lack of protective measures and limited access to collective bargaining power. The purpose of the study is to explore a specific empirical context involving temp agency workers and investigates how this mode of employment generates individual socioeconomic consequences. In particular, it focuses on the triadic relationship between the temp worker, the Danish State as place of work - and the somewhat new phenomenon of a temp agency facilitating the contractual employment.

Despite Denmark being characterised as a well-developed welfare state, the pandemic revealed cracks in various labour market policies and thus gave rise to a government-managed new Precariat. The preliminary findings suggest that because of the otherwise secure employment conditions in the public sector, being hired by a temp agency and assigned to work for a government agency, the sense of unfairness amongst the temp workers affected their well-being.

Through the acknowledgement of organizational justice as factor for employee well-being the aim is to illuminate the following: How does interactional (in)justice affect employee well-being under the conditions of temporary employment during the COVID-19 pandemic?

The data consist of semi-structured interviews with both former and current temp workers – most of them with a university degree, however newly graduated or with limited experience in their respective fields. By drawing on the concept of interactional justice (Bies & Moag, 1986) as a framework for understanding employee perceptions of unfairness the study sheds light on how the triadic context give rise to new and paradoxical shifts in labour market processes and ambiguous power dynamics. More importantly, it implies that the pandemic enabled a further rise of precarization within



government employment, supporting the idea of crisis as a potential catalyst for increased precariousness - also within the core of the welfare state itself.

The platform economy and interdependent cycles of change between the labour process and technology - a conceptual framework

Carl Hughes (University of Liverpool)

This paper will argue that the digitalisation of work has not been driven by advances in technology, but rather by a reorganisation of the labour process to make better use of pre-existing technology. As a result, the ‘success’ of companies such as Uber and Deliveroo is not because of technological innovation, but rather due to the way the labour process is organised within the platform economy, with the level of exploitation rising above the ‘average’ level of exploitation inherent within the nature of the capitalist economy. The difference between mainstream perceptions and reality in this regard, shares parallels with the introduction of the assembly line at the Ford Motor Company in the early 20th century. The assembly line at Ford is often held up as an example of technological innovation, however the technology used was pre-existing – the innovation lay in the way in which the labour process was organised around this machinery in order to maximise ‘efficiency’ through the increased exploitation of workers.

The paper will argue that this is part of a wider historical cycle in which technology and the labour process are locked into an interdependent cycle of change, in which advances in one drives changes in the other. The initial development of manufacture in the workshop, as outlined by Marx, reorganised the labour process in order to make better use of the technology that existed under the handicraft system. However, the efficiency that could be gained from such re-organisation hit the natural limits that existed under the handicraft system, and so capital developed machinery in order to maximise the efficiency of production that could be gained from this re-organisation of the labour process. The next stage of the cycle saw Taylorism re-organise the labour process in order to maximise the gains that could be made from machinery. The paper will argue that capitalism has subsequently been characterised by these cycles of interdependent change between technology and the labour process, with each cycle increasing the level of control that capital holds over the labour process.

If this is the case, and the initial development of the platform economy has been the stage of the cycle in which the labour process has been reorganised in order to make more efficient use (from the perspective of capital) of existing technology - this raises questions around the kind of technology that capital will develop in the next stage, in order to make a more efficient use of this reorganisation of the labour process. The contribution of this paper will be to offer a conceptual framework with which to understand the way in which trends associated with the gig economy and the digitalisation of work, are affecting the balance of power within the workplace, historically grounded in the development of capitalism over time. By using this conceptual framework, researchers may be able to better anticipate the ways in which future technological development will affect the working class.



Algorithmic Management and Workplace Power Dynamics: Redefining the Frontiers of Visible and Invisible Work

Kai-Hsin Hung (HEC Montréal), Cassandra Bowkett (HEC Montréal, Alliance Manchester Business School), Julie Garneau (Université du Québec en Outaouais), Christian Lévesque (HEC Montréal)

Theoretical orientation: Drawing on labour process, we posit that the use of algorithms to control the labour process is transforming the visibility of work and workers, in terms of work direction, evaluation, and discipline, as an ongoing and dynamic socio-technical process that is co-constituted by actors, regulations, and technology (Klein & Kleinman, 2016). Undergirded by recent work on algorithmic control (Kellogg et al., 2020) and Edwards' (1979) “contested terrain”, this paper examines the changing notion of visibility and invisibility of work (Whittaker, 2018) in three digitalizing industries and regulatory settings of 1) the Uber platform-based ride-hailing technology in California, the United States, 2) a data processing centre in rural Andhra Pradesh, India, and 3) a traditional aerospace manufacturing industry that is unionised in Québec, Canada.

Findings: Through our three cases, we show that algorithm management disempowers workers through a codification of knowledge and the pursuit of rationalisation, standardisation, and the production of objective data, made through different change processes of displacement, layering and drift. In the Uber case in California, we see a process of displacement, where existing regulations are completely replaced or repealed by powerful actors as all human managerial forms of control are displaced by algorithmic management tools. In the data processing centre case in Andhra Pradesh, we see a layering process where the new does not replace the old but is added to it. In the Québec aerospace case in we see drift where even though the existing workplace regulations are not changed, the way they are interpreted is different.

Methodology: Our conceptual argument uses vignettes to illustrate three cases of distinct industries and regulatory settings based on primary and secondary empirical material, where actors are faced with uneven conditions, resources, and capacities. A vignette approach (Denis et al., 2010; Gray et al., 2017) was used to contextualise a theoretical account of the impacts of algorithmic management on the visibility and invisibility of work activities. In the vignettes, the variegated nature in our three cases in regulating and re-regulating changing work dynamics (Murray et al., 2000) offer insights and further scope into possible explanations and experimentations aimed at underscoring the contingencies and worker experiences.

Contributions: By examining the new contested terrains brought about by algorithmic management as the latest frontier to assert greater control over the labour process in each of the three cases we see the change processes of displacement, layering and drift. Using visibility and invisibility as an analytical tool allows us to show how these processes are redesigning systems of control regarding how and by whom various dimensions of work are transforming power dynamics at work that also points to broader changes to workplace employment and labour regulations beyond that of the gig economy and allow us to problematize the opportunities and limits of algorithmic control (Moore & Woodcock, 2021). We conclude by exploring the future of work in an era of algorithmic management and the regulations and resources required to ensure outcomes that empower workers for a more just world of work.



Labour regimes and glocal production

Stefanie Hürtgen (University of Salzburg)

Debates about labour regimes in global production have become an important field for addressing what Thompson and Newsome (2004: 133) call the connectivity problem. This is the question of how labour process dynamics at the point of production connect to the broader political economy. In response to this question, among others, labour geographers, and GPN scholars in particular, have drawn upon and developed the concept of the local labour control regime. Often with reference to detailed case studies, they show how national and regional state policies, interwoven with global firm dynamics, constitute specific local social practices and institutions that shape working and living conditions (Pattenden 2016; Baglioni 2018; Smith et al. 2018). They have developed multi- scalar approaches, which see (local) labour regimes as being “continuously reproduced and/ or transformed by forces ... operating at a variety of scales” (Jonas 1996: 329).

In the paper, I do not want to present specific case studies, but I want to propose a heuristic scheme that seems helpful for grasping the central logics and dynamics in contemporary global production – or, as I call it, glocal production. The term “glocalization” describes a seemingly contradictory dynamic of contemporary capitalism: that the socio- spatial fragmentation and deregulation of working and living standards, namely their downscaling, is the corollary of an upscaled, generalized logic of competitive capitalist accumulation (Swyngedouw 1997).

I take this geographical concept to argue that multi- scalar fragmentation of labour processes is the basis of spatial dispersion and upscaled profit- led (digitalized) governance. The consequences are far- reaching, in terms of intensified socio- spatial competition between workers and with regard to the general transformation of labour’s socio- political representation in the political economy and society. The main thesis is that with Micheal Burawoy’s (1985) notion we see a generalization of despotic labour regimes in glocal production. The fragmentation/transnationalization logic unevenly but systematically detaches (wage) labour from the means of socially integrative reproduction and effective political representation. It cuts through continents, nation states and regions as well as through production sites and workplaces.

Labor Market Structure and the Effects of Immigration on Poverty in in 24 Upper - and Middle-Income Nations

Allen Hyde (Georgia Institute of Technology, USA), Amie Bostic (University of Texas, Rio Grande Valley, USA), Todd Vachon (Rutgers University, USA)

In this paper, we examine the effects of several labor structure variables and their effects on poverty for households with both immigrant and native born householders in in 24 Upper- and Middle-Income Democracies. Specifically, this study evaluates whether employment protection legislation (EPL), union density (UD), minimum wage setting (MWS), and active labor market policies (ALMP) reduce the risk of poverty for immigrants and natives similarly in these countries from 2004 to 2014 using data from the Luxembourg Income Study. Initial analyses find that immigrant households are more likely to be poor than native born households, and that employment protection legislation reduces the risk of poverty generally. For immigrants, the effects in reducing poverty for employment legislation



are not as strong. The other key labor market variables do not show different effects across immigrants and native born households. We discuss the implications of this research, as well as chart future directions in this study.

Beyond the core-periphery approach. The transformation of workplace regimes in the Italian shipbuilding industry

Francesco E. Iannuzzi ("Ca' Foscari" University of Venice), Guglielmo Meardi (Scuola Normale Superiore, Florence), Nicola Quondamatteo (Scuola Normale Superiore, Florence), Devi Sacchetto (University of Padua)

This paper presents some preliminary results from ongoing research focused on the organisational and labour process transformations in the shipbuilding industry and how these affect the composition and management of the workforce, workplace regimes and workers' voices. The research draws on empirical evidence from the case of Fincantieri, an Italian state-owned company and one of the world's leading shipbuilders, gathered through interviews with workers, unions and managers in the shipyards of Marghera (Venice) and Monfalcone (Gorizia).

Fincantieri has been pursuing organisational rationalisation for many years through outsourcing and the construction of complex subcontracting chains (Cillo, Perocco, 2015; Panariti, 2011). Also crucial in this process is the increasing use of migrant workers by subcontracting companies. Moreover, these changes are framed in a medium- to the long-term process of labour processes transformation that results in greater standardisation and acceleration of some activities (especially hull construction). Also in Fincantieri (Basso, 2007; Cillo, Perocco, 2016; 2015), as elsewhere (Grimshaw et al., 2018; Evans et al., 2007; Wills, 2009), organisational changes based on decentralisation and outsourcing weaken the powers of workers and unions and worsen working and contractual conditions.

Most of the literature on outsourcing and firm reorganisation strategies focuses on the impacts of these processes on the outsourced and peripheral workforce's employment regimes, often neglecting the implications of outsourcing for the core workforce and, in particular, its impact on control, consent and cooperation regimes.

In Fincantieri one of the most significant transformations stimulated by firm restructuring is the modification in the technical composition of direct workers. While the number of direct workers is steadily decreasing (Galisi, 2011), the distribution among different jobs sees a significant increase in technical white-collar employees, who control the production process, while the number of blue-collar workers is rapidly decreasing (Company Annual Report 2020). Therefore, technical white-collar turned in indirect workers supervisors. The internal shift in the technical composition of direct workers, and the outsourcing of much of the blue-collar work to sub-contractor companies, have been identified by practitioners as the leading causes of the erosion of power and qualitative transformation of trade union representation (evidenced by works councils composition modification), as well as of the transformation of workplace politics.

Starting from this framework, our research wonders how the system of the workforce management is reorganised and, secondly, what reactions of consent, adaptation, or resistance - on the part of the workers involved - are provoked by this peculiar organisation of labour and workplace politics (the so-called 'Fincantieri model').



We aim to bridge the gap in the literature that addresses the implications of outsourcing processes through the "core" and "periphery" approach. Our results indicate how outsourcing has also impacted non-outsourced production processes and their related workforce by supporting the erosion of union representation in quantitative and qualitative terms and producing differentiated management and control strategies resulting in new forms of hierarchy and stratification.

"Free time" and collective actions. The case of performing arts workers mobilisations in Italy

Francesco E. Iannuzzi ("Ca' Foscari" University of Venice), Francesco Campolongo (University of Calabria)

Based on the results of qualitative empirical research, this study aims to investigate the attempts of social and political recomposition of the performing arts workers in Italy, starting from analysing the collective action and solidarity processes undertaken during the Covid-19 pandemic.

In the entertainment and live art performance sector, the pandemic outbreak has been grafted in a scenario marked by pre-existing vulnerabilities, such as advanced processes of precariousness, lack of employment protection and social safety nets.

Given the conditions of individualisation, social and contractual fragmentation, spatial dispersion, and high incidence of self-employment that characterise the performing arts professions in Italy, one would expect that workers would have little opportunity to develop solidarity processes and engage in unionisation. However, among the many workers' mobilisations in Italy during the pandemic, entertainment and performing art workers struggles were the most widespread, long-lasting, and systematic, thus disproving deterministic expectations. Going beyond this counterintuitive observation, this study aims to identify and analyse the factors that led to the development and consolidation of collective mobilisations and the spread of solidarity among these workers.

The fact that a social situation marked by cyclical interruption of income, difficulties in accessing social security, and growing uncertainty that had previously been experienced individually has become common and collective among workers due to the pandemic is identified as the primary condition that has triggered the development of collective mobilisation and solidarity processes.

While highlighting the role played by the impact of the pandemic in acting as a universalising agent, this research nevertheless underlines the salience that the dimension of "free time" (from work) has assumed in the collective actions. Indeed, the availability of free time emerged as a central dimension in workers' narratives when discussing the push factors for engaging in collective action. As artistic workers in a highly competitive context that rewards creativity, working time does not end with performance or rehearsals. It also includes training, coaching, creating artistic works and often finding work and/or funding for their artistic ideas, thus taking much of their lives. If, on the one hand, the stop imposed by the pandemic determined the almost total interruption of income and multiple difficulties in accessing emergency protection measures, on the other hand, it would have worked in favour of a freeing up of "time". This availability of time has been qualitatively oriented towards self-reflection, self-organisation, and the claim to recognise their condition of 'intermittent work', which implies a significant share of unpaid productive work.

Empirical results indicate that the mobilisations of workers in the performing arts start from material and status claims, both of a universal nature and specific to the sector, but soon acquire a political and re-compositional value. Together with a "material" claim dimension, constituted by the need to



access the emergency income support measures, the mobilisations of the sector's workers also push towards a process of political subjectification articulated through unprecedented auto-organisation and unionisation paths. Starting from that, this contribution also aims to conceptualise the dimension of "free time" in collective actions.

Organizing the Officeless: Class Antagonism and Politics of Freelancing in Istanbul

Özlem İlyas (Boaziçi University, Modern History of Turkey)

Freelancing could be taken to refer to different forms of often precarious employment relations, the class-focused analysis of which reveals a terrain of diversity as well as antagonism. I argue that the neoliberal discourse on freelancing presupposes this employment form to involve freedom to work wherever, whenever and with whomever one ones, suggesting a disavowal of social interdependence and class and non-class antagonism. First, drawing on Lacanian psychoanalytical tradition, I point to the psycho-social and concomitant depoliticizing impacts of this disavowal drawing on two experiences of self-organization by freelancers in Istanbul. The first was based on a space of common called *Dünyada Mekan* (A place in the world), which was opened in the aftermath of the Gezi uprising in 2015 and operated until 2019. Freelancers who met there decided to create a network of solidarity called *Ofissizler* (the Officeless) in 2019, aiming to render this form of labouring visible, do research and create advocacy campaigns, and investigate alternative forms of working and living for freelancers. Secondly, I suggest questioning the neoliberal discourse on the freedom of freelancing is possible by taking the overdeterminist approach to "class as process" (Resnick&Wolff, Gibson-Graham, 2000) as an analytical framework in order to point to the diversity of class processes in the field of freelancing. In this way, I try to open up space for rethinking class politics with antagonism (Madra&Özselçuk, 2015), also pointing to the importance for capacity to deal with conflict as crucial for political subjectivity (Byrne&Healy, 2006). In the meantime, antagonism is not primarily located between a more or less homogenously defined working class as subject (like the "multitude" or "precariat") and the increasingly parasitic form of capital (Hardt&Negri, 2009), but rather is taken to permeate the variety of class processes including the non-capitalist ones. I argue that freelancers as among the precarious workers have traumatic work experience which are aggravated by the neoliberal discourse of freedom, leading to an aversion to deal with conflicts and a decrease in social and political capacity on the part of the worker. Rendering class diversity and antagonism together with social interdependence visible in freelancing is hoped to provide a ground for finding organizational solutions to those challenges. The results are based on the in-depth interviews conducted in various spaces with managers of coworking spaces, freelancers, remote workers as well as start-up owners, and the ethnographic activist-research I did in Istanbul between the years 2015-2020.

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Labour platform models and their different worker groups

Jere Immonen (University of Jyväskylä/Finnish Institute of Occupational Health)

Labour platforms have been seen as promoters of precariousness and segmentation in working life and erosion of the post-WWII regime of employment security (Schor 2020). While these views compare platform work to normal considered full-time working arrangements, less attention has been paid to how varying labour platform practices and control mechanisms segregate the field of platform workers. Earlier research has noticed the heterogeneity among platform workers in terms of their needs and experiences. (Schor et al. 2010) Less has been focused on how experience is affected by platforms' operational practices or whether people with different needs, motivations and capabilities are attached to different labour platforms.

Labour platforms have been viewed both as digitalized marketplaces and new forms of organizations. The contradiction of these roles has been theorized with institutional logics theory. Theory sees organizations entwined with multiple intersecting institutional ideal and their expectations. This contradiction is called institutional complexity (Thornton et al. 2012). Labour platform companies have especially seen to face contradiction of market and corporation logics when creating platform-based marketplaces for independent workers (Frenken et al. 2020). Strategies that labour platforms adopt to balance between these contradictions are different from each other and create different types of working environments and platform models. There is a great number of labour platforms operating with different practices. (Eurofound 2018, ILO 2021)

In this research 38 Finnish labour platform companies have been reviewed and classified based on their governance principles and employment forms (see Ahrne et al. 2015). Research material consists of companies' terms of services and webpage presentations. Based on the classification I have selected seven companies to more in-depth study to view their operations from the perspective platform workers, platform leaders/owners, workers of platform companies and byers.

Review on terms of services have indicated that platform companies adopt different strategies to control both work mediation and actual work processes. Some of them follow more market logic - orientated approach and aim to create marketplaces for self-employed workers to compete for gig with their own terms. Some take more corporation logic- orientated approach by controlling work division and working practices more intensively.

Worker groups for who these platforms are marketed are visibly segregated. Platforms that allow less autonomy for self-employed workers by controlling rewards, managing work processes and sanctioning for non-compliances and levels of activity, are often targeted to migrants, students and those who are looking for low barrier access to work. Market logic-orientated platforms on the other hand are for highly educated entrepreneurs and freelancers. Interviews with platform workers have supported this perception of segregation.

Results are indefinitely tentative because of the lack of quantitative data. However, there is a great reason to believe that models of digital labour platforms promote precariousness of working life in



different ways. Some models are more controlling towards workers than others. The groups of workers that are already more vulnerable in labour markets are more likely to be attached to platforms where their freedom of working is more limited.

Trapped in Contradiction: the ideological orientations of young, precarious workers in the UK and Greece

Gregoris Ioannou (University of Sheffield)

This article explores the ideological orientations of young workers as manifested through their narratives concerning their experience of precarious work in hospitality in the UK and Greece. Drawing on 60 semi structured interviews with hospitality workers in Scotland, northern England and Greece, many of them university graduates or students, the analysis focuses on workers' perceptions of their work, their rights within it, their expectations from it and beyond it, and the place that employment has in their everyday lives. Through worker understandings, ideas, and beliefs about their present and future work, their broader ideological perspectives, values, and worldviews are abducted and examined in relation to the prevailing market values and axioms of neoliberalism. By interrogating worker stances on issues such as freedom and flexibility, immediate and long-term goals, collectivism and trade unionism, and their ideas about what is just, fair, and possible in their field of work, this paper captures the contradictions that are expressed in the young workers' ideological orientations.

The main argument articulated in this paper is that while young workers' experience in the labour market contrasts with their hopes, they tend to adapt to the conditions they encounter without undergoing a process of rethinking the basic tenets of their broader worldview. While the ideals of freedom, fairness and respect are often refuted in the context of their employment, these are neither dropped, nor reformulated for the purposes of adjustment. At the same time, these ideals are not developed towards building an oppositional consciousness that could lead to action challenging the status quo. Lowering expectations and avoiding long-term thinking are the key coping strategies adopted, not only with respect to the labour market and workplace realities, but also with respect to workers' understanding of their relationship with both their employer and their colleagues. This leads to at least a partial acceptance of neoliberal premises and an implicit normalisation of existing labour market conditions as shaped after the 2008 financial crisis.

Ideology and consciousness operate in dynamic, not static ways and subjects are often enmeshed in contradictions which defy easy categorisations. What the analysis can do in the face of diverging and contradicting positions contained within narratives is to recognise them, account for them, interpret their meaning, assessing their significance and implications, and explain their causes and consequences. By doing so, this paper illuminates the ways in which the dominant neoliberal ideology functions as subjects are asked to reflect on their own lived, working experience. It thus contributes to existing knowledge about the relationship between material conditions and ideological orientations and the mechanisms through which one influences the other.



Stratified survival, unified voice: the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on Venezuelan migrant workers in Argentina's gig economy

Mariya Ivancheva (University of Strathclyde), Jesica Pla (CONICET, IIGG, University of Buenos Aires)

The outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic has posed new challenges to the ways in which labour is valued and valorised in advanced capitalist societies. With governments across the world implementing national lockdowns to control the spread of the virus, low-paid low-status work merged at the forefront of public attention as 'essential' labour. Glorifying accounts presenting 'key workers' as national heroes have had a test in a reality where too often migrant workers occupy 'frontline' positions, poorly recognised/remunerated as 'low-skilled' work yet pivotal for social reproduction processes. The pandemic, thus, has called for an urgent discussion on the link between migration and social reproduction work.

To join this discussion, the paper presents results from our SSRC COVID-19 Rapid Response and Wenner Gren Global Initiative Grant, focused on a particular case of migrant workers that encapsulates some key contradictions that crystallised during the pandemic: Venezuelan migrants in Argentina. Since 2014 over 3,500,000 Venezuelans have migrated across South America (Phillips 2019). A humanitarian crisis, comparable to the Syrian migrant crisis, the situation of many Venezuelan migrants in the continent was severely exacerbated by the pandemic, many deprived from sources and spaces to make ends meet while left behind closed borders from their families or opportunities further afield. Before the COVID-19 pandemic, Argentina received over 150,000 Venezuelans (Uriem 2019). Unlike other migrants, Venezuelans were presented as 'university-educated', 'deserving', 'high-skilled' workers forsaking an authoritarian socialist regime to live in a free market society. They were given a right to residency and work via the Mercosur union and were initially promised gainful employment in their respective, highly qualified fields (Sala 2019). Yet the recession and political crisis left many unemployed over significant periods of time or working in the informal and gig economy (Sala 2019; Chaves-González & Echeverría-Estrada 2020), in sectors seen as 'essential' during the pandemic.

Against this background, we studied how 'high-skilled' Venezuelans experienced working on the 'frontline' of the pandemic: did it change/reinforce their perception of 'skill' and 'value', 'risk' and 'reward' in relation to 'essential' social reproduction work? To address these questions, we conducted a mixed-method research project, triangulating the results of twenty online semi-structured interviews with an online survey among Venezuelans in Argentina. We inquired into the motivations to migrate, the choice of country, ways of travel and job search, formal and informal support organisations, labour and social integration before and during the pandemic outbreak, as well as into future prospects as our research participants projected themselves into the future. Triangulating survey and interview findings with historical analysis, we show that the Venezuelan migration to Argentina is varied in terms of socio-economic backgrounds, experiences and strategies of survival during the pandemic. While all migrants are relatively satisfied with their life, 'essential workers' especially in the platform and domestic work sectors are exposed to greater risk but also see lower levels of economic stability and labour autonomy. We also show that curiously, what unifies our research participants, is a somewhat paradoxical distaste for socialism but desire for access to welfare services.



“Morienthal reversed”. The effects of a job guarantee in an Austrian town

Jörg Flecker, Hannah Quinz (University of Vienna, Austria)

A job guarantee is a labour-market-policy measure aimed at providing employment to the long-term unemployed who have been excluded from the labour market so far. The state acts as an ‘employer of the last resort’ to achieve full employment and thus social inclusion through work with a living wage (Wray et al. 2018). In contrast to workfare, it is not about tying unemployment benefits to work but offering regular jobs in the public or non-profit sector to the long-term unemployed on a voluntary basis. If a job guarantee was rolled out to a whole region or country, it would have effects beyond the areas of employment and labour market policy as it would put pressure on employers in the secondary labour market to improve jobs and support a minimum wage (Tcherneva 2020).

In 2020, the public employment service of Lower Austria started a model project called “Modellprojekt Arbeitsplatzgarantie Morienthal” in the town of Gramatneusiedl, home of the historical factory town of Morienthal. They invited all jobseekers who had been unemployed longer than nine months to take part in the job-guarantee measure. The work consists in non-profit activities within the community and the jobs are paid according to the relevant sector-level collective agreement. The model project is planned for three years and is aimed at providing insights that can inform a possible roll-out of the job guarantee beyond a single community.

Right at the beginning of the model project, we started a three-years evaluation study to analyse the effects of the measure. The main aim is to assess the impact on the former long-term unemployed in terms of their financial situation, day structure, health, self-efficacy, social contacts, acknowledgement and other dimensions. In addition, it is analysed how the participants assess the measure. All of the approximately 40 initial participants are surveyed three times during the lifetime of the project using standardized questionnaires and in-depth interviews.

The contribution to ILPC 2022 will present findings from the first two waves of the panel study. It will highlight changes between the situation of long-term unemployment and work within the job-guarantee measure and present the effects of the measure one year into the project. As the main difference between the job guarantee and a conventional employment measure is that all long-term unemployed are offered a job and no selection for the project is taking place, we see a great diversity among the participants in terms of gender, age, qualifications, health, duration of unemployment etc. In the paper, we present this diversity by way of a typology and discuss the benefits and the limitations of the measure.

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Waiting for the orders and for the papers: the experience of illegal migrant workers in the delivery platforms in France

Arthur Jan (LISE-CNAM)

The emergence in the last years of digital platforms that put consumers in contact with self-employed workers (Uber, Deliveroo, etc.) has disrupted several economic sectors and given rise to major controversies about the "gig economy".

First academic works on these companies have shown how their model relies on the circumvention of the standard employment relationship (Abdelnour et Bernard, 2018), participates in the development of precarious employment with low wages and protection (Wood et al, 2018), and is based on the remote supervision of workers by algorithmic management (Lee et al, 2015; Rosenblat et Stark, 2016).

As some platforms gradually cut rates and incentives for their workers, we have witnessed a significant turnover of their workforce and a gradual transformation of its composition.

These transformations are particularly visible in the meal delivery sector we've studied in France. While in the first study that we conducted (Jan, 2018), we observed that most deliverymen were French students or young workers, the observations and interviews we conducted in 2020 and 2021 show that a large proportion of workers in this sector are now recently arrived immigrant workers, largely undocumented.

This paper will combine an analysis of migration policies and labor market regulation with an empirical study of the living and working conditions of migrants who have recently arrived in France and who work in the delivery sector. It will provide elements for understanding the place that work on delivery platforms has taken in the labor market traditionally assigned to these workers.

We will base our presentation on a study conducted between 2018 and 2021 in two French cities, as part of an ongoing Ph.D dissertation. Several types of material will be mobilized: a participant observation as a deliveryman where we shared the daily work of Ivorian and Guinean immigrants for a month, an observation of a mobilization of immigrant deliverymen - mainly undocumented - that lasted several weeks, 25 interviews with immigrant workers including 12 undocumented ones.

We will first show that in a context of stricter migration policies, which make access to residence permits but also to legal work increasingly difficult, work on delivery platforms constitutes a temporary refuge that allows undocumented workers to earn incomes while being less exposed to repression and control than in other sectors. The access to work of these workers is achieved through the development of bargaining practices and forms of inter-exploitation (Didry, 2016) that we will expose.

We then show that the collective experience and sociability of these workers on the platforms is structured by uncertainty and by a double expectation: that of daily work, with the hope of receiving orders from the platforms, and that of papers. While informal work on the platforms does not allow them to advance their "paper career" (Spire, 2005) and does not contribute to their legalization, the forced eternalization of these workers in this activity generates significant frustration and a feeling of being stuck, which was one of the driving forces behind the mobilizations in which some of them participated.



The Crisis of Labour-Property Relationships, the End of an Era from the Black Death to COVID-19

Joern Janssen (European Institute for Construction Labour Research)

Labour-property relationships are intended to address a specific aspect of the decline of capitalism. For this paper it is important to emphasise also that labour-property relationships are to be distinguished from wage relationships, because wages may increasingly be paid also for work that does not contribute to either private or public property.

For this purpose, it will also be helpful to refer to the historical background of this labour as a means to identify its dynamic at present. For instance, under the feudal regime relationship land use was a grant, not based on property right. But with the juridical regulation of wages in England from 1349, land became a property for sale. I shall argue that social relationships, after more than 700 years of transformation, are at present at a stage of major crisis. The global pandemic of COVID-19, like the Black Death of 1348-50, incidentally enforces this process.

If the present dynamic is identified as a crisis of labour-property relationships between employers and employees, the emerging new modes are likely to be misunderstood in the present. Significantly, the so-called ‘gig’ economy is commonly defined negatively in relation to what is termed ‘standard’ employment, often promoted as a mode to be restored. This paper will elaborate how the basic conditions of the labour-property relationships began to erode at the latest since World-War II, especially with expanding social wage components and benefits enforced by civil government. Meanwhile property ownership has become dominant and separated in the form of finance capital in its diversity of component forms. Meanwhile, its productive assets are in a global process of permanent reconfiguration.

To resume the historical picture of a process of fundamental social development, it will be argued that we are in a critical stage of transition that represents again the liberation of labour, formerly from feudal sovereignty, now from property dependence. Strategies to fight against ‘precarious’ working conditions, uncertainty of employment, low pay, social inequality and discrimination are the subject of the conclusions. They will build on labour as the dominant power to produce and reproduce social subsistence and development.

The role of community organisations in the collective mobilisation of migrant workers: The importance of a ‘community’-oriented perspective

Joyce Jiang (The York Management School, University of York, UK)

In examining the collective mobilisation of migrant workers, scholars have explored the emergence of community organisations (COs) as alternative forms of worker representation. However, community unionism scholars tend to adopt a union-centric perspective with a focus on the institutional frame of analysis that centres on union strategies and practices, and/or different logics of action between unions and COs. This scholarship tends to leave unexplored the complex nature of COs. Often, there is an implicit assumption that COs are inherently organic and relational, are agents of social changes with some capacity for collective actions and naturally show interest in work-related issues. This scholarship also tends to assess outcomes primarily in terms of union membership and



influence. We argue that it is important to adopt a ‘community’-oriented perspective. Such a perspective allows us to explore varied capacity for collective action and different forms of identity framing across COs. We argue that these can affect the union-community relationship and various types of outcomes. By comparing two COs- Justice for Domestic Workers (J4DW) in London and Midwest European Communities Association (MECA) in South Somerset, we suggest some analytical points that can be gleaned from the two cases. First, we point to a need to explore different axes around which migrant COs organise members and how CO practices position the relationship between these axes. Our study suggest that the COs which adopt a class-based, intersectional approach might be more likely to facilitate the reciprocal union-community relationship and contribute to collective mobilisation. The COs which adopt a competing approach, however, might compete with unions and other COs for membership and influence and shift the focus away from class-based issues. Furthermore, we argue that COs do not necessarily engage in a relational culture and have capacity for collective action as community unionism scholars suggest. A ‘community’-oriented perspective requires us to carefully examine whether and how capacity for collective action is mobilised within COs and its implications for the union-community relationship and organising outcomes. Finally, a ‘community’-oriented perspective argues for the importance of going beyond the institutional framework of unions to address MWs’ perspectives and initiatives when assessing organising outcomes. Grassroots empowerment, personal growth and confidence, and the development of ‘communities of struggles’ are all important components of community organising. Overall, our analysis suggests the importance of shifting from a union-centric perspective with a focus on institutional frame of analysis to a ‘community’-oriented perspective to understand the role of COs in community organising of migrant workers.

Introducing the Digital Miner

Jan Johansson, Lena Abrahamsson (Luleå University of Technology)

The emerging digitalization in the mining industry offers new possibilities for improved work environment, but it is a process that requires caution and reflection. Used correctly, digitalization can create attractive jobs in safe control room environments, providing space for the employee's full expertise and creativity. Such control rooms receive online processed information from the “rock”, from personnel and from machinery, and control room equipment makes it possible to control and fine-tune the complete operation, from resource characterisation to the final product. Sensors and the extensive use of cameras and image techniques even permit “live performances” in the control room. All of this is certainly a good development, but we must also consider the risks, such as privacy issues, increased stress and changed work-life boundaries.

Therefore, we need to ask ourselves a number of questions: Will jobs disappear? What are the effects on competence and skill requirements? How is the physical and psychosocial work environment affected? Will digitalization open up for a new gender order? What is the human's role in a more digitalized production system? What will happen to trade unions and other power systems? These questions can be condensed into a broader issue that more clearly highlight the width and the dynamics of the development: How can we ensure good work in the future digital mine?

In this presentation we try to illustrate what the new technology can mean for the individual miners. We formulate the notion of Mining 4.0 (Industry 4.0 in the mining industry), where we try to create



an image of how the future might look from a miner's perspective, and how mining companies may navigate their way to a future that works for all miners. At the end of our presentation, we bring forward some recommendations that can be considered as a beginning of a road map for the human side of Mining 4.0. The presentation is summed up in two scenarios, a dystopia that we should avoid and a utopia that we should strive for.

Transnational mediated migration: Cross-border recruiters as a mode of governance of social reproduction

Katharine Jones (Centre for Trust, Peace and Social Relations, Coventry University)

Over the past three decades, the growth industry of cross-border recruitment has transformed global labour markets (Fudge and Strauss 2014). A wide array of independent labour recruiters, from temporary work agencies to informal brokers, now make it possible for migrant workers to access overseas employment (Deshingkar 2019). On a practical level, recruiters facilitate migration, including helping broker visas, arranging birth certificates and passports, booking transportation, guiding, finding jobs and/or accommodation, connecting migrants to healthcare and providing training (Ayalew 2018). They also offer financing (Eelens and Speckmann 1990) and services related to remittance (Gammeltoft-Hansen and Sorensen 2013). While some are registered as businesses (Salt and Stein 1997), others are fully enmeshed in migrants' social networks (Kern and Muller-Boker 2015). They are essential to understanding contemporary patterns of migration (Lindquist 2012), A nascent academic literature theorises cross-border recruiters as mediators of migration (Jones and Sha 2020), as migrant infrastructure (Xiang and Lindquist, 2014) and as migrant brokerage (Schapendonk 2018). These studies recognise that recruiters play regulatory roles in transnational labour markets. For employers, recruiters enable access to flexible workers who are often cheaper than citizens, with fewer rights and opportunities to organise (Jones 2021). For governments, recruiters enhance and extend governments' ability to control immigration and emigration (Xiang and Lindquist 2018). At a macro scale, they are critical to the expansion of racialised capitalism and contribute to increasing profit margins for companies in sectors such as manufacturing, fishing and construction (LeBaron 2020). At the micro level they discipline workers while contributing to a global erosion of workers' rights (Jones et al. in press). To date however, recruiters' regulatory roles as transnational mediators of social reproduction have been significantly under-recognised (Shire 2020). Moreover, much research is based on data from one national or regional context preventing the comprehensive theorisation of recruiters' roles across transnational labour markets.

In this paper, the author addresses this conceptual and empirical lacuna through comparing data from two major transnational qualitative research studies, one conducted in Europe and one in Asia, selected as examples of two contrasting labour market regimes. The first study the current paper draws on concerns the author's PhD research conducted between 2008 and 2011 on the role of temporary work agencies in facilitating the migration of workers from Poland into jobs in food production and engineering in the UK. At the time of this research, Polish migrants could move freely to the UK for work. The second study the current paper draws on concerns research conducted between 2013 and 2015 on the role of domestic work placement agencies in brokering the employment of women from Bangladesh into live-in jobs in Jordan and Lebanon, an example of a highly regulated transnational labour market regime. For the two studies combined, over 80



interviews with recruiters and 120 interviews with key informants were conducted. Comparative analysis of this data enables the author to theorise how recruiters act as a mode of private governance of social reproduction at multiple scales, a major contribution to new knowledge in this field.

Shapers of technological change? Trade union strategies and influence in the grocery retail sector in Norway and the UK

Secki P Jose (De Montfort University, UK), Caroline Lloyd (Cardiff University, UK), Jonathan Payne (De Montfort University, UK)

The impact of automation on the labour process has recently gained renewed impetus with debates around the role of digitalisation (Howcroft and Taylor 2014, Briken et al 2017). Previous studies have highlighted the challenges unions face in shaping technology outcomes for workers (Davies 1986, Beirne and Ramsay 1992). In the UK, union involvement often occurred ‘too late’, while in Scandinavia ‘co-determination’ and collective agreements, while not without challenges, provided greater scope for influence. The role of trade unions in shaping the use of digital technologies remains a vital question. This paper compares union approaches to workplace digitalisation in the grocery retail sector in Norway and the UK. It explores union effects through a multi-level analysis of national institutions, sector and the workplace, and the role of power relations at different levels (Lloyd and Payne 2021). Cross-national studies in countries with contrasting institutional environments where unions have varied power resources are lacking, despite their potential to shed light on the social shaping of digitalisation.

This paper focuses on unions organising in ‘bricks-and-mortar’ supermarkets, where most union membership is located, with a focus on in-store workers. Retail employers’ drive for flexibility, low pay and hours’ variability is well-documented (Price 2016), and often operates in tension with demands for ‘soft’, ‘interpersonal’ skills in delivering customer service (Grugulis and Bozkurt 2011). Digital technologies include self-checkouts, handheld scanners, digital pricing and shelf labelling, smart sensors and cameras (Grewal et al. 2020; Hoyer et al 2020). These technologies have been presented as a way of reducing routine tasks and expanding skilled work and customer interaction, yet there is evidence that they provide managers with more tools for workplace monitoring, data collection, deskilling and work intensification (Evans and Kitchin 2018).

Drawing on findings from a Leverhulme-funded research project on trade union approaches to digitalisation in Norway and the UK, the paper compares two trade unions, one from each country. The research draws on semi-structured interviews undertaken in 2021, with national officers with responsibilities for the digitalisation agenda, regional and local officers, and workplace union representatives at store level. The interviews explore union strategies on digitalisation, their ability to influence the use and outcomes of digital technologies, and explanations for their successes and failures to shape better outcomes for workers.

Initial findings indicate common themes across the two countries in how management seek to use technology to cut costs and enhance managerial control. In comparison to non-grocery retailing, job losses were not a major issue. Collective bargaining agreements and legal rights in Norway provide workplace reps with more power to exert influence and restrict digital forms of monitoring and employer-led working-time flexibility. While unions in the UK have weaker protections, and fewer resources than in Norway, the research shows that strong workplace organisation can still mitigate



some of the worst outcomes. The paper contributes to contemporary studies of unions as shapers of technological change, and draws out lessons in terms of the conditions which support or constrain union influence.

Resistance as a continuum. Forms of resistance in the workplace and on the streets in contemporary Chile

Gabriela Julio Medel (University of Bristol, United Kingdom)

The question about the workers' resistance has been a recurrent topic in the field of labour studies and when studying conflict in general. The approach of what constitutes resistance, however, has tended to focus on the organised forms and during periods of high conflict-intensity, often dismissing both the less evidently successful forms and the unorganised forms that are part of the everyday forms of resistance which sustains the struggles in the long-term (Scott, 2008).

This paper presents part of the findings from a PhD thesis that inquired about the forms of workers' resistance in Chile. The research began during a period that appeared as less intensive in terms of workplace-related conflict, a period marked by a context of an extreme neoliberal transformation with a renewal of the process of primitive accumulation (De Angelis, 2004) and (re)commodification of most aspects of life, initiated during the Pinochet dictatorship and kept after the return of democracy. However, during the process of analysing the findings a momentous uprising took over the streets of the country with consequences that are still unfolding.

The focus of this paper thus, presents the reflections about the elements that emerged during the fieldwork carried out before the October 2019 uprising – an inquiry on the forms of workers' resistance in Chile – and the elements that triggered and sustained the peoples' protests on the streets during the uprising.

Drawing on primary sources from interviews carried out with workers, trade unionist and key informants during 2018 and from secondary analysis of written, photographic and video material about the uprising, this paper discusses how resistance manifests in the country, one that suffered a broad neoliberal transformation and an extreme commodification of life. The panoply of forms in which resistance manifests, both through individual forms and collective forms, are interpreted mobilising the argument of the value of labour has to capital and its need to keep control through the constant imposition of work (Cleaver, 2017). The struggles against this imposition, both within the employment relationship and beyond it, are thus interpreted as a continuum.

The findings discuss the common elements that appeared in the research carried in 2018 and from secondary sourced about the 2019 uprising connected. Among the key elements highlighted are the elaboration, both from the workers interviewed and on the different forms of street demonstrations, of a critique of the violence (understood in a broad sense) ingrained in the neoliberal (capitalist) system, and the struggles for pay, time and against the commodification of life.

The insights from this research, which does not focus exclusively on the visible periods of conflicts but on a wide range of forms of resistance, while nationally-focused, have echoes in other contexts where the macro-dynamics of neoliberal capitalism have been imposed, and where resistance might not be immediately evident.



Labour market attachment among descendants of labour migrants in Norway

Jorunn Kaasa (Institute for Sociology and Political Science, Norwegian University for Science and Technology, Norway)

This paper presents a longitudinal analysis of labour migrant descendants' attachment to the Norwegian labour market. Occupational attachment is a good measure of the long-term consequences of migration, especially migrants economic contribution, which is dependent on their labour market performance and the labour market performance of their children. Norway has experienced a large wave of labour migration after the EU11 enlargement, which has spiked discussion on the long-term consequences of migration (Hermansen, 2013). However, this is not the countries first wave of labour migration. The first wave occurred in the late 1960s to the early 1980s and consisted mainly of people from Pakistan, India, Morocco, and Turkey. Previous studies show that these labour migrants experienced high levels of unemployment and weak labour market attachment after the first ten years in Norway (Bratsberg *et al.*, 2014). Migrant descendants in Norway have long been a young demographic and a well-researched group in terms of education. However, few quantitative studies have been conducted on their performances in the labour market, and the ones conducted are primarily descriptive. This paper aims to complement a descriptive analysis with regression-based analyses to identify specific long-term labour market attachment mechanisms. Focusing on labour market descendants born to parents migrating to Norway during the countries first large wave of labour migration, this paper will argue that the long-term effect of migration is mainly dependent on the performances of migrant descendants on the labour market. Using comprehensive longitudinal register data on birth cohorts 1981-1991 of children born to parents migrating to Norway between 1966-1980, this article examines whether labour market descendants experience weaker labour market attachment than their native peers with a similar socio-economic background. This paper argues that labour market descendants experience different prospects for promotion and income growth than their native peers, focusing on differences in economic returns over time.

Surviving and thriving in the platform economy: Strategies of workers of Tallinn's ride-hailing sector

Kairit Kall, Marge Unt, Triin Roosalu, Liis Ojamäe (Tallinn University)

Platform work, especially on lean platforms, represents one of the purest forms of flexible work arrangements in the contemporary Western societies, disrupting traditional employment relations and workers' social security situation. Although it has received considerable academic attention during the recent years, especially from the macro/meso point of view and in countries like the USA and UK, less is known about how contextual factors and platform workers' socio-demographics and strategies interrelate. The aim of this paper is to understand the strategies that workers in the ride-hailing platforms of Tallinn use to get by, give meaning to their work and even thrive.

Tallinn makes an interesting case to study the ride-hailing industry and worker strategies within it. On the one hand, the flexibility discourse and techno-optimism have been highly praised at the societal level; on the other hand, traditional employment contracts still dominate in most sectors, so platform work is an extremely disruptive although often celebrated development in the labour market.



Furthermore, the emergence of taxi-apps like Uber and Taxify (currently Bolt) have led to the changes in the legislation, decreasing regulations for traditional taxis and adding some requirements for workers using ride-hailing platforms, unifying these two industries (with small exceptions), and also causing de-professionalisation of the taxi drivers' occupation. Thus, the ride-hailing industry has had a considerable impact on traditional taxi business and taxi drivers, some of whom now also use platforms to provide their taxi services.

Drawing on 15 semi-structured interviews and a focus group interview with diverse group of Uber (and Bolt, Yandex) drivers conducted in 2019/20 (for the European Union-funded PLUS project), the paper highlights the variety of strategies these workers use to improve their livelihoods and work situation. These include multi-apping, discursive justification of their situation, planning an exit, collective action and "being at the right place at the right time". We also elaborate on the lack of collective strategies, the absence of unionization, and more widely the powerlessness felt that can accompany this line of work, showing also the contextual and social-demographic specificities (e.g. migration background) that play into that.

What women want: solidarity and resistance among domestic workers in the Arab States

Rima Kalush, Vani Saraswathi (Migrant-rights.org)

"Vulnerable," and "invisible" are two terms most often used to describe the situation of migrant domestic workers in the Arab States. These descriptors are accurate to a degree, with the absence of meaningful legal protections and the entrapment of the mostly-female domestic workers in employers' homes exposing them to risk, and rendering them invisible to the reach of the law. Power dynamics between employers and non-citizen employees are further misaligned under the employer-tied visa system (Kafala), which is especially rigid for domestic workers as compared to other migrants. And yet despite these oppressive labour regimes, migrant domestic workers - who have virtually no legal right to mobility, let alone to organize - still carve out spaces of solidarity and resistance. Despite concentrated efforts by both employers and the state to prevent workers from organizing, these mobilizations take many reforms, from transient whisper networks to private Facebook groups and semi-legal organizations. Many of these activities have become more visible during the Covid-19 crisis, as states and private employers largely abdicated responsibility to migrant workers.

Among civil society and international organizations working in this space, there has been increasing acknowledgement of the need to centre domestic workers and their agency in discussions on reform, with model activists and community groups championed by locally registered NGOs, trade unions, and, for example, the regional offices of the International Labour Organization (ILO), and the International Organization for Migration (IOM). Again, the elevation of domestic workers' voices has become more visible during the Covid-19 pandemic, with the rapid proliferation of online conferences and discussions on migration. Yet both before and after the crisis, inviting these voices into the room did not always mean they were heard, and too often workers were brought in to discuss their lived experiences rather than to articulate their goals for reform. Their contributions generally do not meaningfully impact priority setting, but rather are inserted into pre-determined agendas. Efforts by domestic worker-led groups to assert their agency are often co-opted if not otherwise



suppressed by other stakeholders purportedly working to safeguard their rights — further contributing to the “invisibility” of these workers.

This paper will thus explore two dimensions of domestic worker mobilization in the Arab States: the actual demands and strategies of migrant domestic workers themselves, and the dynamic between them and other actors in migrant rights’ advocacy. Though the paper will include a brief overview of the region at large, focus will centre on two case studies of migrant domestic workers organizing in Lebanon and Kuwait. Both countries employ the Kafala system, and both have domestic worker-led organizations that have been able to flourish due to civil society spaces that are relatively more open in comparison to much of the region. The countries offer interesting social and economic contracts as well.

The paper will engage with literature on domestic workers organizing, including its complicated relationship with parallel rights movements such as feminist, labour, and other human rights movements. It will source heavily from semi-structured interviews with migrant domestic workers themselves.

Scheduling Flexibility: Managing labour supply of gig workers in food delivery platforms

Ujjwal Kango, Rajesh Bhattacharya (IIM Calcutta)

As digital platforms boom, labour platforms emerge as significant modes of organising work, with labour available ‘on-demand’ (De Stefano, 2016), much like any other commodity. The organisation of work by digital platforms has largely circumvented legal or political determination of employer-employee relations, by unsettling the very figure of the “employee”—leading to a fundamental change in the organisation of work. However, in countries like India, with massive ‘surplus’ labour force in the informal sector, working mostly without the protection of labour laws and social security systems, organisation of work relations by digital platform companies calls for its specific understanding. While the literature highlights the new algorithmic forms of labour control (Kellogg et al., 2020; Rosenblat & Stark, 2016), scholars have given limited attention to how the platforms activate labour effort and maintain labour supply without a formal employment relationship—more so in a large informal economy dominated by community and kinship relations, reciprocities and weak ‘culture of contract’.

Based on ethnographic fieldwork, which involved the first author working as a food delivery worker with an Indian food delivery platform and semi-structured interviews with company management, this essay attempts to understand how food-delivery platforms attempt to manage a reliable supply of workers. Maintaining reliable labour supply involves three interrelated challenges: spatial redistribution of the available food delivery workers; temporal availability of the workers at different times of the day; and recruiting more workers onto the platform. Drawing on Burawoy’s (1979, 1985) concept of work game—the organisation of activities in the labour process wherein workers employ tactics and strive to achieve uncertain goals—we highlight the role of work games in maintaining labour supply on digital platforms. We argue that work games that rest upon, earning targets and incentives, performance management by the fleet manager, and interactions amongst workers, form a key mechanism in solving the indeterminacy of labour supply. Additionally, for the new workers there is a significant learning which happens after they join the platform. Thus, learning strategies such as, finding the right times to work, learning to navigate the app, etc. in order to maximise earning



targets becomes an engrossing learning game for these workers. Besides structural debt traps (joining the labour platform entails a structural entry into the cycle of debt, as the burden of the asset rests on the workers), and socio-cultural processes shape labour supply on the food-delivery platforms. This essay also identifies the differences and similarities between Burawoy's making out games and work games in the platform economy, and highlights the limitations of algorithms in organising work.

Trajectories of migrant involvement in workplace representation

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Among unionised workers in the metal sector, an above-average number of migrants and people with a 'migration background' are active as work councils and shop stewards. This paper discusses the results of a case-comparative qualitative study that looks at the motives, contextual conditions, and trajectories of migrant involvement in workplace representation. We conducted 25 semi-guided, narrative interviews with workers from two companies as well as trade union representatives. Our study shows the extent to which patterns of recruitment are linked both to life-world experiences shaped by migration and to workplace dynamics conditioned by an ethnic segmentation of the labour market.

For most of those interviewed, their involvement in workplace representation bodies was brought about by a combination of workplace conflict and encouragement by colleagues to run for office. In some cases, colleagues already active in such positions encouraged them to get involved and went on to mentor them in their efforts. Most of these mentors were workers with a 'migration history' themselves. This dynamic could be conceived as a form of migrant 'recruitment chains', through which access to a once 'fought for' space in the bodies of workplace representation was passed on.

Other interviewees were invited to run through 'collective nominations', where several fellow workers encourage or invite the person to stand for election. In these cases, the nominees already had an informal representative or leadership role. In companies with a high proportion of first-generation migrants, such unofficial representative roles are often also linked to language proficiency. In these cases, the nominees' language skills put them in a position to receive the concerns of a large part of the workforce and to communicate them to management or in workplace representation bodies.

Collective nomination processes can also produce 'opposition candidates' to the incumbent worker representatives. Against the backdrop of structures of ethnic segmentation and the resulting unequal impact of restructuring measures as well as the 'mirroring' of segmentation in some of the representation bodies, this dynamic could also have a specifically migrant character.

After their election, seminars offered by the trade union for members of works councils and shop steward work play a central role in shaping the workers' involvement in representation bodies. Here, those involved do not only learn about formal legal aspects of the work but acquire a broader political outlook on their new tasks in the context of industrial relations. The educational experience of respect and recognition in these seminars stands in stark contrast to exclusion and discriminatory practices many of the interviewees faced in school and other educational institutions.

The study shows that the specificities of migrant involvement in workplace representation emerge from the social processes and structures that produce and cement inequality along the category of 'migration background': precarising migration regimes, labour market segmentation, exclusion and



discrimination in the education system, and racist debates and movements. Its interaction with these processes points beyond the workplace.

Uberization, Public Space and Stakeholders: Towards a new Configuration of Employment and Labour Relations in Territories?

Donna Kesselman (Université Paris-Est Créteil), Christian Azaïs (Lise Cnam Paris, France)

Digital platforms are architectures whose operation profoundly disrupts the way workers' activity is organized and managed. The notion of platform undermines any conception of employment as a "location in work organization". The workplace is no longer materially circumscribed or even geographically situated. The occupational identity of the connected worker is for a large part based on a flexibility of initiative and skills required by the variety and turnover of tasks or missions offered on the platforms.

The direct control of the connected worker's activity puts labor law, social protection institutions and trade unions to the test.

We define uberization as the expression of a political, social and institutional process engaged by "the emerging grey zone figure" (Azaïs, 2019) of the platform company whose aim is to produce new norms or regulations of work and employment in the heart of territories, mainly in the "public space" of metropolises. Uberization claims to organize the disconnection of employment from salaried work. However, this disconnection does not mean the end of work or the end of wage labor. Rather, it marks a digital process of dematerialization of the firm that manifests itself in a multitude of centrifugal forces that at the same time encounter resistance, causing the formation of numerous work and employment gray zones in the public space (Azaïs, Dieuaide, Kesselman, 2017).

The aim here is to understand how labor and employment relations intermediated by digital platforms invest the public space, how these new workspaces accommodate established rules or call for the development of new regulations.

Behind uberization, we propose to evaluate the place and role of territories in the emerging recodification of the wage relationship. This dynamic is not simply a translation of collective bargaining and industrial relations onto a new terrain. It includes changes in the nature of work and the power of the employer in a new spatio-temporal configuration, in tension, tending to break, with that which prevails in companies.

With the development of digital platforms, how have territories and the public space transformed the employee/employer relationship? How has this dynamic involved workers and employers, and, unions but also other stakeholders? What does collective bargaining mean in such a context? Negotiating on what and with whom? What alliances?

To answer these questions, we conducted open-ended interviews with various stakeholders. The two territories of investigation – Seine-Saint-Denis, France and São Paulo's eastern suburbs – reveal the public space around two figures of companies and platform workers: ride-sharing drivers and food delivery couriers.

Our approach consists in identifying and questioning stakeholders: their involvement, the way they consider work and employment, the type, level and scale of their intervention. It studies the collective dynamics of this group of actors, the type of regulation produced, in order to evaluate the coherence and the distance with the traditional wage-earning system.



Impact of Migration on Women Workers in Printing Industry of Rajasthan

Chaitanya Khandelwal (Ambedkar University, Delhi, India)

This paper attempts to understand how labour mobility shapes work and employment relations in the context of women artisans of hand block printing industry in Rajasthan, India. Sanganer and Bagru are two locations in Rajasthan where women from Chippa community are involved in hand block printing techniques using vegetable dyes since four centuries. However, the ‘development’ of the trade, modernisation of printing techniques and competitive export market have led to drastic changes in production organisation and labour processes in last four decades. One of the major changes in the occupational structure and production organisation is involvement of migrant labour in the printing process.

It is an established fact now that involving migrant workers in the labour force helps in strategizing labour control and wage cost reduction. The dominant discourse on migration studies focus on migrant workers, their work conditions in the destination area, their socio-economic condition in the source area and their families. Gendered perspective also delves into the lives of migrant women workers.

However, there is lack of study on the effect of internal migration by male workers to a sector/industry/occupation where women were predominantly working and involved in production processes. This is important because women are also considered ‘low wage employees’ as compared to male workers. In a sense, the vulnerability of migrant workers and local women workers intersect and at the same time contrast each other in the destination area. Then, it becomes important to investigate the conditions and factors responsible for hiring male migrant workers over local women. This paper attempts to look at changes in work and employment relations over time due to labour mobility that has impacted women labour force participation in the destination area.

This paper attempts to look at the impact on women workers who have been in the printing occupation for years, after the immigration of workers from Farrukabad, Uttar Pradesh in Sanganer and Bagru in the hand block printing industry of Rajasthan. How has the migration of male workers influenced the wage relations and employment patterns in the two regions? What has happened to women labour force? How has the two vulnerable sections in the workforce i.e. migrant labourers and women workers intersect each other?

The research is done through qualitative semi-structured interviews of women workers and male migrant workers in the printing industry in the above mentioned regions. The paper follows standpoint of the women workers to look at changes in wage and employment relations, labour process and working conditions. The paper therefore explains the gendered aspects of labour market.

The impact of the autonomy-control paradox through blockchain technology on site and white-collar workers in construction production: insights from Sweden

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Construction is an industry characterized by shifting power dynamics – also within Sweden. Those shifts are affecting the actors (e.g., clients, contractors, and, crucially, construction site and white-



collar workers) during construction production – with the workers potentially experiencing an intensification and objectification of their labour due to this effect. In this paper, we address the research question of how such shifting power dynamics brought, specifically, by implementing blockchain technology, affect workers within Swedish construction production. Blockchain has been claimed to foster partially decentralized digital ecosystems featuring automated peer-to-peer transactions with a reduced need for third-party intermediaries, thus generating trust and transparency. However, while such transparency can be provided through generalized and decentralized control, this can lead to a reduced autonomy of the actors (especially the workers) represented by the blockchain network nodes – the so-called autonomy-control paradox. As such, we are trying to tackle the stated research question by analyzing this paradox through labour process theory (Braverman, 1974; Thompson and Smith, 2010), and see whether utilizing blockchain can aid workers in getting mobilized and re-capturing more sway on construction production labour processes. In this analysis, we also try to account for the peculiarities of the Swedish construction site – as sites constitute production spaces that differ from factory floors. Methodologically, we conducted a literature review on possible blockchain-induced transformations of work practices (also within construction production), and drew empirical insights from our research on implementing a blockchain solution for construction logistics during the production of a specific construction project. Despite the early stage of that implementation test, the study's main results already indicate changes in controlling labour and information. It seems that for site and white-collar employees, a more thoroughgoing transactional transparency can be realized through a blockchain akin to our testing formulation, while impacting operations management, work processes, and material flows. In that vein, the autonomy-control paradox for site and white-collar workers in sales, purchasing, route planning etc. can show that through blockchain, the present work regime may become stricter (e.g. missing micro-breaks); however, blockchain's transparency could also enable a bottom-up element, where site and white-collar workers obtain better insights in the processes they participate, as well as new forms qualities in their work. Ultimately though, judging from the present test, the focus on the material flow (i.e., the companies' and managers' main interest) will probably be more prevalent in future implementations of blockchain in construction production - a prevailing "business as usual" even in a blockchain-driven digital workplace, indicating discourses (raised by labour process theory) concerning re-structuring employment, controlling regimes, and autonomising spaces (Briken et al., 2018). It is thus more likely that blockchain will be utilized to increase top-down control over labour. As such, this study contributes with insights on the effect of implementing blockchain - a hyped digital technology - on the power dynamics impacting labour processes during construction production. Those insights are backed by on-site empirical observations, a rare trait in blockchain research for construction production, where actual use cases are yet to be found.

The digitalisation of doctor's decision making process

Jörg Kirchhoff (Østfold University College)

Information and communication technology (ICT) is increasingly adopted to monitor and support clinical activities in health care organisations. In particular, computer-based technology is implemented for the purpose of electronic medical records (EMR) which integrate information from the pharmacy, radiology and laboratory. EMR has revolutionised the work of health care



professionals by providing health professionals with direct access to information that allows a comprehensive picture of patient's health, treatment and background.

Existing research on the relationship between ICT, the labour process and the working conditions of health care professionals indicates that the use of ICT in clinical work, frequently restricts health care professionals' autonomy increases their workload, facilitates surveillance and negatively impacts on their relationships with other professional groups and patients. Expert knowledge held by occupational groups, however, may moderate the impact that ICT has on employees.

There is, however, little research on how the access to clinical information about patients, provided by ICT systems, influences the decision making processes that base on the body of expert knowledge held by health professionals. The aim of this paper is to explore doctor's utilisation of a fully integrated ICT system, by focusing on the doctor's decision making processes in clinical work.

The influence of ICT on doctor's decision making processes was explored by an ethnographic study, including observation and individual in-dept interviews, in a Norwegian hospital before and after relocation to a new building. The relocation of the hospital resulted in a further implementation and utilisation of a fully integrated electronic patient record (EPR) system, thereby constituting a unique longitudinal case.

The data from both the observations and interviews indicates that doctors accepted and integrated ICT into their working life as a valuable tool for diagnosing, treating and evaluating the treatment of patients. Nevertheless, doctors experienced that integrating the ICT system in clinical work also resulted in undesired consequences for the decision making processes. First and foremost, doctors use of ICT in decision making processes resulted in a decline in clinical work, ie. less direct contact and examination of patients. In consequence, doctors' decisions became increasingly influenced by the information within the ICT system. Next, the increased amount of information provided by the ICT system resulted in an information overload and difficulties in making the right decision. Finally, doctors often find that other health professionals contradicted their decisions. Registered nurses, for example, had access to the same information within the ICT system and thereby use the information to review doctors' decisions.

(De)professionalisation, occupational closure and 'the law': evolving professional projects in HR and legal services

Eleanor Kirk (University of Glasgow, School of Law), Esme Terry (ESRC Digit Research Centre, Leeds University Business School)

Law, legal expertise and principles can be drawn upon and deployed by both professionals and non-professionals in a variety of ways and for a variety of purposes. This paper concerns the evolving legal labour processes and attendant statuses of occupational groups that seek to deploy 'law,' both as a form of technical expertise and as a normative, ideological and legitimating resource (Hunt, 1993). As an 'elite profession' (Ashley and Empson, 2017; Larson 1977), lawyers have traditionally monopolised the deployment of legal labour, mediating access to legal knowledge (Dinovitzer and Garth, 2015), preserving an elite professional project that offers privileged status and rewards (Ashley and Empson, 2017; Larson, 1977), by maintaining closure of their occupation by regulating entry and practice. In recent decades however, the surety of their monopoly has come under threat within a



juridifying society (Teubner, 1987). Legal knowledge is now increasingly openly sourced, accessible via the internet, and regulatory changes have opened the market for the provision of legal services. Concomitantly, emergent occupations such as HR have sought to carve out a space as compliance professionals (Dobbin and Sutton, 1998), challenging the legal profession's traditional monopoly over the provision of legal expertise. Seeking professional legitimacy, HR may mimic not only the generic traits of more established professions (Pohler and Willness, 2014), but directly encroach upon the expertise of other occupations, such as lawyers, as part of a developing professional project. In order to understand and contextualise these related processes of legal professionalisation and de-professionalisation, this paper brings findings from two distinct qualitative datasets into conversation, offering a preliminary synthesis of our studies of two occupational groups, lawyers and HR practitioners. We explore how legal labour is deployed and claimed, the varying fortunes of expert and non-expert practitioners, and the related evolution of the law as an institution regulating work and employment. Case study A explored the classed-dynamics of the Scottish legal profession and involved 50 participants from law firms in Scotland, including 46 fee-earning lawyers and four HR professionals. Semi-structured interviews covered areas including professional skills, barriers to entry, and the changing nature of the legal profession. Case study B explored the legal consciousness of HR practitioners, drawing on interviews with 39 HR practitioners and six employment lawyers, observation of professional events and discourse analysis.

We find that many lawyers perceive their professional status to be under threat from the diffusion of legal knowledge into society. Particularly pervasive are narratives surrounding the potential impact of digitalisation on the sustainability of a socially and professionally exclusive legal market. However, we also find evidence of 're'-professionalisation in legal services, with lawyers and legal institutions seeking ways to reinvent the profession and ensure the long-term viability of a legal professional project. HR practitioners are found to have become in many contexts 'quasi-lawyers,' engaging in significant legal labour. The practice of 'quasi-law' sometimes subverts law towards managerial ends. That this is not subject to regulatory scrutiny in terms of legal 'practice' raises concerns about the felicity of law as it is implemented.

Owner Operated Businesses between Intimate Service Work and Direct Marketing: On Freedom and New Constraints

Isabel Klein (LMU Munich)

Whereas commodified domestic and care work is broadly researched in terms of labour conditions, little is known about the work of mostly self-employed beauticians and other owner operated businesses in the field of intimate service work. Beauticians work on their clients' bodies in order to make them feel (sic) and look better through massages, hair removal, manicures and pedicures and skin care. Not only do they offer very intimate service work on the body but they also generate value through direct marketing that is controlled by few big beauty companies. Drawing on ethnographic data in the field of beauty work, I argue that owner operated service work with direct marketing is a special case of neither wage work nor self-employment. This special case illustrates a research gap in labour theory and unfolds a complex nexus of freedom and dependency.

Beauty work is institutionally deskilled and deregulated in Germany, thus offering a low-threshold entry into the labour market for mostly female migrant workers. Relatively easy access to trade and



flexible self-employment regulations promise autonomous work to low-skilled migrant women, often previously employed in the care sector. I show that women choose to work as self-employed beauticians, triggered by a low-threshold entry and a promise of autonomous work. However, based on ethnographic data with beauticians, I would like to argue on that this promise of freedom is undermined by new dependencies that unfold between beauty companies and beauticians. Owner operated businesses in the beauty industry depend on beauty companies as these support the establishment of a business; conversely, these companies oblige beauty workers to direct marketing of their products. I show that even though beauticians are formally self-employed, they are controlled by direct marketing companies, coercing them into dependencies similar to wage work.

Hence, intimate service work is twisted through the direct marketing demands forcing beauticians in the role of a hidden salesperson. With regard to these contradictory demands, beauticians find themselves in the middle of diverging interests, turning the idea of flexible and autonomous work into complex dependencies. Concluding I argue that this complex nexus of freedom and control not only demonstrates the ambivalence of owner operated service work (between freedom and new constraints) but also calls for a more nuanced analysis of deskilled gendered migrant labour.

How do Polish temp workers in the German logistics industry experience and reflect on work, precarity and marginalisation?

Robert Koepf (Berlin Social Science Centre, Weizenbaum Institute for the Networked Society)

Eastern European workers are an important pillar of various German low-road industries. There is a body of literature on the structurally vulnerable employment position of migrant workers, the patterns of insecurity generated by non-standard employment forms and consequences for labour agency. However there is little research on how this is experienced and reflected by those workers. This talk will present first findings of the analysis of in-depth interviews on the workers subjectivity of Polish agency workers in German logistics.

Various industries in Western Europe run their productive models on sourcing a migrant workforce. More often those workers are from Eastern Europe since the population of those member states was granted full labour market mobility within the EU (Krings 2016). It seems that employers utilise migrant workers as they cannot sustain a profitable business under domestic costs of labour power reproduction.

Among others such a labour sourcing strategy is present in the Germany's warehousing and delivery. East European workers in those low-skill low-wage jobs constitute a major chunk of the industries workforce (Krings 2020). Employers stratify the employment relations according to their flexibility and cost requirements (Butollo et al 2018). For this they can draw on dividing labour market institutions. Temporary agency work and the EU wide deployment of 'posted workers' are common forms of non-standard employment in the logistics industry (Singe 2014, Taylor/Briken 2019).

Cross-border recruitment into "vulnerable employment" is not only decreasing employers labour costs and builds up pressure on direct-hire employees (Holst et al 2010). Moreover the fragmentation of the workforce along different employers, racialised divides and periods of employment within a workplace affects power resources available for collective labour agency

Therefore inclusive labour organising in the community of migrant workers remains an important task for trade unions and employee representations (Carver/Doellgast 2020, Pulignano et al. 2015) .



Political economy and the company-level evidence raises the question if and how these work mediated inequality patterns and structural vulnerabilities resonate in the lived experiences and reflections of migrant workers. This question is vital as these experiences can grow to be a subjective resource in challenging the low-road utilisation of their labour power. The counter hypothesis is given by Mrozowicki&Trappmanns (2021) work. According to their finding young Poles and Germans deem to be legitimate and subsequently not a driver of political action.

The talk will present first findings of the lived experience of Polish logistics workers in Germany. It will focus on the motivations and reflections of these people of working under precarious and racialised conditions, of employment insecurity, their position in working communities and their agency to change.

Data gathering has yet to be started. I aim for ten in-depths interviews and two group interviews with Polish agency workers deployed in a German logistics centre at the outskirts of Berlin. I will approach them through an established contact to a works councillor within the centre. The analysis must cater to the exploratory nature of the research question. A grounded theory methodology will be well suited for this purpose.

Gender compromise: men doing gender-atypical jobs in a Chinese mine in Papua New Guinea

I-Chang Kuo (Australian National University)

There has been a surge in interest in China's influence in the South Pacific in recent years. Most past research, on the other hand, has focused on the top-down questions of whether more Chinese engagement undermines current power relations (e.g. Henderson and Reilly 2003) or offers developing nations an alternative (e.g. Smith and Wesley-Smith 2021). This paper adds to the conversation by focusing on work relations in canteens within a Chinese-owned and managed mine in postcolonial Papua New Guinea (PNG), in response to scholars' advocacy (e.g. Nyiri and Tan 2017) to examine Chinese transnational enterprises' activities from the bottom-up local perspectives. According to studies on work relations in PNG's mining canteens, a popular narrative portrays multinational mining corporations and expatriates, including Chinese, as dominant players who dominate the upper floor and refuse to dine with indigenous personnel. Work relations in Chinese mines have not been adequately investigated, nor has how postcolonial and Indigenous cultural values associated with food work affected local employees' understandings of work relations.

This study shows the work experiences of Papua New Guinean butchers and food services attendants in a Chinese nickel refinery in PNG, with the goal of filling the gaps mentioned above. Because some sorts of jobs (such as serving tables and cleaning) are regarded as women's jobs brought during Australian administration, this article suggests conceptualising Papua New Guinean employees' engagement in culinary labour as gender reconfigurations. Instead, when it comes to food preparation in the village, male canteen personnel respect and cooperate with women, and the gender divide of labour is purely physical. Canteen employees' reconfigurations of gender identities represent a compromising process, including negotiating with diverse notions and conceding to the work situation after encountering these two opposing conceptions. Furthermore, while talking about working with Chinese cooks, male canteen employees' concerns and praise are mirrored in the jobs they regard as women's jobs. This study shows how local male employees' gender compromises



connect with ethnic ties in canteen work relationships. This demonstration contributes to our knowledge of labour process studies regarding Chinese transnational enterprises.

Digitalisation of the Norwegian Child Welfare Services. A qualitative study based on policy documents and individual interviews

Minela Kvakic, Heidi Aarum Hansen, Mona Jerndahl Fineide (Østfold University College, Norway)

Digitalisation of the public sector in Norway has been on the agenda for many years, but few state-initiated solutions have been introduced in child welfare services (CWS) compared to other parts of public sector (Breit, 2019; Hansen, Lundberg & Syltevik, 2018). Simultaneously, the expectations of both service users and frontline professionals rise in line with increased use of digital and social media in society (López Peláez, Pérez García & Aguilar-Tablada Massó, 2018).

A Digital Government Review of Norway named “Boosting the Digital Transformation of the Public Sector” reported a need for a dedicated and integrated digital government strategy and a clearer and more structured governance framework for digital government (OECD, 2017). Further, reports highlight the need for increased standardisation by digitalisation in order to remedy quality problems, inefficiency, coordination problems and unequal service provision in CWS (Bufdir 2016; KS 2018). CWS is characterised by the children’s and their families individual need for tailored services, there is uncertainties, ambiguities and paradigmatic controversies making major challenges for frontline professionals. Recent studies demonstrate that the frontline professionals were not quietly waiting for a government strategy, rather they developed individual strategies by using social medias e.g. Facebook in their work (Kvakic, Fineide & Hansen, 2021), see also Cooner, Beddoe, Ferguson and Joy (2020), Byrne, Kirwan and Mc Guckin (2019) and Breyette and Hill (2015). These findings brought us to the question of “which challenges in the child welfare services is digitalisation the answer to”?

In this paper, we turn our focus on standardisation, as standardising can be an effective mechanism of control: “Because the range of stimuli is greatly reduced by standardisation and specialising in one activity, the subordinate has fewer opportunities to make decisions that maximise personal interest rather than the organisation’s interests” (Perrow 1986, p. 129). Regulation is not a narrow, largely technical matter, but should rather be viewed as rulemaking in a broad sense, as a form of organised governance, but which can also constitute an institutional arrangement for coordination and control (Brunsson & Jacobsson et al. 2000:10; Timmermans & Angell 2001; Timmermans & Berg 2003; Scott 2004b). We thus explore public policy instrumentation implying a set of problems posed by the choice and use of instruments; they are “bearers of values, fuelled by one interpretation of the social and by precise notions of the mode of the regulation envisaged” (Lascoumes & Le Gales, 2007, p. 4).

A thematic analysis of policy documents and official reports from the last five years was conducted to explore the challenges, intentions and digital tools in CWS that are presented. In addition to four individual interviews with managerial staff members from three pilot CWS from the Norwegian digitalisation project “DigiBarnevern” (Digi Child Welfare). Our preliminary findings point towards tendencies where standardisation through introduction of digital support tools seem to be a quick fix to solve complex issues in the CWS. We also see tendencies of fragmented government policy, and how market actors seem to be in the drivers-seat.



Reappropriating autonomy, safeguarding dignity and fighting reification: A labour process approach to meaningful work

Knut Laaser (Brandenburgische Technische Universität Cottbus-Senftenberg)

Theoretical and empirical contributions to meaningful work (MW) have flourished in the last two decades; investigating how the interplay of organisational factors with employee attitudes and experiences enable or deny meaningful work. The majority of MW discussions take place in the field of Organisational Behaviour and Political Philosophy, focusing either on how management practices and organisational designs foster meaningful work or presenting normative interventions that seek to radically transform the nature of waged work. Political materialist informed frameworks in general and Labour Process Theory approaches in particular to MW have been scant thus far. We suggest, however, that LPT offers essential conceptual tools to strengthen the political, social and agentic dimensions of MW, while embedding it in the contested terrain of the workplace. In this way, the presentation promotes a LPT informed approach to MW which allows to understand better the many faces of MW by illustrating in what labour process settings MW emerges, persists, is challenged or destroyed.

The presentation introduces a LPT informed MW framework that combines objective and subjective dimensions of MW, that include autonomy, dignity and recognition. The MW framework suggests that meaningful work is experienced at the individual and relational level, but is shaped by wider dynamics at the structural level, such as the particular characteristics of work under capitalism and the dynamics of the labour process.

To illustrate the explanatory power of the framework, a case study on retail bank work from the UK is analysed that explores the impact of the transformation of the conservative and bureaucratic bank workplace regime towards a performance driven employment relationship on meaningful work. Thereby, workers struggle for meaningful work in the light of an intensified labour process and conflict-ridden relationships is exemplified. Via this analysis, the presentation suggests that a LPT informed MW approach offers a novel critical analysis of trends in work and employment, embracing an exploration of the social and relational consequences of contemporary work. Furthermore, it is argued that the MW framework provides an important lens for academics, policy makers and unions alike to safeguard and fight for meaningful work in general and autonomy, dignity and recognition at work in particular.

Reconciling work and family by creating a job through entrepreneurship: the case of immigrant women

Nathalie Lachapelle, Diane-Gabrielle Tremblay (Université TÉLUQ, Univ. of Québec)

Our research aims to highlight the positive and negative variables that influence an immigrant person's (IP) desire to choose the entrepreneurial profession and to start their own business, as well as the challenges found in the process of doing so. We understand entrepreneurial motivation as a concept that is transformed into a response to the characteristics of the entrepreneur and the environment in which he / she evolves. There are not so many writings on immigrant entrepreneurship, and we want to look particularly at women immigrants to determine to what extent general studies



on immigrant entrepreneurship and those on women's entrepreneurship converge or diverge, or can eventually be brought together to better understand the process, the challenges of entrepreneurship for immigrant women, and compare this to writings on women entrepreneurs and entrepreneurship motivation and processes in general.

GEM define two types of entrepreneurs: those who pursue a business opportunity to satisfy their own interests and at the same time work in a normal way (pull) and those who feel the need to engage in such an activity due to the lack of other career opportunities (push) (Reynolds, Bygrave & Hay, 2002). The push approach corresponds to the concept of necessity entrepreneurship (Acs and Varga, 2005). In contrast, the pull approach is the opportunity entrepreneur (Acs and Varge, 2005). The importance of immigrant entrepreneurship is reinforced by the great entrepreneurial motivation that we observe among immigrants, their motivation being more important than among natives. In 2018, GEM report for Quebec observed an intention to go into business rate of 39.8% among immigrants, compared to 16.1% among natives. Th

It is thus important to determine to what extent immigrant and women's entrepreneurship are motivated by a lack of other career opportunities, and what is the specific situation for immigrant women as concerns the obstacles, challenges and process of business development that they encounter.

Our literature review revealed the many variables (sometimes contradictory) that explain the entrepreneurial process for the various groups (women, immigrants, and immigrant women). According to various articles, it seems that the life cycle of a person has an influence on their motivation to become entrepreneurs (Bohas et al., 2017), as their age, education, employment, culture, etc. could develop different motivations according to their life course. We hypothesized that the lifecourse might be more important for women, and even more so for immigrant women, given the major events that constitute their lifecourse, and that may be more diverse and complex than those for women and immigrants considered separately. We will present the preliminary results of our empirical research on women immigrant entrepreneurs' motivations in the development of their entrepreneurial process, linking them to the literature review.

“Build back better. Blah blah blah”: Covid-19, disaster capitalism and “Decent Work” in Cambodia’s garment industry

Sabina Lawreniuk (School of Geography, University of Nottingham), Katherine Brickell (Department of Geography, Royal Holloway, University of London)

The COVID-19 pandemic has caused severe disruption throughout global production networks, including the global garment and footwear industry. Manufacturing shutdowns and consumer lockdowns have disrupted the rhythms of supply and demand since early 2020, forcing frequent halts to production. The effects have been devastating for the workers who usually cut and stitch the world's supply of clothing and shoes. As fashion brands and clothing suppliers navigate the crisis, they have protected profits over people, externalising costs and risks by passing them on to the most vulnerable element in the supply chain: workers. These dynamics are best exemplified in the mass layoffs that grabbed global media headlines throughout 2020. However, they are also increasingly being revealed on the ground in slower, everyday practices of workplace restructuring.



In this paper, we explore these longer-term legacies of Covid-19 on the organisation of work in garments and footwear manufacturing. To do so, we draw on data collected as part of the ReFashion project: a longitudinal study led in Cambodia over 24 months. Using repeated rounds of qualitative surveys and in-depth interviews, our research has tracked the impacts of the pandemic on the work and employment of a cohort of 200 workers since January 2020. Workers' experiences of the pandemic are supplemented by interviews with over 60 participants representing stakeholders across the industry: trade unions and labour rights organisations; industry associations and regulators; government line ministries; and multinational brands and buyers.

The structural vulnerabilities of garment workers laid bare by the mass layoffs in early 2020 – insecure and flexible work with limited social protections – rallied a promise from the ILO and others to “Build Back Better” for equitable and resilient forms of decent work in supply chains after the pandemic. Bringing work on labour regimes into conversation with the critical literature on disaster resilience and recovery, however, we explore how these ambitions are being undermined. In particular, we adapt conceptualisation of “disaster capitalism”, understood as when public and private interests collude to exploit large-scale crises by pushing through policies that systematically deepen inequality and enrich elites. Through this, we trace the emergent contours of “Covid capitalism” in the garment industry. We show how capital leverages advantage from the pandemic, focusing on three interlinked and increasing workplace trends: subcontracting, union busting, and backsliding benefits. Against the noisy rhetoric of Build Back Better, Covid capitalism is underscored by deepening reliance on techniques of flexibilization and intensification in an already precarious and highly pressurised feminised workplace.

Environmental mobilisations of workers as instances of climate justice

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The energy transition leads to the abandonment of certain sectors of the fossil economy and to the closure of some work places (e.g. wells, mines or refineries). This leads to the precarisation of some sectors of the working class. However, it also radicalises the antagonism between labour forces and traditional environmentalist movements, that are sometimes willing to sacrifice workers' rights to defend the biosphere (Krause, Morena and Stevis 2020). This form of 'jobs blackmail' prevents the greening of trade union strategies and the politicisation of the climate movement (Rätzhel and Uzzel, 2012), going as far as frontal oppositions between ecologists and workers (Ciplet and Harrison, 2020). In this intervention, we explore an alternative path and argue that since the 1980s there have been forms of environmentalist mobilisation specific to the working class (Loomis 2021 ; Snell 2021), based on the defence of occupational health and safety (Mazzochi, 1993; Vachon, 2021) and more generally of social reproduction (Barca and Leonardi, 2018). Moreover, the ecologico-political interpretation of the pandemic - according to which the root-cause of zoonotic spillovers is to be found in the global metabolic rift (Wallace, 2020) - allows us to assess workers' demands as instances of climate justice. To make our analysis more concrete, we will briefly present two cases: a survey conducted among the workers of the Grandpuits (France), where the struggle against the closure of the refinery gave rise to an original alliance between trade unionists and environmentalists; the struggle in the logistic sector in the Padana flatland (Italy), where workers' demands were recognized



as their own by climate justice movements, opening up the political space for a possible class-based climate advocacy.

The Dilemma of the Employment Relationship among Migrant New Generation Employees in Chinese State-owned Enterprises

Shuangjing Li (The University of York)

Nowadays labour conflicts constantly occur in Chinese organisations, ranging from industrial actions and employee suicides. As new generation employees constitute the majority of the labour force, an increasing debate is generated for the exploration of this cohort of employees. All benefits and welfares provided by state-owned enterprises (SOEs) have been attracting migrant young people, including hukou (residential identity) transformation and quasi-“iron rice bowl” regime. Nevertheless, apart from the difficulty regarding securing a position in SOEs, they are required to deal with the intricate relationships with others in the workplace to “thrive” or even “survive”. There have been extensive studies carried out on generational differences and the discussions around the new generation and HRM, however, research in the area of the employment relationship of migrant new generation employees is still scarce and has not been paid its deserved attention. In particular, guanxi as a cultural component is closely correlated with the employment relationship, especially in Chinese SOEs. Guanxi represents “a dyadic, particular, and sentimental tie that has the potential of facilitating favor exchange between the parties connected by the tie” (Bian, 2018 cited in Bian, 2006, p.312). Therefore, this paper concentrates on the neglected employment relationship of new generation employees under the influence of guanxi in Chinese SOEs, to investigate the workplace conflicts from another angle. It adopts labour process theory and draws upon an ethnographic study situated in both the interpretivist paradigm and qualitative research. Data is mainly gathered through ten semi-structured in-depth interviews and supplemented with my field diary from observation. The results of this study show that guanxi has a significant impact upon the employment relationship owing to the power and position of people involved in guanxi. Furthermore, guanxi cannot be isolated when it comes to the exploration of employee relations debates. The findings have several implications for the current literature: First, it compares workplace friendship with co-worker guanxi, to differentiate their respective impact in the workplace; secondly, it brings new insights in terms of understanding guanxi regarding the employment relationship by discussing one-to-many guanxi and many-to-many guanxi, to elaborate the dilemma migrant new generation employees face, besides performing their duties; thirdly, it uncovers the sensitivity and secrecy of remarking upon guanxi-related topics in the workplace, to demonstrate that this cohort of employees is struggling to “keep them save” in tricky guanxi-related circumstances.



Migrant labour and just-in-time retail chains' requirements: A qualitative research on the bagged salad commodity system in Northern Italy

Martina Lo Cascio (University of Padova), Domenico Perrotta (University of Bergamo, Italy)

Over the last ten years, the research on migrant labour in the agri-food sector in Europe has flourished. In this field, two issues remain relatively understudied: labour conditions in food processing plants, and the effects of retailers' power on the whole production chain. In this presentation we aim to contribute to reduce these gaps, by focusing on the commodity system of the bagged salad in Italy. These products are fresh vegetables and fruit, which after the harvest are subjected to processing stages such as cutting, washing and drying, packaged in plastic envelopes and sold “ready for consumption”. This production was introduced in Italy in the late 1980s, in particular in the Lombardy region, in the province of Bergamo; here, processing plants of both multinational and Italian companies are based. Since the 1990s, these companies have been expanding their activities and suppliers' networks in other Italian areas as well, in particular the Piana del Sele (province of Salerno, Campania region). Bagged salads are almost exclusively retailed by supermarket chains and, over the last thirty years, they represented an innovation in the consumption as well as in the production of food. This commodity system is characterized by both a re-organization of farming (in particular, greenhouse production) and innovations in processing technologies.

Our contribution deals with the transformations in labour organization and labour relationships in processing plants in the Lombardy Region. Here, the most part of employees are migrant workers, especially of Indian origin. The analysis focuses on three main points. First, working times and shifts are organized to meet the just-in-time requirements of the retail chains, for example with the introduction of labour shifts on night, Saturday and Sunday; second, a relevant part of the labour operations in processing plants are subcontracted to workers' cooperatives, with the aim of reducing labour costs and reach a greater production flexibility; third, trade unions play an important role in labour management in the processing plants.

The field study is mainly based upon about 60 in-depth interviews with farmers and farmworkers; workers, managers and technicians of processing plants; representatives of workers' cooperatives, producers' organizations and trade unions; managers of retail chains, realized in Lombardia and in other Italian regions.

Work, illness, and mobility: a critical ecological approach

Fiorentina Longobardi (University of Padua)

Over the past 20 years, work-related musculoskeletal disorders (WMSDs) have been the most widespread work-related diseases in Italy, becoming a critical public health issue due to their rising prevalence and the association with profound disruption of workers' lives (Fontana e Tuccino 2017, 2018).

Efforts to understand these types of injuries have largely been dominated by epidemiological research and safety science, which have focused on identifying risk at the level of the individual worker, population group, or work sector (Wolkowitz, 2006).



Limited research has focused on the perspectives of workers in negotiating the labour process (Willis 1989, Taylor 2015) and placing them as holders of specific working body knowledge. The incorporation of health and safety dimension by workers is carried out in a contested terrain (Edwards 1986), that has as its object the definition of the working body with its health implications.

This study explores labour health issues and forms of mobility that invest in free wage labour characterized by repetitive manual work, from the workers' perspective, using labour process's theoretical tools and ethnographic methodologies. It studies biographical trajectories to situate the health workers' condition in the segmentation of labour market, as long as sick workers are often migrants, women, manual precarious workers. The perspective with which the occupational health is framed finds its foundation in the tradition of workers' environmentalism (Barca, 2012) and in the Italian Trade Union Model (Carnevale et al. 1999, Oddone et al. 2007); according to this approach workers are the first actor able to recognize the harmfulness of work environment.

The study is based on a year of field research in Turin in a local trade unions desk for occupational disease collecting sixty qualitative in-depth interviews with workers who had sustained a work-related musculoskeletal disorder.

Firstly, our result shows how labour mobility constitutes a form of management of the harmfulness of work by employers and harmful production is more frequently outsourced. Precarious employment and instability constitute an important sum of harmful work, in which health needs and norms are not observed. Secondly, the management of sick workers take the form of forced mobility as assignment to a lower job, change of department, or punitive shifts. It is argued that these forms of control act in the direction of containing the indeterminacy of the work. Forced mobility causes retaliation and humiliation in the workplace, which frequently ends in the expulsion of sick workers from the labour process. However, these renewed forms of control are also intertwined with different forms of resistance, for example: use flexibility and precariousness to get a better working conditions (voluntary redundancies, emigration); leave a secure job; use what is left of the Worker's Statute (early retirement, takes of exit package, use health certifications to force employers to respect the security standards in the workplace); ensure that (individual) limits to the working tasks are recognized and respected.

Where is work within comparative political economy? Bridging the gap between growth models and the labour process

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Despite sharing many points of concern regarding the social, institutional and political embeddedness of work and employment relations, the theoretical traditions of labour process theory (LPT) and comparative political economy (CPE) have largely developed in parallel (Vidal and Hauptmeier, 2014). Recent developments in CPE, with the emergence of the 'growth models' (GM) perspective (Baccaro and Pontusson 2016), have largely reinforced rather than bridged this conceptual separation. Having refocused the debate in CPE away from supply-side institutions, the GM literature looks also at structural dynamics of capitalist accumulation, which were conspicuously absent from the debate on 'varieties of capitalism'. However, the GM perspective has remained thus far solely focused on macro-level dynamics, so that it has almost systematically erased from its conceptual and empirical



foci of attention the primary site where capitalist accumulation concretely plays out and where its inherent contradictions become manifested: the world of work and the labour process.

To the extent that the interaction between growth models and the world of work has been considered, this has remained confined to macro-level distributive, institutional or regulatory aspects (e.g. the impact of different growth models on the labour share; or how changes in employment relations institutions respond to different logics of wage moderation). However, the connections between different 'growth models', their mode of insertion in the international political economy, their changes over time and how these might in turn shape different kinds of 'workplace regimes' of control and consent within the labour process in both 'dominant' and non-dominant sectors have thus far remained under-scrutinised.

Likewise, the dynamics of workplace conflict and consent have remained so far absent from theorisations of the politics of growth models. The GM literature conceptualises the growth strategies underpinning growth models as being shaped by élite-level political dynamics, through dominant growth coalitions in interaction with electoral politics. In doing so, it disregards how lived experiences of work and of different workplace regimes of control-consent can also be key sites either for the generation of consent towards a given model of accumulation, thus helping to consolidate hegemony and even the persistence of otherwise dysfunctional models of accumulation; or, on the contrary, be key loci for the emergence of discontent and conflict that might have destabilising effects on the sustainability of different growth models by making the forging of durable cross-class coalitions more difficult. In short, by forgetting the labour process, the GM perspective disregards how the politics of production might play into the broader politics of growth models' stability or change.

In this paper, we argue that the erasure of work, workers and the workplace from the GM perspective constitutes a significant limit to its capacity to understand contemporary capitalism; and we advocate for a dialogue with the insights arising from the LPT tradition to address this blind spot. We outline the potential theoretical inter-connections and contributions that the two literatures could make to each other and illustrate our theoretical points with illustrative examples drawn from the literature and from our own areas of empirical expertise.

Mobilization, unionization and resistance of West African Migrant Farmworkers in the province of Foggia (Southern Italy): an intersectional investigation.

Camilla Macciani (Università della Calabria)

The present paper represents a contribution to the growing body of research exploring migrant farmworkers' organization and mobilization in the context of Southern European agriculture.

Building upon 2 years of ethnographic fieldwork research (2019-2021) and interviews with key informants carried out in the agricultural province of Foggia (Southern Italy), the paper suggests adopting the theoretical lens of intersectionality (Crenshaw 1989; Alberti et al. 2013) to examine different forms of organization and mobilization put in place by West African migrant farmworkers living and working in the informal settlements of the province. This theoretical framework allows to interrogate unions' and other political actors' actions and strategy, as well as past mobilizations, to assess whether the multiple forms of oppression experienced by West African migrant farmworkers were addressed through an intersectional approach or instead revindications were articulated giving



priority to one specific dimension. In order to better frame the action of unions and other political actors on the ground, the analysis will also employ key concepts developed in the field of labor studies, such as ‘community unionism’, ‘service unionism’, ‘organizing unionism’, ‘social movement unionism’ and ‘worker centers model’ (Caruso 2017; Fine 2006; Martinez, Perret 2009; Waterman 1993). Contextualizing migrant farmworkers’ struggle in Southern Italy in relation to other experiences of migrant workers’ unionization and organizing permits to conceive it as representative of the challenges existing in the organization of an extremely precarious workforce, fragmented along lines of race, ethnicity, nationality, migration status, and gender.

Even though the past few years have been characterized by multiple instances of West African migrant farmworkers’ mobilization, there has been a failure in addressing and strategically articulating the multiplicity of their demands. The fragmentation of the actors on the ground, taken together with the lack of democratic participation of farmworkers and the ambiguous role played by labor intermediaries within informal settlements, also contributed in undermining the possibility to effectively mobilize for the improvement of their living and working conditions.

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Post-redundancy Transitions and Sustainable Working Lives

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This study focuses on the experience of labour market transitions following job displacement, through the conceptual lens of Sustainable Working Lives. Redundancy has been considered a ‘critical life event’ (Gardiner et al, 2009), which brings into sharp relief the types of support and resources aimed at supporting individuals in employment transitions (Jolkkonen et al 2017). Based on comparative



case studies of restructuring in the UK and Swedish steel industries, we explore the transition experiences of workers over an extended period several years after the being made redundant.

Sustainable Working Lives (SWL) has become an increasing focus of academic research and, in the Swedish context, policy interest (Vuori et al 2015; SOU 2018). However, SWL remains conceptually underdeveloped in academic debates, and there is a tendency for conceptual slippage between sustainable working lives and sustainable careers (Ahonen 2015). The Swedish government committee appointed to review the possibilities for more sustainable working lives (SOU 2018: 24) stressed the importance of enabling people to take responsibility for their own employability and abilities to compete in the labour market during the entire working life course. Here there are strong echoes of the concept of employability, which stresses the individual and individual responsibility for maintaining human capital (Forrier et al 2018).

We propose a new operationalisation of the concept of sustainable working lives, conceived as an alternative to employability and sustainable careers, in order to stress the collective nature of experiences of transition and to open up the space for intervention at various levels by support agencies and policy makers.

There are two main reasons why our operationalisation of SWL differs from the concept of sustainable careers (SC). Firstly SC assumes an upward developmental trajectory over time, even if this includes changes in career focus (De Vos et al 2018). This assumption reflects a bias towards middle class occupations and professions, which is unsuited to the employment experience of many workers. By contrast SWL focuses on the maintenance of employment as the basis for subsistence, with upward developmental experience being desirable but not inevitable. Secondly, SC is – like employability - overly focused on the individual, even when this includes stressing the importance of context and multi-stakeholder approaches (De Vos et al 2018). Disruptions to careers are conceived as individual crisis. Our understanding of SWL is informed by crisis as a collective experience. Such a focus also allows insight into the collective response to and negotiation of crisis, and offers scope for policy interventions that engage collective processes and experiences. In contrast to both the concept of employability and sustainable careers, our research brought to the fore the importance of collective processes and social structures – even in cases where individual agency and initiative are stressed in the personal biographies of the research participants. Thus sustainable working lives are underpinned not just by individual responsibility but by engagement with collectives in various forms: both in terms of formal transition support agencies, but also family, social networks and the occupational community.

Valuing Entrepreneurs. The Destruction, Creation and Devaluation of Human Capital in Poland

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By abandoning the ahistorical conception of human capital developed in mainstream economics, we study the destruction, creation and devaluation of human capital in Poland since the start of its transition to capitalism in 1989. We conceive human capital as a set of social relationships, in a Marxian sense, placing the changes in Poland's human capital in a critical historical perspective. We argue that Poland represents a unique case study to understand the value of entrepreneurship.



This article contributes to an understanding of the Polish economic and social transformation by using the concept of human capital as a lens through which to understand the rising role of entrepreneurship for a capitalist transformation. It draws upon Balibar's work (2019) to shed new light on the nature of entrepreneurial capitalism. We argue that the process of human capital development and accumulation in Poland needs to be understood in the context of a dual labour problem: the need to absorb large fractions of surplus labour stemming from declining industries and the requirement for a new human capital capable of adapting and leading the capitalist transformation. Balibar's crucial point in discussing the application of Say's Law to health products 'for life' was that value (of human capital) is not an *ex ante* reality. Rather 'no capital is valorized if it is not metamorphosed into its polar opposite, a commodity that can be consumed "productively" in the capitalist sense' (Balibar, 2019, p. 46). If this possibility of human capital to be 'consumed productively in the capitalist sense' fades away, the *ex-post* value of human capital must diminish.

The 'value' that the entrepreneurial class brings to the Polish economy goes far beyond the material productivity of its human capital. As simultaneously 'a political and economic category and one that rests on symbolic and ideological fantasies' (Jones and Murtola, 2012b, p. 636), entrepreneurs' contribution to entrepreneurial capitalism needs to be evaluated in broader terms. Entrepreneurial human capital is one of those new commodities that is continuously invented, which produces 'means' for the productive sector or for the 'subsistence' of human subjects and 'produces' the subjects themselves (Balibar, 2019, p. 53–54).

Finally, we illustrate some of the contradictions that currently shape the fate of the Polish entrepreneurial class. As capitalism further develops in Poland, many young people enter entrepreneurship out of 'necessity', as the value of their formal education diminishes, and precarious employment becomes the dominant form of work. In the meantime, Poland's entrepreneurs record difficulties in meeting the current demand for innovation and new markets.

These contradictions impact the actual working conditions of Polish entrepreneurs. It is likely that the COVID-19 pandemic will heighten the trends and contradictions outlined in this paper.

The Rise of Authoritarianism in 21st Century Africa and its Imminent Self-Destruction

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The world has seen an upward trend in the globalization of authoritarianistic governance and brought with it the reincarnation of authoritarianism in Africa. The Covid 19 pandemic is also currently fuelling the fortification of authoritarian survival-persistence strategies that sanitizes judiciary capture and 'rule by law' not rule of law hence mimicking democracy. That this has created illiberal governments is not arguable. The total sum is the use of the 'legal framework of democracy' to progressively dismantle citizenry's civil and political rights. Labour has accepted the challenge and is using both old and new sources of power. Besides the traditional worker power, contemporary trade unions are militarizing their campaign for democracy and worker's rights. The concept of Freedom of Association in Human Rights Law has cut across all work spectrums to include the armed forces. These have built transnational union solidarity, with the ILO granting the International Council of Police Representative Association's right of audience at the June 2021 International Labour Conference. The army unions are next in line. The paper examines the emergence and impact of unionization of national forces over the past three decades as an additional dimension of union power to deflate authoritarianism. Its internal contradictions become evident when the external factors



change. Thus besides self-destroying from within, like fascism, the system is destroying by exogenous forces. This article examined five examples of incipient authoritarianism in Africa – Zambia, Rwanda, Zimbabwe, Burkina Faso and Uganda, to establish common features of these countries and how they are sustained. Previous research on the vicissitudes of authoritarianism tended to concentrate on one body of workers only. Thus the study across services was a holistic approach in improving the drawing of conclusions and policy direction. This study covered current and former trade unionists and was an exploratory qualitative research study that collected data on experiences and stories of the authoritarian scourge. A sample of 300 participants was chosen from each country including ununionized serving police personnel and unionized judges and magistrates, all in equal numbers. Data collection was face-to-face and telephone interviews, as well as WhatsApp and e-mail correspondence with participants. The GLU Africa Alumni WhatsApp Social Group was very instrumental in the identification and organisation of interviewees. From the research, there was unanimity in the condemnation of authoritarianism and that it must fall. Emphasis was also on upholding democratic processes and workers' rights and foreshadowing the roles the army, the police and judiciary unions can play in securing political and civil rights in collaborations with other unions both nationally and internationally. This study will reinvent and stimulate the discourse on army, police, and judiciary labour rights, as is with the mainstream workers movements.

The workplace as a source of (mis)recognition. Studying consequences of worker voice suppression for feelings of (mis)recognition in The Netherlands

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Recent studies on political disengagement and populism have suggested that more attention should be paid to misrecognition, i.e. the feeling that one is not valued and recognized as a full member of society, as a potentially important factor in the political attitudes and behaviors of so-called disengaged citizens. Some examples thereof are found in recent political events such as Brexit and the election of Trump as president of the United States. A common argument in such studies is that large-scale developments such as globalization and immigration have created a context in which certain social groups, most notably the lower educated, feel left out of society and, as a consequence, turn to political forces that go against these developments. However, apart from these large-scale phenomena, not much is known about how feelings of (mis)recognition are formed. In this paper, we argue that the workplace is an important social context to consider when trying to understand how (mis)recognition takes shape. Not only is work an ever so important source for self-realization, the workplace is also the prime social context in which educational differences materialize, both in socio-economic and cultural sense. As such, the workplace is an important context to consider when trying to understand what underlies feelings of (mis)recognition. In this paper, we thus study how experiences at work contribute to feelings of recognition. We specifically focus on experiences with worker voice, such as suppression of voice and retaliation, because we expect that such examples of not feeling heard at work may well generalize into feelings of misrecognition. Next to testing this general effect, we also consider potential difference therein along the lines of the educational divide. We test our expectations using the Work and Politics Survey 2020, a large-scale survey collected



among a representative sample of the Dutch labor force aged 16-67. This survey contains unique measurements of worker voice experiences as well as a newly developed scale to measure misrecognition. Our findings indicate that experiences with worker voice suppression are indeed related to higher scores on misrecognition. We conclude by discussing the implications of these findings for both studies on misrecognition and the field of worker voice.

Moving beyond the fences of industrial relations? Understanding workers' voice of discontent within food delivery platform work in Bologna (Italy)

Claudia Marà (KU Leuven), Valeria Pulignano (KU Leuven), Paul Stewart (Grenoble Ecole de Management)

Against the expectations that the advent of digital platform work has challenged the possibility of forms of collectivism (Rosenblat 2018), research has illustrated that platform workers can 'voice' their claims against managerial authority even in the absence of the continuous sociality in the labour process as typical of Fordist times (Cant, 2019; Piasna et al., 2019; Stewart et al. 2020). This research has pointed to forms of workers self-organization based on networks of solidarity that emerge next to or beyond formal trade unions within the platform economy (Marrone and Peterlongo 2020; Tassinari and Maccarrone 2020). Parallel to these studies, some more radical stances have recently invited to abandon "the eurocentrism of industrial relations" (Nowak 2021) going beyond the "fetishizing of the trade union form" (Atzeni 2021) when considering the emergence of these self-organized forms of collective workers' voice of discontent. This paper will reflect on the implications that self-organized and collective action within the context of the platform food-delivery sector poses to industrial relations research by investigating the specific case of food-delivery couriers in Bologna (Italy).

By drawing on digital ethnography and 28 interviews with food delivery couriers in Bologna, workers' representatives and formal trade unionists, this paper contributes to existing literature by advancing knowledge on the nature and dynamics of contemporary industrial relations in emerging sectors of the platform economy. In particular, it is our contention that understanding collective action requires to position workers' voice within a continuum – rather than an absolute – of dimensions which cluster socio-political and discursive factors and resources as well as institutions including formal trade unions within the city of Bologna. Thus, we use the concept of 'contested dynamics' (McAdam, Tarrow, and Tilly 2001) to identify the relations among various players, e.g. workers collectives and trade unions, along this continuum of phases of contentious politics that have culminated in an unprecedented labour response that we understand as quintessential of this era of global turbulence (Benanav 2020; Brenner 2006). Whether there is no doubt that, especially within the context of the platform economy, trade unions have often played a fringe role in organising workers protest at first, we claim that it would be misleading to think that this implies the need to rethinking conflict and workers collective action outside the fences of industrial relations.



The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on women's attitudes to, and expectations from, work and employment

Abigail Marks, Danny Zschomler, Oliver Mallett, Lila Skountridai (University of Newcastle upon Tyne)

The manner in which paid and unpaid labour is inequitably divided between men and women is central to the endurance of gender inequalities across the globe. Recently, the COVID-19 pandemic has had a disproportionate impact on women's lives. Women are not only more likely to be in occupations that the pandemic made vulnerable, but during the peak of the pandemic there was an extension to the domestic and caring responsibilities that already excessively burdened women. Women still undertake more unpaid domestic and caring work than men. This unequal distribution of this unpaid work serves as a barrier to female labour force participation and is one way in which gender inequalities are reinforced and have potentially been exacerbated by the pandemic.

At the peak of the pandemic, due to stress on the care system and NHS, women were more likely to be caring for sick family members which reduced their capacity to be in paid employment. Internment at home, as a response to the government-imposed work at home requirements and school closures appears to have further compounded the unequal division of domestic tasks in part due to the responsibility for schooling children at home being disproportionately borne by women. This inequitable division of paid and unpaid labour aligns with ubiquitous and embedded gender norms that define women as caregivers and men as breadwinners.

There is a risk that these female-caregiver and male-breadwinner norms could increase the both the unequal division and the perceived value of paid and unpaid labour post pandemic. In previous crises, such as the 2008 financial crisis, there was a retreat from progress with gender equality due to increased support for the perception that men were more entitled to available work than women.

This paper will look at women's narratives in the UK regarding the role of work in their lives, how this has been shaped by their experience of the pandemic and an understanding of women's broader expectations from work post the crisis point of the pandemic. Data will be drawn from three surveys undertaken at different points over the past two years as well as four phases of interviews with a panel of 80 participants undertaken over a sixteen-month period. The paper will focus on the three interrelated themes - the centrality of work in women's lives, attitudes towards domestic and caring responsibilities and career ambitions and expectations.

The Dark Side of Platform Labor Process. A Soft-Skills based analysis of digital labor in Deliveroo, Airbnb and Helpling

Marco Marrone (University of Venice), Federico Chicchi (University of Bologna)

Thanks to the role of digital technologies in mediating working activities, digital platforms' labor process is often associated with flexible and simple jobs composed of highly fragmented tasks requiring mechanical skills in order to be done. This view is often presented by platforms' management, motivating the use of technologies to provide new ways of working, but also by workers, who perceive themselves vulnerable because of the degradation of the working activities resulting from technological development. Furthermore, the understanding of platform labor as a low-



skilled job has also led researchers to emphasize the role of lack of training and education among those factors leading individuals to experience the precariousness and exploitation characterizing digital platforms working regime. In this sense, other than simply for avoiding regulation, digital platforms have often been criticized for contributing in polarizing between low and high skill workers.

On a first view, in fact, algorithmic management allows workers to overcome the obstacle of language knowledge as they have mostly communicate through digital means, a characteristics explaining the attractiveness of digital platforms for the migrant workforce. However, on a more careful analysis, more than automatizing and simplifying the labor process, they seem to go on the other side. The aim of this contribution is to highlight how more than making platform labor process mechanical and low-skill based, digital platforms demand a wide range of informal skills resulting in an expansion of the margins of labor exploitation. Thus, while on one hand it is well known technology impacts the labor process by intensifying workers' performance, on the other digital labor appear as a general reconfiguration of working activity where workers are demanded to develop specific skills to successfully comply with platform standards. This is for example the knowledge of the work that needs to be done to get visibility in the platform, the knowledge of the city to rapidly complete a delivery task, the management of customer relationships finalized to get better reviews, the ability to rapidly respond to platforms' notifications irrespectively from the time they will come or, last but not least, the confidence in using smartphones. Although they are not often recognized as proper skills, in fact, all this knowledge is necessary to successfully conduct tasks in the platform labor process.

Thus, with the aim of investigating the human work hidden by platforms it will be presented here a soft skills based approach combining the analysis of labor process with that of the different workers subjectivities (migrant and italian, young and older, male and female) involved. Empirical evidences will come from the fieldwork occured in the context of PLUS (Platform Labor in Urban Spaces) H2020 project and will make use of 35 interviews conducted in the city of Bologna among platform workers of three of some of the most popular platforms such as Deliveroo, Airbnb and Helping. Finally, after exposing the main research outcomes, conclusions will discuss the potentiality that the recognition of these "hidden" skills has in empowering workers and in challenging platforms' power.

Integration or exploitation? The case of work integration programs for refugees in northern Italy

Noemi Martorano (University of Padova, Université Paris-Nanterre)

This paper aims to analyse the connection between the Italian reception system, activation policies, labour market segregation, and new forms of occupational (im)mobility, through the study of labour integration programs addressed to beneficiaries of protection inserted in reception projects in northern Italy.

In the late 1990s in Europe and in Italy the civic integration model affirmed itself and defined a new model of social action migrant people are called upon to adhere to (Gargiulo 2018). Work is given special attention as an element of "integration" and participation in community life. This political strategy encourages individual autonomy and willingness to be active in the labour market with the aim of building "immigrants who are suitable and adequate to the needs of the labour market" (Gargiulo 2017: 61). In this process, a significant role is played by activation policies (Borghini 2005),



services that aim at increasing the employability of individuals dependent on social assistance and belonging to marginalised social categories. The immigrant population in Italy and the so-called “forced migrants” depending on reception projects are also affected by these policies, which produce a re-composition of inequalities, and a “refugeeization” of some segments of the migrant labour force (Rigo and Dines 2018).

The programs studied in the paper fall within this framework. They are designed as work orientation and accompaniment services meant to encourage refugees that have obtained papers and are concluding their reception process to undertake job orientation, professional training, and internship, with the purpose to achieve progressive autonomy and “integration” into the labour market. The analysis of the programs is based on qualitative research that took place in different contexts in northern Italy, where participant observations of labour integration pathways in the reception context and interviews with program beneficiaries, reception workers, job centres, employment agencies, and enterprises were carried out.

The contribution focuses on two axes. On the one hand, an intersectional approach (Crenshaw 1991; Davis 2009), allows us to understand how institutional actors in the labour integration process reformulate and reproduce religious, cultural, racial, and gender relations, which concretely orientate the job trajectories of the beneficiaries towards specific labour market sectors and segregate them within the broad spectrum of social reproduction jobs (from logistic to care work). On the other hand, it intends to focus on the increasingly widespread use of internship, which, although intended as an initial training tool to facilitate entry into the labour market, in practice it takes the form of recruitment that locks migrants into a gap between work and training without job protection and few perspectives for upwards mobility.

The framework on which I rely brings together the literature on asylum and humanitarian policies (Fassin 2010; Tazzioli 2015), critical studies on the concept of “integration” (Carbone et al. 2018), intersectional feminist reflection (Crenshaw 1991; Davis 2009), literature on workfare and activation policies (Handler 2003; Krinsky & Simonet 2012; Borghi 2005) and social reproduction (Kofman & Raghuram 2015; Anderson 2001).

Autonomy and control in mass remote working during the Covid-19 pandemic. Evidence from a crossprofessional and cross-national analysis

Francesco Sabato Massimo (Sciences Po Paris), Angelo Moro (INRAE – Dijon; ARTES 4.0 Macronodo Scuola Superiore Sant’Anna – Pisa), Marta Fana (JRC – Seville)

The global pandemic induced by the spread of the Covid-19 acted as an exogenous shock which forced organisations to adopt telework as a daily and common form of work along a relevant fraction of the occupational structure. Indeed, most of the growing contributions on telework focused on the estimation of employment which can work remotely, while less or any attention has been paid to the impact of the “new” work arrangement on the labour process. Our paper aims at filling this gap. Drawing from a real-time cross-professional, cross-organisational and crossnational

qualitative survey, our research investigates two main and interrelated aspects. First, we show how organisations reacted to this shock in terms of autonomy and forms of control including standardisation and teamwork dimensions across different occupations and economic sectors.



Second, we describe how and to which extent workers respond: adapting, resisting or appropriating the new organisation of work. More specifically, we study the effect on the above-mentioned dimensions across different occupations to highlight heterogeneity along the vertical division of labour.

Work, Logistics and Monopoly Capital. An analysis of Amazon paradigm through the prism of labour process

Francesco Sabato Massimo (Sciences Po Paris)

The characteristics of Amazon paradigm are linked to two crucial dimensions of contemporary capitalism: logistics on the one hand and finance on the other. Hidden behind these, labour continues to occupy a central place. My thesis is that labour, finance and logistics cannot be considered separately, and I will try to identify some of the links between them.

Amazon was founded and moved its first steps in American market at a time when the crisis of Fordism had been definitively concluded its cycle in central capitalism and new paradigms were detected or announced: from post-Fordism to the New Economy, from new “spirit[s]” from capitalism to post-capitalism tout court, from the network society to, more recently, platform capitalism. Underlying to these analysis there was a reconfiguration if not, the demise of (waged) labour, if not its emancipation, thanks to the advent of new technologies and new employment arrangements.

The 2008 crisis, the populist cycle and the covid crisis showed the limits of many of these new paradigms and their fail in seizing not only the fragility of the growth model of financial capitalism, but also the persistence of blue-collar subordinated work (either waged or self-employed) – who had not disappeared but had been if anything relocated globally – the return of process of vertical and horizontal organisations to gain market control and, finally, the revamp of monopoly capitalism.

A company like Amazon, with its 1.4 million direct employees, 578 logistics facilities (mid 2020), \$1.691 market capitalisation (end 2021), and \$469.8 billion revenue (end 2021), represent the crisis of the new paradigms and the overcoming of them. But does Amazon represent a new model? And what role plays labour in it and how does it combine with logistics and finance?

To study empirically such a large object I chose the workplace and the labour process as the starting point of my study. Drawing from a comparative and transnational ethnography of work and labour politics in Amazon logistics network (France and Italy) I will outline a frame to understand the transformation of labour process in Amazon and an analysis of the “relative autonomy of the workplace” which is the result of pressures coming from the evolution of Amazon profit strategies and the institutional constraints coming from local patterns of labour conflicts. What emerge from this analysis is a model of capitalism that it is not certainly the repetition of the old Fordist paradigm but that is able to pick up some of its characters, vertical and horizontal integration, wage policies, Taylorist methods, to overcome the shortcomings of the firm strategies of the 90s and 2000s. At the same time the concrete application of this paradigm in the workplace and in the setting of labour politics institutions does not come without frictions. Thus this new model is never a static one but in continuous motion.



Post-Fordist work organisation and the multitasking ‘game’: The case of freelance animators in Japan

Shintaro Matsunaga (Nagano University, Japan)

Japan has traditionally applied a post-Fordist labour arrangement characterised by flexible work organisation (Friedman 1988). One example of this arrangement is the existence of strong job security for regular workers in the manufacturing industry (Whittaker 2020). A similar post-Fordist work organisation has been adopted in the animation industry, where freelancers, who are not employed, form the core of the workforce. On the basis of data from more than 300 hours of fieldwork in an animation production company, this paper illustrates how animators carry out work for multiple companies within the flexible labour organisation of the animation industry.

Previous research on the labour process of freelance work has argued that the use of piece-rate remuneration often results in a ‘game’ (Burawoy 1979) wherein workers try to achieve a higher income level. To succeed in this ‘game’, the workers need to construct temporal order in a flexible and unpredictable labour process (Snyder 2017). However, such studies have overlooked the fact that freelancers undertake multiple tasks simultaneously and must be resourceful by changing their priorities according to the circumstances. This paper discusses how ‘games’ emerge in a multitasking situation by analysing daily records of animators’ work progress as well as field notes that reveal details about animators’ behaviour in relation to these records.

The results of the analysis demonstrate the following points. First, in the process of animation production, the work schedule of each person in charge was explicitly set; yet, in practice, there were often delays for which the animators themselves were not responsible. Early career animators in particular may not be able to anticipate these schedule changes and might risk losing the income. Second, for experienced animators, these schedule changes are perceived as ‘normal trouble’ (Sharrock 2011). Because these animators signed multiple contracts in advance, they were prepared to earn money in the event of a delay in a specific production process. Third, when the contracting companies urged the animators to continue their work, they did not simply accept the request and effectively resisted such attempt at control by providing the managerial individual in charge with an explanation of the challenges that would arise if they were to proceed.

Such cases reflect the potential for autonomous task management and negotiation, for example, rather than workers simply being controlled by post-Fordist labour arrangements. However, the findings also highlight that working as an individualised freelancer renders it difficult to cultivate occupational solidarity, as coping with risks tends to be a personal experience.

Understanding labour experiences to design better HAT systems: the view from the cockpit

Fabio Mattioli (University of Melbourne)

Over the last decade, companies such as Airbus, Sikorsky, Honeywell, and Thales have been experimenting with automated decision-making tools and digital assistants—think a high-tech version of Amazon Alexa or Google Home in the cockpit. Aertech companies imagine digital flight assistants as tools that can support the flying crew and, in the medium run, will take over the functions of co-pilots. AI team-mates would allow for smaller crews and more agile planning, cutting training



and personnel costs, especially on long transcontinental flights. But what would be required to make such human-autonomy teaming systems (HATS) work, considering the relational complexity of the cockpit? And what do pilots think of these new technologies and their impact on their lives?

This paper builds on 30 interviews with airline pilots conducted since November 2019, as international air travel slowed down because of the covid pandemic. The goal of these interviews was to explore what kind of assistance pilots wanted to receive from AI tools—a co-design approach that hoped to bring the voice of pilots to bear on choices of aviotech companies. We were particularly interested in understanding what relational aspects would an AI team mate need to feature, considering that cockpits are socio-technical system already saturated by automated technologies and designed to support human and non-human relationships through forms of shared cognition.

Our findings suggest that pilots look at AI technologies and digital flight assistants with an hopeful skepticism. Unlike general users, pilots are trained to use automation as part of workflows that are both carefully planned and constantly cross-checked. Until the 1970s, these workflows involved three or more professional figures. With the evolution of automation, airplanes have been designed to be operated by two professionals, a pilot and a co-pilot. AI team mates were seen as a digital reincarnation of flight engineers—a welcome support to free pilots from some of their cognitive labour that they have to shoulder. However, pilots were skeptical that the recommendations of AI tools could be transparent or empathetic enough to satisfy their need for verification and emotional support during delicate phases of the flight. This was particularly true for pilots who had worked in exploitative or controlling airlines. These pilots were uncomfortable with AI tools that recorded their voice and offered advice based on what the company dictated, which they imagined at odds with their actual needs.

The paper concludes that making AI systems into effective team mates in complex workplaces requires more than an understanding of the direct relationships that humans have with technology. Instead, it is necessary to think about the sedimented social relationships and labour experiences that shape specific professional settings. In other words, we argue that it is necessary to develop a critical political and economic understanding of pilots' experiences in order to design HAT systems that can be effective in the cockpit.

Gendering global production network analyses: variation in employment systems and masculine domination within the Bangladeshi ready-made garment industry

Bentul Mawa (Bangladeshi Agricultural University), Steve Vincent (Newcastle University), Kate Hardy (The University of Leeds)

This paper explores masculine domination within workplace supervision through an analysis four case-study factories from the same region and sector, the Bangladeshi readymade garment (BRMG) industry. We demonstrate that forms of masculine domination depended on how workplaces are embedded within employment systems. Using realist social theory, we define employment systems as a multilevel political economy, constituted of employment relations, supply chains and employment regulations. We demonstrate how employers' structural embeddedness within a local employment system shapes forms of masculine domination. The evidence demonstrates that masculine domination was least evident in one factory, which was structurally embedded, in a favourable way, inside an enterprise zone (EPZ). In contrast, more authoritarian and coercive forms



of masculine domination were observed outside the EPZ, although there was some variance that was related to each factories' structural embeddedness within local employment systems. Perhaps most significantly, outcomes appeared relationally interrelated. The sustainability of factories that were more favourably embedded often depended on the continued existence of network of less favourably embedded factories, where there was evidence of the most penalising forms of workplace masculine domination, and vice versa. We therefore argue for a relational understanding of forms of masculine domination within an employment systems framework.

'It was doing my head in': Low-paid multiple employment and zero hours work

Jo McBride (Durham University), Andrew Smith (Sheffield University)

This article explores the lived experiences and working time complexities of low-paid workers in legitimate multiple employment and zero hours work. Based on detailed qualitative research, these workers have 2, 4, 5 and even 7 different jobs – all out of necessity due to low-pay, unpredictable working hours and employment precarity. The study reveals a dual fragmentation and individualisation of employment, as these workers traverse multiple, expansive, complex and dynamic temporalities of precarious work.

The study centres on the regions of Yorkshire and the North-East of England, because at the inception of the study both were in the top three regions for underemployment together with over 20% of workers paid below the Foundation Living Wage (FLW). In terms of the sampling frame, our major focus was on those workers with more than one legitimate job who were paid below the FLW, as our key aim was to critically examine the work experiences and work–life challenges of these workers. We conducted 50 semi-structured interviews with low-paid workers in multiple employment, along with 6 senior managers, 9 trade union representatives and 2 foodbank organisers. This paper is based on a specific data subset of 21 workers who were employed on zero hours contracts (ZHCs), along with 8 retail workers who were employed on Highly Variable Hours (HVHs) contracts. Our detailed interviews with the workers focused on issues around routes into employment, working time complexities and challenges, low-pay and the reasons for engaging in multiple employment. The interviews were subjected to iterative and manual thematic data analysis, with open coding of transcripts to identify general themes relevant to our research questions.

Whilst we acknowledge that there is a growing body of extremely useful literature on zero hours work, much of this has been quantitative research (see Farina et al., 2020; Koumenta and Williams, 2018) or practitioner-based (see Brinkley, 2018; CIPD, 2015). Our research reveals indications of what an audience of work and employment may already be familiar with - that workers need to be available for (potential) work at any point, but may not actually be offered any hours – however, one of our key arguments here is that we believe this constitutes unremunerated labour time.

In fact, this paper makes a number of important contributions as we argue that ZHCs and HVHs work fundamentally transforms employment relations and the wage-effort bargain, as working time and, therefore, overall earnings are not fixed in advance. Hence, here we see new temporal and economic indeterminacies of labour. Furthermore, the research highlights a densification of working time with zero hours work as employers maximise productive effort into specifically numbered, demarcated and minimised working hours, which tightens the porosity of labour. Finally, this research advances



literature on contemporary low-paid employment and reveals the embedded and interconnected structural factors of insufficient earnings, variable hours and acute precarity.

Exploring power resources of native and migrant couriers in digital platform-enabled food delivery in the UK

Pedro Mendonca (Edinburgh Napier University), Nadia Kougiannou (Nottingham Trent University)

This article explores power resources accrued to native and migrant gig workers in the platform-enabled food delivery sector in the UK. We draw on the power-resource theoretical framework (Gumbrell-McCormick and Hyman, 2013; Wright, 2000) to analyse the capacity for different groups of gig couriers to develop (or not) collective power resources to defend their interests and improve working conditions. We intersect it with Smith's (2006) conceptualisation of the double indeterminacy of labour to explore how the labour process constrains/enables effort and mobility power for the different groups of couriers. In so doing, this article examines the role of precarious working/living conditions and the struggles to build-up collective and individual power. It focuses on native British couriers, Eastern European EU migrants and outside EU undocumented migrants. While there is a growing literature considering gig workers' agency in the platform economy (Tassinari and Maccarrone, 2020; Veen et al., 2020; Wood et al., 2018), there is a lack of research that looks at how of varieties of precarity amongst native and migrant gig workers affect their capacity to develop individual and collective power resources. Therefore, the article aims to answer two questions:

1. To comparatively explore the differences and similarities of precarious work experiences across native and migrant labour in the food delivery in the UK.
2. To comparatively examine the role of precarious working and living conditions for native and migrant workers to develop power resources in the food delivery sector.

The study draws on qualitative research conducted between 2017 and 2019, with four main sources of data: (1) closed Facebook group page and Messenger chat; (2) minutes of couriers' network meetings (n=4); (3) audio-recording of couriers' network leadership meetings (n=5); (4) semi-structured interviews with native couriers (n=19) and migrant couriers (n=13).

The article sheds light on different facets of precarity amongst gig couriers, which exposes differences but also points of connection amongst the couriers, such as an overarching level of dependency on platform work, insecurity in pay and employment. However, this dependency is nuanced as data demonstrate multiple ways in which gig couriers' consent to precarious and exploitative conditions. For instance, when compared to native British couriers, migrant couriers highlight having other priorities that lead to accept exploitative conditions.

This variety of experiences also reflects on how migrant couriers may prioritise some of their individual and family interests above challenging precariousness collectively. Data show levels of precarity across the studied groups impacting on collective power resources, such as associational, institutional, and structural. However, beyond these, this article shows the significance of individual mobility and effort power as a key feature of precarious gig work and an extra resource in workers' agency. The precarious living and employment circumstances of gig work defines the possibility of exercising or not this form of agency. While mobility power may create some possibilities of job mobility for native British couriers to resist exploitative working conditions, for migrant couriers,



and particularly those that are undocumented, the freedom of movement to other jobs is highly restricted.

Bogus self-employment and top-down versus bottom-up labour law enforcement in Slovakia

Petr Mezihorak (Institute for Sociology of Slovak Academy of Sciences, Slovakia)

Despite several changes in the labour code in the last decade which increasingly broadened the scope of dependent work, the estimated number of persons working in bogus self-employment in Slovakia remains high. In the first quarter of 2021 it was 108 thousand, which means 30 % of self-employed, 36 % of solo self-employed and 4.3 % of total labour force. In Slovakia, besides bottom-up enforcement via courts and in the virtual absence of trade unions, only the Labour Inspection is authorised to monitor employers' compliance with employment rules and regulations. This study takes the case of bogus self-employment, and investigates the ways how, on the one side, Labour Inspection enforces the labour law top-down, and on the other side, workers via lawsuits with their (former) employers bottom-up. The research explores the question about the potential and results of these different strategies to tackle bogus self-employment, and more generally undeclared work, in Slovakia.

The study draws mainly on three case studies selected as distinctive cases of workers involved in the challenge to identify and contest bogus self-employment. Besides the workers, interviews were conducted also with other actors in relationships to them, such as labour inspectors, trade unionists, NGO activists, and lawyers. We were also provided with a range of materials, such as court records or evidence given to labour inspectorate. The study also analysed Annual Surveys of the European Platform Tackling Undeclared Work and statistics of Labour Inspection in Slovakia.

The study finds out that the weak enforcement of labour law in Slovakia is related to wider problem of legal hyper-positivism. In the environment of text-centric interpretation of labour law, there is a risk that the top-down enforcement would focus mainly on 'low-hanging fruits', such as work without labour contract, disciplining mainly migrant workers and serving political interests rather than labour law enforcement. In contrast, more complicated labour disputes which would lead to reconstruction of labour law and justice in employment relations are almost entirely an arena for private bottom-up enforcement through courts. In this perspective, this study demonstrates the utility of understanding the access to labour justice in a broad manner, this means, as a relatively long movement towards the law and within the law rather than singular act, such as submission of a complaint to the labour inspection or an initiation of a lawsuit. Such broad understanding of access to justice also implies that the barriers that people face in the process of seeking help with their grievances are not limited to the organisation of the legal system itself, such as, for example, high costs of bringing claims to courts, or lack of knowledge about one's rights, but may stem from other factors, such as lack of knowledge and experience on the side of judges and labour inspectors, or even influence of employers on labour law enforcement institutions.



Who needs a middleman? How “fleet partners” save polish ride-hailing market for Uber

Bartosz Mika, Dominika Polkowska (University of Gdansk, Maria Curie-Sklodowska University)

In the CEE countries employment relations are based on a hybrid institutional system occasionally creating a need for patchwork-like solutions (Rapacki and Czerniak, 2019). Multinational companies connecting local market with multinational networks apply technological innovations to adapt to the existing legal regulations. Proposed presentation refers to example of such process, namely Uber’s presence in Poland. In the face of institutional change the adjustment strategy adopted by the gig-work platform in the Polish ride-hailing market was to use a peculiar agent ie. ‘fleet partner’. Partners are intermediaries, usually experienced drivers or former drivers, who at some point in history took on from other drivers the cost of setting up a business. Based on 42 interviews with Uber drivers in Poland (conducted between 2018–2020) and two fleet partners (2021), this paper tries to discover the prerequisites of the emergence of ‘fleet partners’ in a semi-peripheral type of work-on-demand platform. In the context of legislation reform in 2020 disturbed by SARS-COVID-19 pandemic authors follow the changes in the status of these intermediators. Using the concept of patchwork capitalism adopted for CEE countries, the study shows that intermediaries took advantage of institutional hybridity placing themselves between a global giant and a local regulator and passed the final burden of the on-demand work further onto the drivers.

The case shows how it is possible to explore features of CEE’s countries as a factors of social innovation rather than simply treating them as a recipient of dominant labor practices. Although ‘fleet partners’ do not work as work agencies or labor brokers they situated themselves between the platform and drivers making the existence of Uber on polish ride-hailing industry passible.

Labour Praxis and Space: A case study of tensions and resolutions in coal mining and agricultural labour process

Srishti Mishra (Indian Institute of Management Ahmedabad, India)

This paper is part of an early-stage Ph.D. study on the processes and relations among actors in the exploitation of coal reserves in the richly endowed North Karnpura Region in the state of Jharkhand in India. Located empirically in a region adjoining a recently operationalized coal mine, this particular paper analyses the labour process in the transportation of the mined coal stock.

This remote region was very recently under the national spotlight, as a week-long protest by the local community disrupted the ongoing supply of coal from this basket mine to several thermal power plants across the eastern part of the country. The multiple concerns of the protesting locals have intricate, and seemingly contradictory links to their identities as labour and labour power. For instance, as farmers they are protesting the destruction of their produce due to pollution from coal dust while as unemployed locals, they are protesting the elite capture of contracts for trucking and loading work, demanding participation in the process.

Taking on the exhortations of Rainnie et al. (2010) to bring a geographically informed approach to understanding the labour process, the analysis is anchored in Harvey’s (2001) conceptualization of the spatial fix and Herod’s (2003) examinations of the dialectic between space and workers’ social



and political praxis. In this paper, I attempt to examine the tensions and resolutions in the dialectic of space and the praxis of the local workers in this region.

Employing a qualitative methodology, I have conducted interviews with members in the community, some of whom are employed in the operations, with the management of the public sector enterprise that owns the mining lease, employees of its subcontractors, and with local administration and elected representatives. This has been supplemented with news reports and relevant policy documents.

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Identities in a flux? Interrogating embodied labour and vulnerabilities in the work of food delivery agents

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How does the nature of work shape one’s ‘identity and one’s comprehension of oneself in the context of being controlled by an algorithm against the context of changing Indian social milieu? Based on 18-qualitative interviews with Food Delivery Agents (FDAs) working with Swiggy and Zomato, we try to explore the identity question in the totality of the emotional and physical labour of FDAs in Kashipur, Roorkee and Delhi by following them around.

Variable and fundamental changes in work organization destabilizes and problematizes the relationship between workers’ identity and their true selves. The relational, changing, and emergent nature of Gig workers’ ‘identity is a complex negotiation process rather than a static construction. Asking questions about their past, present, family, education, experiences etc., we try to unpack their understanding of themselves in the platform work they reproduce daily to make a living. These FDAs regulate their ‘identities and their ‘identities’ and are in turn regulated by precarity, algorithmic control, and interaction with customers. These FDAs also negotiate their identities between their “Me” and “We” selves, often struggling to answer their own sense of being and becoming. Moving from task to task to make ends meet to provide for their families often far away, these FDAs also wish to feel that they are not merely part of a process but of something bigger than themselves. These platforms promise to buy a set quantity of labour, but in the process, they robotise FDAs’ sense of self and identity, turning them into mere ‘riders’ who struggle for slots and race against time. Fictitious freedom, precarity and exploitation are similar verses but with different narratives of identity. We explore through immersive qualitative research how these FDAs are obliged to adopt multiple “identities” and sustain and navigate them to get by each day, overturning conventional understandings of structured antagonism. Our contributions are threefold. First, we extend the ‘identity’ question to gig work and present empirical validation of its fluid and dynamic nature from



the field. Secondly, we explore the intricacies of the embodied labour and effort that goes into the work of Food Delivery Agents and how they reconcile with their unmet hopes and aspirations while putting on a pleasant face serving customers whose only concern is that the food is delivered on time. Lastly, we also make a case for policymakers to have a comprehensive labour policy effectively implemented for these FDAs. We advocate that the benefits of platform capitalism be distributed reasonably, if not equitably.

When work stops, but workers mobilise. The case of Syndicat National des Artistes Plasticiens during the pandemic

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Artists have often been considered as forerunners of the current transformations of work, their mobility across projects and occupations being emblematic for the growing individualisation of workers careers (Boltanski & Chiapello, 1999; Lingo & Tepper, 2013; McRobbie, 2004; Menger, 1999; Throsby & Zednik, 2011). During the covid health crisis, most artists were impeded to work, the lockdown measures preventing them from playing, performing, and exhibiting their work (Pulignano et al., 2021). In the French context, performing artists working under the “intermittent” regime could benefit from the protections connected to wage-employed, but it was not the case of visual artists, who work instead as self-employed and are therefore deprived from unemployment benefits (Bureau & Corsani, 2012; Patureau & Sinigaglia, 2020).

Our study investigates how highly individualised workers, such as self-employed visual artists, reacted to the sudden interruption of their activities and how their collective practices evolved in the pandemic context. We draw on a qualitative study conducted between February and December 2020 within the Syndicat National des Artistes Plasticiens (SNAP), the national trade union for visual artists within the Confédération Générale du Travail (CGT). We combined interviews and participant observation, including the regular online meetings. Moreover, we participated in events and demonstrations together with SNAP members and conducted semi-structured interviews with representatives of the federation SNAP is part of.

In our contribution, we show that the lockdown context actually fostered the intensification of SNAP organising practices in three main directions. First, the development and defence of claims was accelerated by the implementation of public support programmes that were insufficient to respond to artists’ needs, prompting SNAP to actively denounce the shortcomings of these policies and demand more resources. Second, individual support for artists struggling with administrative issues also increased, urging SNAP to both provide advice and mobilise their personal contacts in different administrations to try to solve individual cases. Finally, this unprecedented moment in history also led to a revival of the collective discussions on an alternative social protection system for artists,



thus building new alliances and strengthening connections with the performing arts federation of which SNAP is a member.

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Resistance without solidarity? The conflicting meanings of organizational misbehaviour among blue-collar workers in an Italian factory

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Many sociologists investigated the “unmaking” of the industrial working-class in Western Europe, pointing out how broad socio-economic transformations – rising level of job insecurity, decreasing social protection and extended schooling – have produced a generational conflict within the working-class, which impede its social reproduction. In many factories, older workers, whose jobs are secure and who are generally more unionised, have come to confront a younger generation with precarious and often temporary jobs. Since these generations are put in competition directly on the shop floor, the transmission of the diverse working-class “cultures of solidarity” is blocked.

Drawing on extensive ethnographic research based on participant observation and life story interviews with workers employed in an automotive factory in central Italy, I question such framework. The factory recruited workers in two distinct temporal waves, namely at the end of the ‘70s and between the mid-‘90s and 2000s. The distinction between the workers hired in different decades offers the possibility to analyse a full-fledged generational gap between two opposing groups. On the one hand, the “old guard” still adheres to the practices and values of class solidarity, and on the other hand the newer generation is more inclined towards individualism and competition.

On the shop floor, the two groups express different attitudes at work, that follow the opposition between the “stability” of older generation and the experience of “precariousness” of the younger one: the former is more rebellious and hostile to flexibilisation and work intensification, while the latter tend to be more submissive and accommodating to new management requirements.

Nevertheless, the hypothesis that this cleavage had prevented any transmission of the working-class solidarity should be expanded upon. In this paper, I argue that the generational frame represents less



of a deterministic structure than a “constraining environment”, which offers room for the reappearance of workers resistance in the labour process.

On the one hand, faced with the breaking down of participation and self-realization promises of “total quality” management, younger workers reacted by implementing practices of organizational misbehaviour (such as “limitation of effort” and “refusal to collaborate”), which recall the rebellious attitude employed by older workers and appear to be very effective in subverting the collaborative logic of the lean production system. On the other hand, however, the persistent refusal to identify as factory workers and the rejection of traditional working-class culture prevent these young workers from attributing a symbolic significance to their organizational misbehaviour, hindering the construction of horizontal solidarity.

This can be built only when workers ‘discover’ the collective nature of the labour process – veiled by both the logic of lean manufacturing and collaborative trade unions – and give new meaning to their practices of resistance.

Therefore, the paper contributes critically both to the understanding of the “unmaking” of the industrial working-class and to a sociology of the processes that currently influence the emergence of workers resistance and solidarity in the labour process.

Towards the digital-lean factory? Work intensification, control and 'employee empowerment' in eight Italian automotive plants

Angelo Moro (INRAE - Université de Bourgogne - Artes 4.0 - Institute of Economics, Sant'Anna School of Advanced Studies), Maria Enrica Virgillito (Institute of Economics, Sant'Anna School of Advanced Studies)

A growing literature on the impact of new digital technologies on the transformation of the labour process is emerging, that stresses the role of the combination of technological and organizational changes as drivers of transformation in terms of human-machine relationship. While comparison across countries starts to be undertaken, relatively less attention has been devoted to study how heterogeneity unfolds within the same sector of activity. By analysing the case of the automotive sector in Italy, this paper aims at filling the existing gap in the literature, addressing the existence of a variety of lean-oriented organizational models inside however a common trend of digitalisation across factories.

Leveraging on the results of two field-work analyses conducted under a collaboration with the Sabattini Foundation and the metal workers trade union FIOM in the period 2016-2018, we compare an ensemble of factories whose main activity is related to the final assembly of automotive vehicles (cars, motorbikes, commercial vehicles or forklifts), both high-end/highly customised and low-end ones.

By looking at the patterns of convergence and divergence in the techno-organisational configurations of these factories, we are able to show that, differently from the standard wisdom, this wave of technological innovation is far from leading to total automation or the digital revolution. On the contrary, it appears to be integrated into the historical trend of “leanification” of production processes in the automotive sector.

According to our results, in all the factories studied, rationalisation (waste reduction) and standardisation (control of the process) are enabled by digital technologies, which coupled with the lean systems lead to an intensification of working rhythms and to the deterioration of working



conditions. Moreover, the digitalisation of the production process and the interconnection of equipment and machinery reinforce control over workers performances in all factories, especially in those most affected by digital tools and software that facilitate direct and remote supervision, and allow collection of performance data with an unprecedented degree of granularity.

Heterogeneity among our cases is found in the actual implementation of organisational practices and managerial techniques inspired by the lean production paradigm – especially those related to the so called “employee empowerment” –, which seems to vary in scope and extent from case to case. Such divergence, found even in factories where the introduction of digital technologies has been more pervasive, suggests that these technologies per se do not enable nor hinder forms of employee empowerment. In fact, the latter does not appear to depend on the intrinsic characteristics of the new artefacts, but on the organisational context in which they are adopted.

This organisational context is shaped not only by the different corporate culture of every factory or company, but also by the workers themselves, who are able enact more or less manifested forms of attachment/refusal of corporate identity that translate into different forms of cooperation or misbehaviour in the labour process.

Resistance, the Transformation of School Teachers’ Work and Performance Management Reforms: A Labour Process Perspective

Sophie Morrell (Edinburgh Napier University)

The study of resistance is a central aspect of labour process theorisation. Much recent literature has focused on the impact of collective action on work, yet insights into the realities of individual forms of resistance remain understudied within an LPT perspective (Thompson 2016; Bryson et al. 2019). This article draws on the concept of opposition to develop a frame for understanding the complexities of meaning-based resistance (see Bélanger and Thuderoz 2010). A major contribution to theorising opposition is in the recognition of resistance being based on meanings and values of workers that are derived outside of the workplace context (Baines 2016). This is a fundamental development for studying resistance in public sector contexts where there is often an underlying public sector ethos of making a difference to society in an individual’s day-to-day work. This study examines the impact of performance management on teachers’ experiences of work through the lens of resistance, within an LPT perspective.

A qualitative ethnography of one secondary, inner-city academy school was conducted over a four-month period. This comprised a six-week shadowing phase, document collection and 26 semi-structured interviews (each averaging between 45 and 90 minutes), with Teachers, Senior Managers, HR and Trade Union Representatives. Template analysis and abduction were used to derive themes from the data set (King 2012; King and Brooks 2017; O’Mahoney and Vincent 2014).

Findings reveal that a major way teachers asserted their opposition to the competitive ethos cultivated through the performance management reforms, was to turn down positions for promotion. During performance reviews, or where presented with a potential promotion, these teachers expressed that they were able to give their best with their current workload and that taking on further responsibilities would reduce the quality of their work. Their opposition was based upon a collective set of values that put their pride of work at the forefront. In contrast, there were a number of teachers who aligned themselves with the competitive ethos, placing a higher value upon their personal performance than



upon the shared pride of work ethos. Where teachers succumbed to the cultural shift, there emerged a set of oppositional identities between those who held on to their collective sense of work commitment and those who sought progression up the pay scales.

The majority of studies that have considered the issue of teachers' resistance to various changes in their work have generally been framed through the lens of unions (for examples see Carter et al. 2010; Ironside and Seifert 1995). Whilst these approaches play a significant role in recognising the part that unions play in representing teachers and even, at times, shaping education reform, the limitation of this approach has been a lack of attention to other, more individual avenues through which teachers choose to exert their opposition. This argument is echoed in broader labour process debates (Ackroyd and Thompson 1999; Thompson 2016). The central contribution of this study is to extend labour process theorisation of resistance within the public sector context through a focus on individual forms of resistance.

Warehouse: Household and Community. Labour control and resistance in the factories of circulation

Joe Morris (University of Sheffield)

Distribution Centre workers are employed at the critical “choke points” of global capitalism and are endowed with potential powers of disruption that can bring the circulation of commodities to a standstill (Bonacich and Wilson 2008). However, in the UK, distribution centre workers have rarely utilised such power. The question, therefore, becomes one of accounting for this. What social mechanisms have enabled capital to limit the power of the logistics workers they employ? Previous efforts to address this question have emphasised the spatial, organisational, and ethnic divisions that have limited logistics workers' power. A fuller explanation must address what Burawoy called the politics of production –the managerial regimes through which firms govern the labour process, generating varying forms of class dominance/compromise within the labour process (Burawoy 1985). To answer this question, the analysis builds on the emerging dialogue between logistics and labour regimes (Dorflinger et al, 2020). To do so, the paper integrates labour process theory and social reproduction that has prompted new interest in labour regimes (Baglioni, 2018; 2020 & Mezzadri, 2020). The paper combines labour regime and social reproduction analyses to highlight the connection between capitalist circulation, social reproduction and labour process theory for a deeper, relational, labour orientated understanding of how the logistics managerial regime has limited workers' powers of disruption within and beyond the immediacy of the production process.

The paper draws on ethnographic data from a comparative study of two distribution centres within the apparel supply chain in the UK. One integrated distribution centre and one third party logistics firm (3PL). Observational data was collected at each distribution centre, complemented by interviews with the workers at both sites.

The paper finds that the predominant form of managerial control relies on coercion in which management imposes high levels of job and employment insecurity on workers (most of whom are migrant, agency workers). This pattern was especially clear in the 3PL firm. At the integrated distribution centre, however, the paper finds a different form of production politics: partly owing to the degree of ethnic and cultural homogeneity within the migrant workforce and in the surrounding community. In this latter case, management relies on informal labour hierarchies through the social



connections developed in migrant community networks that are used to co-opt workers into production through an articulation of coercion and consent. Kinship ties and patriarchal hierarchies penetrate into the progressively domesticated shopfloor and, labour disciplining expands into the increasingly productive realm of the household and the community.

Analysing power relations in the community, household and the workplace, the paper reveals how labour control beyond the distribution centre is crucial to the supply of a cheap and disciplined migrant logistics worker. In tracing forms of class struggle, resistance within and beyond the labour process emerge entangled.

The paper concludes that efforts to understand workers' capacity to engage powers of disruption at strategic chokepoints must pay careful attention to the relational, co-constitutive, micro-political conditions that workers encounter on the shopfloor, the household and the community, in dialogue with the everyday experience.

Form exit to voice? The changing contours of workplace protests in Russia

Claudio Morrison (Middlesex University), Nikolaus Hammer (Leicester University)

This paper assesses new, independent, and previously unpublished data on labour protests in Russia over the period 2008-2018 and argues that the political economy of workplace protest in Russia is undergoing a significant change. The argument evaluates 'signalling theories' (e.g. McAdam) and shows how the relationship between the state, employers, trade unions, and workplace protests have to be re-interpreted in the context of the economic crisis. An analysis of current dynamics of Russia's workplace protests needs to be situated and contextualised in terms of the protests' motivations and specific dynamics, especially given their unofficial character. We ask: what motivates workers' protests in workplaces that are dispersed across industry and geography and what are their initial motivations? We need to know how workers interpret their environment and what conceptions inform their actions.

The argument is based on a robust database of previously unpublished data, established through careful data mining and coding. In Russia the regulation of strike activity has rendered strikes virtually impossible, and statistics therefore measure a phenomenon that has been regulated out of existence. In this situation it is more robust to expand the phenomenon in question to one of workplace conflict or protest, and collect incidences from independent media/organisations. Our empirical basis is firm-level data across over 10 years of monitoring which has resulted in more than 3,000 cases. The data differentiate between a wide range of issues that triggered and underlie workplace protests as well as the relations between 35 different actors (and their environment) over the course of the respective conflicts.

An emerging literature has pointed to the rise in informal protests. Our findings explore this shift, from trade unions in large industrial enterprises to the rise of spontaneous protests by unorganised workers (up to 56% of all recorded protests in 2017). Moreover, we find that authorities become more involved, employers less; that protests have risen in the informal economy and budget sector at the expense of industry. Equally, the form of protests has shifted to a range of informal, political, and extra-regional strategies.

We argue that, as recession and austerity normalised in-work precarity for the majority of the population, the political process of workplace protest has changed: fully accepting that the industrial



relations system is dysfunctional workforces appeal directly to the authorities, bypassing industrial relations actors and institutions. The de-politicisation of the Russian industrial relations system has thereby turned against itself as it has fuelled over-spilling spontaneous protests whose strategy consists exactly in politicising the conflict. This does not mean that trade unions are passive. Yet, rather than trade unions signalling to workers that strikes would be supported, it is public opinion that provides the key political opportunity structures for spontaneous protests. The continuing economic crisis and austerity have transformed the informal economy from a voice and exit option to one that constitutes a dead end. We argue that the economic crisis and de-politicisation of industrial relations have laid the social and political foundations for a convergence of economic and social interests in workplace protests.

Abusive Supervision and Service Performance: The Mediating Role of Prosocial Impact

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Increasingly, theorists have drawn attention to the concept of destructive leadership (Aasland et al., 2010; Hoel et al., 2010) and its negative consequences for employees and organisations. A destructive leader is seen to consistently ‘violate the legitimate interests of an organisation by undermining or sabotaging the company’s goals, tasks, resources, and the motivation, wellbeing, or effectiveness of followers’ (Einarsen, Aasland and Skogstad, 2007, p.208). One type of leader behaviour that fits in with the domain of destructive leadership is abusive supervision. Despite growing interest in abusive supervision and its association to a number of negative outcomes, research remains scarce in uncovering the mechanisms through which such associations may occur. Our study addresses this issue by exploring one such mechanism to examine why abusive supervision can impair employees’ service performance. Specifically, drawing on attachment theory, the study investigates the mediating role of perceived prosocial impact in the abusive supervision-service performance link.

A time-lagged multisource data from nurses and their direct supervisors was used to examine the study’s hypotheses. Results of multilevel generalized structural equation modelling (GMSEM) analyses revealed that abusive supervision was negatively related to nurses’ prosocial impact which, in turn, undermined their service performance. Our findings suggest that abusive supervision can undermine employees’ job perception (i.e., prosocial impact of their work) and thus their performance, offering a new angle to understand the negative impact of abusive supervision. The findings of the study substantiate the significance of reducing abusive supervision and infer the importance of designing jobs that provide opportunities for demonstrating prosocial impact of work, specifically so for individuals working in service-centred occupations.



From bricolage to conflicts? The pandemic experiences of work in education, health care and logistics in Poland

Adam Mrozowicki (Institute of Sociology, University of Wrocław)

This paper will explore the experiences of work during pandemic in three industries which – for various reasons (social reproduction, (health) care and provision of basic goods during lockdowns) – were seen as critical for society’s functioning: (primary school) education, health care and social care and logistics. It will address three questions. Firstly, what was the role of social and public health crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic for the scope of workers’ control over labour process at their workplaces? Secondly, how did the subsequent pandemic waves translate into the changes of work organisation, in particular in terms of reinforcing workers’ autonomy or restoring managerial control at work? Thirdly, to which extent did the experiences of work during pandemic contribute to the emergence of new conflicts at work? The inspirations are drawn from three classical theories in economic sociology describing the relevance of socio-economic crises for work organisation. Firstly, the Karl Polanyi’s approach in which the crisis is seen as a collapse of radical commodification of work which triggers counter-movements aimed at social re-embedding of the market in a network of protective social institutions. Secondly, the Karl Marx’s theory in which the socio-economic crisis contributes to the various kinds of capital-driven fixes, including the novel means of retaking managerial control at work. Thirdly, the Joseph’s Schumpeter’s approach in which crises are seen as the moments of creative destruction providing an opportunity to innovate in the organisational field. Recognising the relevance of narrations in the social construction of pandemic (Delanty), the paper will report on the tentative findings of 15 (pilot) biographical narrative interviews with workers and 20 expert interviews with trade unionists, employers’ organisation representatives and public administration in the aforementioned industries collected with the framework of the COV-WORK project funded by the National Science Centre in Poland (project no. UMO-2020/37/B/HS6/00479). Based on the analysis of the empirical material gathered so far, it can be argued that the outburst of the COVID-19 pandemic has indeed contribute to a spontaneous, ad-hoc ‘bricolage’ at work, challenging the existing hierarchies, formal rules and managerial prerogatives and opening the space for new forms of workers’ cooperation and solidarity. However, this momentum was rather short-lived. The subsequent waves of pandemic observed the restitution of managerial control apparatus, reinforced the earlier inequalities and divisions at work and – in some cases - contributed to the replacing of the earlier hope of return to normality by the (gradual) redefinition of what is “normal” at work. As result, an opportunity structure has emerged for union organising and labour mobilisation in some parts of the industries studied, including logistic centres employees, care workers, resident doctors and nurses as well as teachers. The analysis will reconstruct both workers’, unionists and, where it was possible, employers perspectives on the (post-)pandemic labour-related tensions. In the final part of the paper, an attempt will be made to discuss these conflicts with regards to the Marx and Polanyi framework in order to understand the longer-term effects of pandemic for labour mobilisation (in Poland).



Crisis of value, overexploitation of labor and the weakening of the legal form

Ticiane Natale (University of São Paulo -USP-, Brazil)

This research, still at an early stage, seeks to understand the transformations in Labor Law under a broader context that I call the weakening of the legal form. My hypothesis is that there is a crisis of value in the current stage of capitalism (exaggerated financialization and overexploitation of labor spread across the globe) which, consequently, is reflected in its predominant social form of social regulation, the legal form.

In fact, the prices practiced on the market do not correspond to the value, in general, strangling the productive sphere of capitalism with parasitic sectors, basically based on the rent-seeking of private property, which has grown at a dizzying pace; the overexploitation of labor further deepens this problem by selling the commodity labor power below its value (making it difficult and/or making impossible the reproduction of the working class and the realization of value in circulation).

However, the expanded reproduction of capital is still taking place through the extraction of surplus value, depending on abstract human labor and, consequently, on the legal form (which establishes that all human beings are equal so that their labors are equalized).

In this clash, the financialization of the economy presses for the dissolution of Labor Law (the right to the commodity of labor) with a view to Civil Law (private property law), but, in practice, it finds the opposite of the legal form: the denial of the subject of law and the overflow of the human condition from the productive sphere – object of law – not only to the sphere of circulation, but in all contexts of the existence of the working class. This is expressed by the Law's difficulty in regulating social relations in a predominant way, with politics and religion coming into play (non-equivalent forms); and democratic rights that are attacked both on the periphery of capitalism and at its core.

With the diagnosis and explanation of the current phenomenon of destruction of social rights, it is intended to open space for a reflection on new forms of struggle for the emancipation of the working class from the subjection of capital.

The method used in this research is the historical-dialectical materialism; the theoretical framework adopted is the Marxist (both for the study of economics and the study of law), using the Marxist Dependency Theory.

Shift Work, Labour Control and Resistance in Indian Coalfields: Reflections on Labour Process in Production of Space

Suravee Nayak (Centre for Development Studies, India)

Scholars have widely discussed the uneven trajectory of (re) production of capitalist space across different regions (Harvey 1981; Smith [1984] 2010). This unevenly developed landscape of capitalism embedded within particular places creates ‘spatial fixes’ and ‘socio-spatial divisions of labour’ which shapes and develops the labour process (Rainnie et.al 2010). Common to the labour process has been the spatial differentiation of production process, however, scholars also argue segmentation of labour in labour process based on location, sector, task and wage, skill level, type of contract besides the subjective experiences of workers defined by intersecting gender, race, caste and ethnic relations in the global south (Campling et.al 2016). Different studies on the global south



demonstrate complex and unique dynamics of the labour process in varied contexts, capital's varied disciplining strategies, and various ways-forms of workers resistance and responses to exploitation. Among all, capital's control on worker's time evolves as not only control on the spheres of production but also reproduction of labour in the global south (Ngai and Smith 2007).

In this context, the paper attempts to understand work-time in a specific socio-spatial context -both as a form of control strategy by capital and worker's resistance in extractive industries (focusing on coal mining) of India. The expansion of open cast coal mines in post-colonial India resulted in the plethora of environmental destruction and dispossession and displacement of agriculture-based rural communities, proletarianization and pauperization of rural communities. Drawing from ethnographic fieldwork carried between 2015-2020, the paper demonstrates the centrality of time and space in shaping the labour process in different stages of coal production in Indian coalfields. It argues that time in the form of shift work becomes a crucial determinant of surplus value extraction and (re) production of capitalist space. Whereas control of labour time is a disciplining strategy by capital, the worker also demonstrates various overt and covert forms of responses to capital through the practice of the time. Further, the paper highlights the different ways formal and informal workers navigate shift work for their reproduction and respond to capital's exploitation. It concludes by reflecting upon both varied and shared meanings and practices of time and space among the workers at the intersections of caste, class, gender and ethnic relations.

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Essential Working: The Impact of Covid-19 on Parcel Delivery Workers

Kirsty Newsome (University of Sheffield), Sian Moore (University of Greenwich), Stef Williamson (University of Sheffield)

The emergency conditions engendered by Covid-19 have tested the resilience and stoicism of many groups of 'essential' workers. Prominent among these are the health and care workers that have won the gratitude of the nation. Less visible are the millions of logistics workers that keep the nation supplied with essential items such as food, medicines as well as non-essential items resulting from online retailing. Logistic workers are employed to move goods from inter-connected points of production to the point of sale and/or delivery. The movement of goods through increasingly fragmented supply chains is predicated upon many thousands of workers engaged in varying modes of transportation (rail, ship, and truck) and sub-sectors of transfer and storage (ports, warehouse,



delivery). Parcel delivery, the ‘last mile’ of the logistics sector, has played an essential role during the pandemic connecting online retailing with consumers (who maybe isolating and/or shielding) The central aim of this paper is to investigate the work and contractual conditions of parcel delivery workers during and post pandemic. Organised through multiple vertical and horizontal linkages the parcel delivery sector embraces large and small enterprises with diverse work and employment conditions. Previous research has highlighted how acute supply chain pressures have exposed delivery workers to greater risk, uncertainty, and insecure work practices (Moore and Newsome 2018). Growing evidence suggests that Covid-19, and the resulting intensification of online shopping, has exacerbated work pressures for delivery drivers including increased workload, the lack of sick pay afforded to self-employed drivers, as well as health and safety issues that may not have been easily mitigated. However, to date there is limited in depth research that explores in-depth how the pandemic has impacted upon these essential parcel delivery drivers.

This paper will report on the working lives of essential parcel delivery workers during and post the health crisis. Drawing on quantitative survey evidence as well as interviews with drivers and their trade union representatives it will explore the employment conditions that delivery drivers have experienced during the pandemic. It will explore the potential influx of workers into delivery in the context of the extension of online shopping and closure of physical high street stores., including gender dimensions. Given the often demanding and time critical levels of service delivery it will also consider the pressures and hazards delivery drivers are subjected to and how these might be overcome to ensure worker health and safety. In theoretical terms the paper seeks to contribute to growing debates reflecting on the notion of essential work in the contemporary economy, the transfer of risk to the individual worker and increasing shift of the costs of distribution onto logistics workers.

Who is the team? Self-organized work under circumstances of fluidity

Manuel Nicklich (FAU Erlangen-Nürnberg/Nuremberg Campus of Technology), Judith Neumer (ISF Munich)

From a management perspective self-organized teams promise advantages in terms of efficiency and effectiveness compared to rather control-oriented, more traditional (project) management approaches. But what does this mean for employees working under these circumstances? What does self-organization mean from a workers’ perspective?

Increasing mobility of workers, distant collaboration of teams, progressing customer integration into the labor process and overlapping logics of organizational principles lead to a blurring of team boundaries and unanswered question of membership. As a consequence, one can observe the establishment of fluid teams (Tannenbaum et al. 2012; Bedwell et al. 2012; Bushe and Chu 2011), in which nobody can describe the internal structure or the membership or boundaries of the team clearly. Teams “change and adapt more frequently, operate with looser boundaries, and are more likely to be geographically dispersed. They experience more competing demands, are likely to be more heterogeneous in composition, and rely more on technology than did teams in prior generations” (Tannenbaum et al. 2012, p. 3). These aspects, however, are directly related to the self-organizing process of teams. But this process of self-organization increasingly come under pressure by ambiguities in structure, affiliation and demarcation, which is not discussed in the existing literature so far. While the current literature especially looks at the composition of membership, we will



examine the relationship of fluidity and the self-organizing moments of demarcation and emergent team structures.

By looking at agile work as an empirical example, in which self-organization is a central principle, we want to examine the constitution of fluid teams and their importance for self-organized labor processes. Agile approaches usually highlight the importance of team-based work thereby theoretically extending the competences of self-organizing. Based on qualitative interviews we show that these competences relate not only to the level of the working process and formal questions of work organization, but also include constitutive aspects of team demarcation as well as internal structuring. Moreover, we see that issues of digitalization take a rather ambivalent role in this regard. While it is usually seen as driver or warrant for the development of agile approaches (Overby et al. 2006; Häusling 2018), our data shows that especially the geographical distribution of teams can only be bridged in a limited way.

We see that the establishment and the maintenance of the team becomes a constant task of the team members themselves. According to this, demarcation and internal structure of the teams is contingent and empirically fluid. Current debates around agile approaches and team-based work, however, neglect this issue widely. While some management approaches such as agile work theoretically offer the possibility for this constant task, we examine that this is severely dependent, whether this (imperative of) self-organization is backed by corresponding organizational conditions, resources and management acceptance. If this not the case, employees experience the self-organization a massive burden (contrary to an element of emancipation). With our contribution we want to offer a more accurate description of the constitution and self-organization of fluid teams and the teams' ability to handle corresponding challenges.

Management Opposition, Strikes and Union Threat

Patrick Nüß (Kiel University)

The paper provides evidence for management opposition against unions in terms of hiring discrimination by a large scale field experiment. For this purpose I submit 11500 fictitious job applications to real vacancies in the German labor market, revealing union membership in the résumé. By doing so I expand the analysis of management opposition in terms of hiring discrimination to the German labor market, considering institutional differences as the coverage of collective agreements, avoiding union voice and consider occupational and regional variation. Second, the experiment covers three years (2017 to 2019) and is able to consider the relevance of labor disputes by exploiting sectoral and regional variation in unions strike activity. This allows to determine its relevance for employers attitude toward unions. Third, the observed sector specific management opposition is linked to the erosion of Germany's industrial relation system, i.e. declining collective agreement coverage.

The results show that callback rates for union members decrease significantly in the presence of high sectoral union density and large firm size. I further explore how this effect varies with regional and sectoral labor dispute intensity and find that management opposition is stronger when a sector is exposed to an intense labor dispute. There is evidence that sector specific union threat effects can explain the observed management opposition. Sectors with lower hiring discrimination have a lower



coverage of collective agreements and in the absence of a collective agreement they are less likely to follow collective agreement wage setting.

“We don't know whether or not the news is true”: Social media and the ride-hailing drivers' protests in Indonesia

Joanna Octavia (Warwick Institute for Employment Research)

How do informal workers in the developing world organise and mobilise for collective action? From minibus drivers in Georgia to street vendors in Liberia and waste pickers in Brazil, around the world informal workers have rallied together to take to the streets and protest for better working conditions (Eton, Schurman and Chen, 2017). Although social media has featured prominently as a driver and platform for street mobilisations in recent social movements such as the 2011 Egyptian uprising and the Hong Kong Umbrella Movement, little is currently known about its role and significance in labour mobilisation, and in particular within the informal sector of the developing world. Past research has shown that informal workers typically only have access to basic technologies and are not connected to the internet due to their unaffordability (Chen, 2016). Nonetheless, in recent years, the growing popularity of digital labour platforms to intermediate between workers and people who need their service, had inadvertently placed affordable smartphones and internet connection in the hands of informal workers (Hunt and Machingura, 2016; Ford and Honan, 2019).

By drawing on a case study of ride-hailing motorcycle taxi drivers in Indonesia, this research looks at the role and significance of social media in protest organisation and mobilisation, as well as the changing nature of collective action in the developing world. This research uses the grounded theory approach and is based on a qualitative fieldwork from December 2019 to August 2020 in Jakarta, Indonesia, involving data collected through digital ethnography on Facebook and WhatsApp; forty-five semi-structured interviews with driver protestors and stakeholders; as well as a range of public and private documents. Through an analysis of four protests targeting the government that occurred between 2018 and 2020, this research aims to deepen the understanding of the social processes that brought together scattered and fragmented workers who are working under precarity in the absence of regulation.

This research found that protest leaders and participants used social media such as Facebook and WhatsApp groups for various purposes throughout the organisation and mobilisation processes. These social media practices were shaped by social norms developed by the drivers - such as trust and structure - which influenced the responses that drivers have to each of the protests. Consistent with Kelly's (1998) mobilisation theory, leadership was found to be a necessary component of the protest movement, in an industry where informality has resulted in the absence of formal hierarchies of authority and multiple claims to legitimacy. However, the theoretical model that emerges from this research suggests that issues such as privacy and anonymity as a result of social media use may create challenges for the traditional organisation and mobilisation efforts put forth by Kelly (1998), which undermines the leadership of some groups but not the others. This study contributes to the current understanding of collective action in the informal sector by reflecting on the precarity experienced by informal workers, the associational life that characterises their relations, and how it constrains and enhances the transformations brought by social media.



Settled but not integrated

Anne Mette Ødegård, Rolf K. Andersen (Fafo Institute for Labour and Social Research)

The EU enlargements in 2004 and 2007 resulted in an immigration wave of historic proportions. According to figures from Statistics Norway, almost 200 000 immigrants, family members and children from EU member states in Central and Eastern Europe were settled in Norway in 2020. The results from a survey among residents from Poland and Lithuania raise the question about to what degree the labour immigrants from these two main sending countries, have been integrated into working og social life. Most of the respondents in this survey have lived in Norway for many years, have permanent jobs and are rarely exposed to unfair treatment in the workplace. They are all in economically productive age groups and tend to work full time. On the other hand, immigrants are concentrated in specific segments of the labour market, the majority earn less than the average among Norwegian workers, and fewer of them own their own home compared to Norwegians in general. Another obstacle for navigating in the society is poor language-skills and lack of recognition for skills and education from the home-country (Ødegård & Andersen 2021). There is no official integration policy for migrant workers from EU member states, in contrast to the comprehensive integration policies that target other immigrant groups. The workplace has been left as the key arena for integration.

In this paper we will discuss whether the principle of equal treatment for workers inside EU/EEA-area is an impediment to integration, and what might be consequences of such a policy.

Integration can be discussed from many different angles. One point of departure can be the three approaches used in an official report on integration (NOU 2017:2): a) welfare rights, income security and living equalization of living conditions, b) functioning of the labour market, and c) investment in competence, qualifications, and social capital.

In the years after the EU enlargements, public discourse has tended to concentrate on the prevention of social dumping and work-related crime, i.e. avoiding unwanted consequences of labour migration. Less attention has been paid to the issue of equality. For example, Friberg (2016) concluded that measures to strengthen the migrant workers' competitiveness and position in the labour market have not been prioritized. This is a backdrop for the need for a more differentiated debate about the consequences of a free labour market.

Harry Braverman, labor process theory and HRM: Taking Stock and Looking Forward

Afshin Omid, Cinzia Dal Zotto (Institute of Management, Faculty of Economics, University of Neuchâtel)

Since the publication of Harry Braverman's (1998 [1974]) seminal book *Labor and Monopoly Capital: The Degradation of Work in the Twentieth Century* (LMC), a particular – if not unique – interest has been blooming among many work sociologists during the past decades, all contributing to the well-known perspective of the labor process theory (LPT). Not as an academician or a sociologist, but rather as a suffering and experienced shop-floor worker, as well as an engaged reader and social activist in the U.S.A., Braverman opened up a new avenue that unraveled many threats to the nature of work, brought about by a capitalist mode of production. Building on Marx's (2004



[1867]) ideas regarding the commodification of labor under the capitalist regimes, he systematically addressed how the labor process is degraded inside the workplace via the allegedly efficient scientific management ethos. For some leading scholars, Braverman's LMC has been considered a paradigmatic breakthrough (1994) and monument of Marx's Capital volume one (Burawoy, 1978), which has become a normal science over time (Ackroyd, 2009). While many organizational sociologists have paid much attention to Braverman's thoughts and the LPT framework so far, a dedicated theoretical and practical pathway in the HRM field inspired by LPT is scant. This becomes crucial when considering that, as Harley (2015) and Thompson (2011) argued, the HRM field has been substantially affected by positivist methodologies, market-related objectives, and individualistic preoccupations mostly inspired by psychological perspectives less concerned with connecting workplace realities to the broader society (see Aguinis et al., 2021). Away from atomistic orientations, HRM could be expanded into a more socially relevant discipline by acknowledging, and thus exploring new research possibilities starting from the interconnectedness of human experiences inside the organizations and macro societal affairs (Dundon & Rafferty, 2018). Regarding such concerns, Harry Braverman's intellectual project and its subsequent advancements in the LPT paradigm can significantly enrich the HRM field. Relying on the insights offered by the LPT concerning the degradation of work in the modern workplace, the HRM discipline could be benefitting in different realms such as recruitment strategies, job design, performance management, employee empowerment, and policy interventions. The current paper, therefore, aims to set a research agenda toward an LPT-inspired HRM scholarship. It does so by taking the following steps:

- 1- Overviewing the building blocks in Braverman's seminal book *Labor and Monopoly Capital: The Degradation of Work in the Twentieth Century* and explaining his main ideas regarding the degradation of work under the capitalist mode of production;
- 2- Reviewing the subsequent theoretical advancements on LPT, showing how other issues such as workers' agency, subjectivity, skills, solidarity, and resistance have been addressed;
- 3- Reviewing recent empirical literature on LPT's contributions to the new theorizations on the emerging regimes of control, performance management systems, worker autonomy, and discretion over the labor process, especially within the context of the growing platform economy; and finally,
- 4- Discussing the LPT's implications in the HRM field and showing how the HRM scholarship could be further developed in theory, context, and method.

Getting onto the road: how and why platform-based passenger transportation drivers in Oslo started to drive

Sigurd Oppegaard (Department of Sociology and Human Geography, University of Oslo)

In this presentation, I explore who the platform-based passenger transportation drivers in Oslo are and why they started to drive for platforms such as Uber. In Norway, Uber started operating in 2014, but discontinued its most popular service, Uber Pop, in 2017, after over 100 drivers were sentenced and fined for providing passenger transportation without proper licenses. Uber's Norwegian and Dutch subsidiary were also fined. However, Uber succeeded in provoking a deregulation of the taxi market in November 2020, lifting numerical restrictions on taxi licenses. Uber restarted full operations in Oslo right after the deregulation, followed by the Estonian taxi platform Bolt in early 2021 and Yango and Viggo a few months later.



Based on approximately 50 interviews with drivers and an ethnographic fieldwork working as a driver myself, I find an overwhelming majority of the platform-based passenger transportation drivers in Oslo have migrant backgrounds. Most of the drivers came to Norway as refugees, while a handful of my interviewees are children of immigrants. The drivers are paid on commission and generally have to work ten to 12 hours, six or seven days per week in order to make enough money. Although the drivers acknowledge that the job is not very well paid and that they work more than what is normal in Norway, they consider driving for Uber and the other platforms an upgrade compared to their previous work experiences: many came from equally poorly paid jobs, having struggled to attain permanent employment, and often working under physically demanding and inflexible conditions. They are drawn to the passenger transportation platforms, first, because this work provide them with a certain flexibility, allowing them to take breaks and fit driving around familial responsibilities and giving them a sense of autonomy. This flexibility, however, is limited by the piece-rate model as well as the platform-based control, requiring the workers to work long and unsocial hours in order to make a decent living.

Furthermore, the drivers I have interviewed argue that it is possible to make a lot of money driving for the platforms – despite not making much themselves. This idea of the potential for high earnings, seems to be a product of, first, the organization of platform-based passenger transportation in Oslo, where most of the drivers are employed by license holders, who take a between 50 and 60 percent cut of the fare. The employed drivers thus see what they would have earned if they had their own car and license. Second, the idea seems to be strengthened by fluctuations in demand, the platforms' dynamic pricing and bonus schemes. During peak hours, drivers can make a substantial income, highlighting the potential for high earnings. This idea is therefore both an important factor in recruiting drivers and for keeping them in the job.

Finally, I discuss what the drivers' stories can tell, more generally, about the emergence of platform-mediated gig work in Norway and the current state of the so-called Norwegian labor market model.

From Partner to Bully: The Degradation of Work in China's Walmart Retail Stores

Eileen Otis (Northeastern University, U.S.)

In 1996 the global retail behemoth, Walmart, launched its flagship China retail store in Shenzhen, not far from the factories that produced goods sold on its North American shelves. In its early years of operation, the firm that is notorious for its low-wage employment in North America offered well-paying jobs, useful skills training and a culture of dignity to its mostly rural migrant employees in China. However, just a decade later the firm began a descent into low-wage employment, precaritized jobs and a culture of bullying. This paper follows the path of Walmart's travels in China from a high-road employer that successfully cast itself as partnering with workers to a low-road and deeply resented employer, as it grew into one of the country's largest retailers, with 438 outlets. The analysis is based on in-depth accounts of veteran workers, in addition to data collected from ethnographies of stores in 7 different cities. Workers described the processes through which Walmart dismantled a labor regime viewed as benign and beneficial, replacing it with 'despotic' practices that contradicted the firm's core principles. These processes combined bullying with legalistic contract rituals integrated into the labor process, which produced "uninformed consent." Central to worker resistance was the Walmart Chinese Workers Association, an internet forum created to support employees



across the country especially by prompting “informed nonconsent” among workers. I supplement workers’ accounts with analysis of the Association’s newsletters, discussions, and announcements. I examine the interplay of control and resistance, including brief strikes, as workers struggled against the degradation of work.

A comparative history of the development of trade union movement in Palestine and Lebanon

Canan Özcan Eliaçık (Istanbul Arel Üniversitesi)

This research aims to make a comparative analysis of the history of the trade union movement in Palestine and Lebanon. It is a historical-comparative study based on qualitative data. Sources include both archive documents of the unions and secondary sources in the literature.

Joel Beinin thinks that when writing the history of countries other than European countries, the categories of European history and the standards established accordingly are taken into consideration. This causes Middle Eastern countries to be compared with European countries and be seen backward compared to them. However, while writing the history of these countries, it is imperative to consider the effects of modernity or the colonial period imposed on non-Europeans. Those subjected to European and American domination are now trying to develop an awareness of their historical identity (Beinin, 2019: 39-42). Beinin emphasizes the importance of the history of working people in the Middle East and the trade union movement. The working people are a great power in the modern history of the Middle East. Especially 19th-century rulers realized the importance of mobilizing these people for state-building projects. As a result, working masses have started to be a source of political legitimacy (Beinin, 2019: 57).

Palestine and Lebanon have a unique place in the Arab world in terms of the trade union movement. Similarities and differences make the comparison between these two countries significant. After the Ottoman Empire, the British mandate was established in Palestine and the French one in Lebanon. Therefore, it would be meaningful to reveal how the union organization that started in the 1920s developed under different mandate administrations. While Lebanon's independence became official in 1943, Palestine could not become an independent –official- state due to the process resulted in establishment of the state of Israel in 1948. Therefore, comparing the two countries on how civil society can be organized in a society with and without a state can be meaningful.

On the other hand, after the independence, sectarian conflicts started in Lebanon and resulted in a civil war. We can say that Palestine and Lebanon have a shared history of Zionism. Lebanon is hosting numerous Palestinian refugees. Israel occupied Lebanon in 1982 and in the same year, the first suicide attack took place in Lebanon. Also, an essential part of the leaders of the trade union movement in Lebanon is Palestinian. This study proves that union organization have been continuing in different forms in both countries where conflict and violence persist.

The existence of trade unions is perhaps more important for Middle Eastern countries than it is for Western countries because issues such as people's working conditions and increasing poverty can cause much greater conflicts in the Middle East. Therefore, unions are vital not only for workers in the Arab world, but also for the establishment of more democratic and peaceful societies. Researching the history of the trade union movement in the Middle East is essential to understanding the present; knowing the present will enable positive steps to be taken for the future.



Competitive Sanctification: How a Pentecostal Church in Orange County, California, Encourages Congregants to Embrace Precarious Employment

Spencer Paine (University of California, Irvine)

Prior research tells us that employers gain the consent of workers inside the workplace through management strategies including normative control, direct control, and responsible autonomy, and outside the workplace by recruiting workers from compliant populations and by pressuring individuals to transform themselves into ideal employees. Precarious employment, characterized by frequent layoffs, externalized career ladders, constant skill acquisition, and the disappearance of secure employment contracts, has been normalized in advanced capitalist societies in the 21st century for well-paid professionals in the primary labor market and low-wage workers in the secondary labor market. Despite knowledge of its material causes and consequences, we lack an understanding of the ideological processes encouraging individuals to consent to precarious jobs. However, given prior research arguing that religion offers refuge from the world of work, rejuvenating believers so they can persist in their occupations, there is reason to believe that conservative Christian churches help congregants adapt to precarious labor conditions.

This study investigates how Pentecostalism helps congregants adjust to life in advanced capitalist societies. I draw on data from over 200 hours of participant observation at worship services, small group meetings, Bible classes, and informal social events at a vibrant Pentecostal church in Orange County, California. In analyzing the data, I find that church leaders promise congregants that living as Christians will transform feelings of pessimism and anxiety caused by participation in secular society into feelings of optimism and tranquility, allowing them to thrive in challenging occupations. Additionally, to increase their spiritual prestige within the congregation, church leaders encourage believers to continually monitor and improve their prayer practice, degree of surrender to God, and familiarity with the Bible. By promoting these activities, church leaders reproduce the logic of the market, rewarding individualism, personal responsibility, and competition.

Given these findings, I argue that Pentecostal churches promote an ideology of competitive sanctification, which encourages congregants to embrace contemporary labor conditions, particularly precarious employment. These findings are important because they detail an ideological process prompting individuals to accept precarious employment, addressing a gap in the literature on the labor process. These findings are also important because they extend the existing literature on religion, which claims that churches merely refresh believers exhausted from their jobs. With respect to future research, these findings suggest that those interested in how individuals are encouraged to accept precarious labor conditions should consider the processes taking place in Pentecostal churches and other religious organizations. These findings also suggest that researchers interested in how Pentecostalism helps adherents adapt to advanced capitalism should consider both the emotional rejuvenation that Pentecostal churches provide, as well as the underlying logic of the practices Pentecostal churches recommend.



Protection of migrants' labour rights: how labour market institutions fail high-wage migrant workers

Wayne Palmer (Bielefeld University), Nicola (Queen Mary, University of London)

This paper takes the under-studied example of high-wage migrant workers in a middle-income country that is primarily viewed in a migrant sending role, to discuss the role of labour market institutions in protecting non-citizen's labour rights. High-wage migrants are normally assumed to be 'successful' migrants, unlike low-wage migrants whose plight has been subject to a substantial body of research, often approached from a labour trafficking/forced labour and human rights perspective. Our preliminary research shows, however, that high-wage migrants do encounter labour rights' violations. This raises the question how such violations are responded to and what the role of labour market institutions is.

We apply the 'migration infrastructure' concept to help us focus on the 'process of mediation' and institutional actors involved in the responses to labour rights violations. Originally, the concept was developed to analyse the facilitation of physical migration of low-wage migrants along five dimensions: facilitation by commercial, regulatory, technological, humanitarian and social actors. This paper redirects attention to a subsequent phase in the migration cycle, in which mediation occurs: when migrants experience and lodge claims about rights violations at work. Drawing on regulation scholarship, we investigate the legal infrastructure and mechanisms of which temporary high-wage migrants can avail themselves when this occurs in the country of destination. Our case is Indonesia, where through design and implementation the main labour market institutions cater to the needs of local low-wage workers.

The paper offers a hitherto neglected 'legal process' analysis to the study of the role of labour market institutions in response to the violation of migrants' labour rights. It draws on the examination of 70 labour disputes that were settled at court to show how Indonesia's primary labour market institutions do little to effectively protect migrants' labour rights. Here we consider the limited impact of labour dispute settlement machinery, labour inspection apparatus and trade unions on rights protection. Qualitative interviews with labour dispute participants and observers help identify the various foci and disconnects that result in institutional failure to protect migrant workers' rights at work. In doing so, it uncovers 'institutional fixes' that enable rights protection, concluding that effective migrant labour governance requires assistance from non-state actors.

Hand Tally Counters vs. Algorithms: How Delivery Workers Fight Information Asymmetry

SuMin Park (Yonsei University, Department of Sociology, Korea)

Information asymmetry has been identified as an important feature in the platform economy that reduces gig workers' power over the company. Workers' abilities to identify task descriptions, check current workflow, and accumulate work history are limited by the technological architect. However, how workers respond to structural information asymmetry has received little attention. Based on field research on food delivery labor in Korea, this study investigates how workers collect, share, and compare data individually and collectively to guess the logic of algorithmic control. It can explain the meaning of data for gig workers by analyzing how workers interpret and use their data.



Rider Union, a food delivery workers' trade union in Korea, conducted a social experiment with 11 members in May 2021 to test the efficiency of the algorithms. The results of the experiment and data from fieldwork, including interviews with riders, show that refusal is a crucial part of delivery work for the sake of the workers. Workers use their experience, which one interviewee referred to as "rider big data," to determine the quality of requests. This rider big data reveals corporeal and emotional experiences that data fails to convey and that algorithmic management erases. Workers assess the fairness of the work by comparing their embodied data to corporate big data. Their interpretation of data based on their lived experience can build a powerful counter-discourse to the company's emphasis on technological efficiency.

This study also discovered that workers actively use various types of technology ranging from basic machines such as hand tally counters to Google maps in addition to smartphones. To deal with information asymmetry, they actively build human-machine assemblages, and this assemblage provides them with the ability to fight the algorithmic control. Workers in this assemblage serve as a bridge between digital information and the local situation. Companies are aware of workers' tactics and attempt to capture them to lock them into their architecture. However, the company's trial serves as a new pivot point for attack. Workers are largely controlled by the company, but they always find a way to assert their autonomy.

This study claims to reconsider the hidden side of data that companies erased and to broaden the range of data in the gig economy, according to the findings. Dispelling the myth of objective technology and engaging in the production of worker perspective data are both necessary. To achieve fair algorithms at work, it is critical to reveal and comprehend the worker experience with multiple technologies.

The Interlinks between Workers' Mobility and Work Effort Struggles : The case of the Korean game industry

Jiyoon Park (Rutgers university)

Whether across countries, industries, or organizations, the movement of workers has been researched widely in different levels in multiple disciplines (Bodenhöfer, 1967; Jacoby, 2008; Kaiser et al., 2015; Moore & Newsome, 2018). In labor studies, research has often addressed voice and exit as two contrasting options that an individual could choose when workers dissent to their labor process (Hirschman, 1970; Iverson & Curriivan, 2003). This approach is based on a dichotomy between individual and collective forms of actions while strictly tying the former with exit and the latter with voice, which imparts individual workers' mobility struggles are less important than their collective struggles to make voice. However, there is an increasing call for research on challenging the dichotomy between the two and seeking interconnections between voice and exit and as well as individual and collective actions (Alberti, 2014; Smith, 2006).

Answering this call, this research builds on Smith's (2006) discussion of two loci of workers' struggles in the labor process to understand how workers' mobility experience is intertwined with their efforts to make a voice in both individual and collective levels. To do this, this research focuses on the case of the Korean game industry. Workers in the game industry are characterized as mobile, individualistic, and entrepreneurial, which has been addressed as a barrier to making a voice against their work precarity. Thus, the Korean game industry provides an interesting case for exploring how



workers' mobility struggles and voicing efforts are interlinked both in individual and collective forms for its recently established labor organizing efforts against their work precarity. This research draws data from public reports, news articles, texts from online game forums, social media group chats of game workers, and 15 in-depth interviews with Korean game workers.

The findings are twofold. First, they show that technological and socio-political shifts changed the way of work controls, including the game workers' mobility structure in the industry. These changes reversed the previous power relationship among game workers and expanded both institutionalized and informal ways to normalize and maintain the high mobility of workers. Second, the findings show that game workers utilize diverse strategies around mobility power to shape the work system both individually and collectively. Workers are also active players in leveraging their mobility power for making a voice rather than acting as mere victims of shifted work controls toward more mobile environments. The findings also show that mobility power differs across occupations and seniority in the same industry.

As the workers' mobility is increasingly becoming relevant to a broader group of working lives, this research contributes to broadening the understanding of mobility struggles in relation to the labor process in two ways. First, it adds diversity to the research on mobile workers by looking at the skilled workforce in a lucrative industry, which has been less researched compared to specific vulnerable groups (Alberti, 2014; Ceccagno & Sacchetto, 2020). Second, it contributes to discussions of dynamic relationships between the individual and collective resistance and exit and voice toward the labor process.

Worker freedom: Union collective action and social movement unionism in Aotearoa New Zealand

Jane Parker (Massey University), Ozan Alakavuklar (Utrecht University)

Freedom of association can concern a labour union's right to take collective action in its members' interests (e.g. International Labour Organisation, 2018). In this pursuit, unions are presumed to augment worker freedom. However, there is a paucity of scholarship on how worker freedom as self-actualisation links to union collective action concerned with coalition-building with civil actors. While union involvement in such has largely been conceived as instrumentally driven (Frege, Turner and Heery, 2004), this form of social movement unionism (SMU) is increasingly recognised as unions' pursuit of social justice aims (e.g. Parker and Alakavuklar, 2018).

This theoretical inquiry draws on Berlin's (1969) notions of negative and positive freedom, and MacCallum's (1967) triadic freedom relationship approach, to assess union-civil alliance-building's meaning for worker freedom. Particularly, a radical democratic perspective (Laclau and Mouffe, 2001) of unions' engagement with Just Transition to progress climate change is used to assess its potential to augment worker freedom, drawing on the New Zealand case. It emerges that SMU, as externally-orientated collective action, links to other outward (and internally-orientated) collective union action for workers. The findings also enable a synthesis of SMU's purpose, and its meaning for key agents (workers, unions and coalition allies) in terms of positive and negative freedom notions, and constraints on freedom. The study discusses potential theoretical and strategic development concerning worker freedom and SMU, and avenues for subsequent theory-building and research.



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Just-in-Time Transition? Industrial Sustainability, Decent Work and the Production of Climatic Precarity in the Cambodian Garment Industry

Laurie Parsons (Royal Holloway, University of London)

"The way we make, use and throw away our clothes is unsustainable" reads the UK Parliament's (2019:3) call to action on clothing consumption and sustainability. Garment production "contributes more to climate change than international aviation and shipping combined, consumes lake-sized volumes of fresh water and creates chemical and plastic pollution". At the same time, whilst providing employment for 75 million workers globally, garment production is recognised as a source of indecent work: characterised by low wages, long hours, dangerous conditions, and workplace harassment and bullying. Sustainable Development Goals 8 & 13 target Decent Work and Climate Action, creating an imperative for research and policy to address the twinned labour and environment challenges posed by global garments manufacturing. Yet it remains a key gap in theory and policy. As consumer anxieties about climate crisis grow, major brands are pledging to speed transition to a low carbon economy by reducing emissions and environmental degradation, making bold commitments to improve sustainability. Nevertheless, these programs are directed primarily to mitigation of carbon emissions and environmental pollutants. By contrast, climate adaptation has been largely ignored in corporate strategy. Decarbonisation programs in the garment sector therefore engage little with how structural changes to the industry impact worker livelihoods and shape their exposure to climate change. More broadly, this reflects a lack of research and policy on the crucial question of how climate change impacts industrial workers. This paper explores how industrial processes and practices shape garment workers' vulnerability to climate change in Cambodia: a key manufacturer of UK garments and among the world's most climate vulnerable countries.

The situation in Cambodia reflects a global issue. Whereas industrial decarbonisation programs are increasingly prevalent and well-funded in the global garment industry, these initiatives focus overwhelmingly on carbon mitigation within the primary supply chain. The result is twofold. First, the local impacts of climate change on worker livelihoods are rarely considered, leaving workers increasingly subject to 'climatic precarity' shaped by combined environmental and workplace pressures. Secondly, the local environmental impacts of industry are neglected in favour of headline



decarbonisation figures, allowing environmental degradation such as water overuse, liquid and airborne effluents and deforestation to intensify the impacts of climate change for workers and their rural households. In neglecting the economic security of workers in this way, therefore, we argue that the garment sector sustainability initiatives preside over a ‘just-in-time’ transition, leaving workers subject to climatic precarity at the nexus of low wages and intensified environmental risk.

The Maruti Strikes: Consciousness and Action Among Auto Workers in India

Charvaak Pati (Tata Institute of Social Sciences, India)

The auto industry in India has grown rapidly after the economic reforms in the 1990s. This growth, however, has been accompanied by militant working class struggles because of denial of trade union rights, low wages, work intensity and the precarious conditions of contract workers. While strikes, violence including death of senior management officials, and factory occupations have occurred in different auto clusters, the strikes in India’s largest car maker Maruti Suzuki India Limited (MSIL)’s Manesar plant stand out for worker’s militancy, self-activity and spontaneous action. The Maruti workers went on strikes in 2011, demanding a separate union (independent from the existing union in MSIL’s Gurgaon plant). Scholars and activists have reached a broad consensus that the wildcat strikes marked the emergence of an independent working class movement in India outside of the institutional framework of trade union politics. In this paper, I contend that the Maruti workers shared a contentious relation with the Central Trade Unions (CTUs) and operated within the ideology of the trade union movement, although in a contradictory way. The Maruti worker’s action and consciousness was mediated through trade union ideology, state intervention, and their own spontaneous action. Deploying Gramsci’s framework of dual consciousness or contradictory consciousness, I argue that worker’s spontaneity did not move beyond trade union ideology despite the potential for transgression expressed in the militant plant-based collective action. While the Maruti worker’s actions were militant and took a form unlike the legalism followed by the trade unions in the region, their consciousness operated within the framework of trade union ideology. This contradiction between consciousness and action played out during the strikes determined the nature of class struggle in the Manesar plant. The paper is based on semi-structured interviews with workers, plant-based union leaders, labour activists, and trade unionists carried out in 2014 and 2015.

The paper makes three contributions to the existing scholarship on working class politics in India and beyond. Instead of a focus on institutional aspects of class conflict reflected through the activities of trade unions, collective bargaining and quantification of struggles through data on strikes and lockouts, the present study examines wildcat strikes outside of the conventional trade union struggles. Second, the scholarship on labour conflict gave more importance to actions while ignoring the thoughts or consciousness driving those actions. This study looks at the strikes from the vantage point of a dialectic of conscious and action, and emphasizes the significance of (class) consciousness in working class struggles. Third, studies on working politics in India, especially of industrial workers, have emphasized on fragmentation along the lines of social cleavages such as caste, religion, ethnicity and regional differences. While these cleavages still create obstacles for class solidarity, the role of differential employment status in creating or preventing class-based solidarity has been under-emphasized. I show in my study how intra-class differences play a significant role in working class solidarity among industrial workers.



Gig Economy, Space, and Economic Geography: A Bibliometric Analysis

Muhammad Yorga Permana (London School of Economics and Political Science, School of Business and Management, Institut Teknologi Bandung)

The rise of the gig economy has been discussed widely in line with the ongoing debate about how digital technology could shape the future of work. Online platform, in line with the rapid change in the ICT sector and the widespread use of the internet, has challenged the nature of work which 'has historically been geographically bounded' (Graham et al, 2017). However, this does not mean that spatial dimension is irrelevant. Considering that economic actor participating in the gig economy still need to exist in the physical space and interact with their environment, this study argues that space and geography are still, and even more, relevant to be incorporated into the studies of the gig economy.

Some of works on the gig economy have revealed the importance of space and geography, for example, regarding how gig workers define their social spaces in the absence of the workplace (Chan and Humphreys, 2018), how gig workers organize themselves into geographically based communities (Ford and Honan, 2019), and how the entrance of the gig economy platform in a specific geographical area affects the size of local entrepreneurs (Burtch et al, 2018). Although each study provides additional insight regarding the role of space from a variety of perspectives and level of analysis, the whole picture remains unorganized.

This study contributes to the growing field of the gig economy by presenting a bibliometric analysis to understand comprehensively the role of space and geography in the existing literature of the gig economy. It should be noted that bibliometric analysis can provide a better understanding of the past evolution of a specific topic and identify the emerging research areas within the domain. In doing so, this study is able to propose the whole picture of the geographical debate in the gig economy research by providing some key concepts based on the most influential studies and discussing some main clusters which emerge within the research stream.

This study used Scopus as the largest citation database of peer-reviewed literature. It is found that as many as 152 documents among the focal articles include at least one of geography-related keywords. Most of the empirical research relies on qualitative analysis using interview as the data collection. Furthermore, some studies focus on a specific platform as the case study of gig economy in which the most prominent cases are Uber, Upwork, and Deliveroo respectively. With regard to the taxonomy of the gig economy, more studies focus on the location-based gig economy (36 percent) rather than on the online gig economy (16 percent) while the rest explore the term of gig economy in general.

By using bibliographic coupling analysis, this study maps those studies into three main clusters, those are (1) the role of space in the absence of workplace, (2) the impact of the gig economy on space, and (3) collective bargaining, regulation, and policy implication. Following those clusters, I propose numerous avenues for the future research regarding the link between space, geography, and the gig economy.



Advancing Workers Rights in the Gig Economy through Discursive Power: The Communicative Strategies of Indie Unions

Davide Però (University of Nottingham), John Downey (University of Loughborough)

The processes of de-standardization, outsourcing and flexibilization that characterize globalization have resulted in the growth of precarious workers, many of whom are migrants. Having found limited representation and support in established unions, a growing number of these workers has been turning to self-organization in the attempt to improve their harsh conditions. Yet, little is known about how these workers can make up for their lack of economic resources and institutional support and negotiate effectively with employers obtaining material and non-material rewards. One key understudied aspect in this respect concerns the communicative strategies that highly precarious workers can develop to increase their chances of concessions from powerful employers, including the deployment of skilful self-presentation in the public arena.

Drawing on interviews, frame and content analysis grounded in ethnographic research with the precarious and migrant workers of British ‘indie unions’ such as IWGB and UVW, we examine the significance of self-mediation practices in facilitating power-building and effective negotiations with employers. In particular, we consider firstly, how indie unions frame the conditions of their precarious workers in their self-mediation practices directed to the public arena; and secondly, how such framing finds resonance in mainstream media, thus enhancing their negotiating power and effectiveness.

In carrying out this analytical exploration, we use as a heuristic device the typology of power contained in Schmaltz et al (2018). This is done in order to chart better our findings on the communicative strategies and discursive power of precarious workers in relation to their use of other powers resources, as well as to present our findings in a ‘format’ which facilitates comparison with accounts of precarious and migrant workers’ initiatives occurring elsewhere.

Through this approach the paper finds that campaigns’ effectiveness can be increased by strategically integrating vibrant direct action of highly precarious workers (associational power practices) and their allies (coalitional power practices) with self-mediated messages framed to resonate with the general public and mainstream media – an approach that we call communicative unionism. These findings extend labour and social movements theory by showing the importance of considering the power-building aspects of workers’ discursive practices of self-mediation in the analysis of labour disputes. They also contribute to redressing social movement studies’ historical neglect of workers’ collective and contentious engagements with corporations.

Insider-outsider divide, trade unions and collective action of worker in Italy (2008-2018)

Margherita Sabrina Perra (Department of Political and Social Science), Katia Pilati (Department of Sociology and Social Research)

This paper examines the consequences of the dualization process on workers’ contentious politics, a field that has remained rather unexplored. WE examine how the growing heterogeneity of workers’ representative bodies affects workers’ collective actions, focusing on the repertoire of actions, the degree of decentralization, the duration of actions and the issues claimed. Whether workers are organized and supported by trade unions, or professional associations or whether they are self-



organized or sustained by new emerging groups such as independent, small rank-and-file trade unions or more informal and spontaneous groups, makes a difference for workers' collective action. As Pizzorno (1978: 32) argued long only trade unions have been able to coordinate conflicts in space and time, into large-scale and durable collective action, against the spontaneity of small groups of workers who claimed a variety of heterogeneous rights. On that occasion, to gain the coordination and monopoly of labor-capital conflict within the labor movement, trade unions had to re-centralize over the diverging thrusts by spontaneous small groups of workers which provoked the fragmentation of workers' claims.

Empirically, we examine workers' collective actions in Italy between 2008 and 2018. While trade unions are still the most legitimized actors in the Italian industrial relations system, as in other pluralist representation systems in Europe, new groups have emerged thus making Italy an optimal case study. The empirical research analyzes an original dataset built following the well-established method known as Protest Event Analysis (PEA). The dataset includes information on all different types of labor-related collective actions (N=9,943) spanning from institutional action to the most disruptive protest occurring in Italy between 1 January 2008 and 31 December 2018 and on major actors supporting them, including both trade unions and other new mobilizing groups.

This article differs from most existing studies in terms of its focus and approach. To date, the insiders-outsiders divide has been explored by considering the effect of different positions of workers in the labor market or their belonging to an occupational group. In this article, drawing on a resource mobilization perspective within the literature of contentious politics, we examine this divide by considering insider and outsider representative bodies, namely trade unions, and the new mobilizing groups which have more recently emerged to support outsiders' claims.

We conclude by discussing how these results differently affect the various occupational categories and the process of social class's formation. Particularly, occupational categories with high levels of affiliations to confederal trade unions, steel workers - the core of the working class - are more likely to see their actions reaching a higher visibility and legitimacy than other occupational categories. Particularly, elementary occupations such as cleaners and refuse workers with low levels of trade unions affiliation, also show high levels of unorganized workers and are thus those workers that are more likely to suffer from the lack of support by trade unions and are more easily marginalized.

Immigration and labour market in times of systemic crisis. The Italian case study in the context of European integration process

Alessandro Perri (Sapienza - Università di Roma)

In the relationship between immigration and labour market, the recognition of a persistent immigrant labour demand generated by the most economically developed countries, such as Italy (Ambrosini 2019), did not produce an equally robust consensus on assessing the sign and magnitude of the immigrant workers impact on the arrival geo-political-economic area labour force (Fasani, Lull, Tealdi 2020).

The economic literature is mostly divided between an evaluation that is A) positive for natives, pushed towards better jobs and income levels (Della Zuanna 2016); B) neutral in the long run, given the natural tendency of labour and capital to be fully employed (Blau, Mackie 2016); C) negative for natives, given the depressive effect of immigration on wages (Barba, Pivetti 2019). Sociologists



moreover propose a reading of the phenomenon D) as having a mirror and strengthening function of the arrival labour market dynamics (Reyneri 2011).

This work seeks to provide arguments in favour of option D through the development of an international political economy analysis of immigrant labour that relies on the Marxian concept of industrial reserve army which is central to understand not only migration processes (Pradella, Cillo 2015), but especially the effect of immigrant entrance in the labour market in a context of accumulation crisis of capital.

By applying this approach, on the one side, we highlight origins, reasons and effects of the policies that lead to the flexibilization of labour force (in Italy as in the rest of the European Union), resulting in its loss of bargaining power given by the increase of the income-share held by capitalists (ILO 2019). On the other side, we seek to show how this weakening is not a function of migration flows increase, but mainly because of the leading macroeconomic framework of the host country; that is, for Italy, the “highly competitive social market economy” established with the process of European integration within, on the one hand, the context of a long systemic crisis and, on the other, the current phase of increasing competition between economic areas.

Indeed, data show that the presence of immigrant workers is greater in sectors with lowest level of wages, protection systems and rate of unionization (such as Collective and personal services, Agriculture, Hotels and restaurants), while they are relative scarce compared to Italians among executives or managers, respectively 1.1% and 7.6% of the total employed. So, in a climate of low worker mobilisation and profound productive restructuring, strong international competition pushes some industry to rely more on cost reduction than on product innovation. It is exactly here that workers from the Global South, socially, legally, politically and economically less equipped, are functional to the intensification of the exploitation of the entire economic area workforces – even beyond the level of subsistence accepted by native workers –, imposed with the ultimate aim to restore rates of profit considered adequate by capital.

The ecological transition in industrial workplaces: the representations of workers, technicians, engineers

Domenico Perrotta (University of Bergamo)

In the emerging field of environmental labour studies, scholars have analysed and debated the issue of the transformation of workplaces and labour relations in the era of the environmental crisis, climate change and ecological transition. The debate mainly concerns the strategies of adaptation and resistance, the conflicts, the role of the different actors that are concerned by – and participate in – these processes. The urgency of ecological transition calls for an increasing scholarly attention and new empirical studies on how workplaces and the labour process are affected by – and cope with – the transformations in production and organization, connected to the climate crisis.

In this presentation, I aim at contributing to this debate by focusing on industrial workplaces in Italy. In particular, through a qualitative research, I explore the representations and imaginaries of the ecological transition in workplaces and the differences in these imaginaries at the different levels of corporate organizations (blue-collars and white-collars; permanent and temporary employees, etc.) and of production networks (between the main companies and subcontracted firms); management's strategies and the workplace conflicts they entails; the transformations of corporate cultures, as well



as of professional cultures of engineers and technicians; on the proposals and approaches of employers' organizations and trade unions. This contribution describes the findings of exploratory in-depth interviews with technicians, clerks, engineers, factory workers, that are employed in the sectors of automobile, food processing and energy production, as well as of trade union officers and activists, in various Italian regions.

Mobile Workers and Modern Slavery Mitigation: A Construction Industry Case Study

Chris Pesterfield, University of Bristol

Various forms of labour exploitation persist in the UK construction industry, ranging from improper pay and working conditions to so-called modern slavery. This occurs not only in the 'informal' part of the industry, but also on larger construction sites run by some of the UK's largest contractors. While this impacts a range of workers, those most vulnerable to exploitation, particularly in its more severe forms, are transient migrant workers who regularly move from one site to another. In some cases, these workers also lack the legal right to work, further exacerbating their vulnerability. These practices are hiding in plain sight due to the challenge of visibly identifying exploitation, and because of the opaque labour supply chains through which workers are hired, comprised of a complex web of subcontractors, labour agencies, and umbrella companies. The construction industry therefore presents a significant challenge for the 2015 Modern Slavery Act (MSA), which encourages businesses to address areas of risk through the Transparency in Supply Chains component found in section 54 of the Act. This paper uses the construction industry as a case study to explore how the interaction between agents and political-economic dynamics has shaped mitigation strategies in response to the MSA, through a modified agency-centred form of Open Marxism. It does so by drawing on empirical data generated through interviews with 30 managers and directors of some of the UK's largest contractors, and documentary analysis of corresponding companies' modern slavery statements. There are three main findings. First, the response from the construction industry has been lacklustre. Second, this outcome has been produced through a combination of cumulative decisions made across contractors regarding modern slavery mitigation, and the need to remain competitive on price when bidding for work. Third, decision-makers in contractors at the top of supply chains are cognisant of the shortcomings of market-based solutions, and of relying on private initiatives - i.e. themselves - to address the presence of modern slavery. Building on these findings, the main contribution this paper makes is in showing how even for senior management who are desirous of reducing exploitation in their supply chains - and many participants claim to be driven at least in part by ethical or moral concerns - the ability to implement change is curtailed not only by market imperatives, but also by the strategic decisions the managers themselves have collectively made.



The baroque infrastructure of platforms: workers' agency in the gig-economy, between technological reappropriations and informalities

Gianmarco Peterlongo (University of Bologna, Department of Sociology and Business Law)

In recent years, scholars have been wondering about the role of digital platforms in the labour market and in the work organization (Grabher & König, 2020). According to a wide literature, lean platforms can be conceived as technological and economic infrastructures (Kornberger et al., 2017; Plantin et al., 2016; Srnicek, 2017). They are technical systems based on a stacked configuration of the labour process governed by informational asymmetries and opaque evaluative standards (Bratton, 2015; Shapiro, 2017), and economic organizations of intermediation preying on a reserve army of workers and on their misclassification as independent contractors (Antunes, 2018; Prassl, 2018). Focusing on infrastructures means recognizing the relational nature of these sociotechnical objects (Larkin, 2013), thus also exploring the use of platforms by workers and users. The impacts of digital Taylorism on work are well known among scholars, but there is a relative dearth of literature discussing the possibilities of agency - especially at individual level - in the gig-economy. By looking at the everyday use of digital technologies (Leszczynski, 2020), this contribution aims to analyse the forms of agency expressed by platform workers in the last mile logistic sector. The research is based on a multi-sited ethnography of platform labour carried out in two very distant countries concerning two different platform-based urban services: food delivery in Italy (Bologna, Torino) and ride hailing in Argentina (Buenos Aires). Despite the differences, the fieldwork shows several continuities among the geographical contexts. First, digital technologies play an ambivalent role in the working environment. While technology is used by companies to further intensify and subjugate work, on the other hand it is also a tool that can be employed to support workers' needs. Both in ride-hailing and food-delivery platforms, workers express their agency by sharing reworking practices (Anwar & Graham, 2020) and tactics (de Certeau, 1981) to circumvent the algorithmic despotism on and off the app. What emerge from the reuse of technology are forms of re-appropriation of infrastructures (Jeffries, 2011; Rossiter, 2016). Secondly, agency can also be expressed by informal economic practices. The fieldwork has uncovered a myriad of informal economic activities developed at the boundaries of the platform economy, although platform owner firms often act as formalising agents. Showing examples from both the cases of study, platforms strongly intersect urban informal economies and fuel informal circuits of labour (Zhao, 2019), as highlighted by the high presence of illicit or illegal exchanges (e.g., accounts market, sale of hacking softwares, scams). In conclusion, platforms are defined as baroque infrastructures, conceiving the baroque (Echeverría, 2008; Gago, 2014) as the complex and hybrid nature of action which mixes formal with informal activities, human with non-human entities, exploitative practices with agency, and forms of neoliberalism from below with practices of solidarity among workers.



Labour rights for temporary migrant workers: how to accelerate reforming the labour management system in the Gulf States?

Nicola Piper (Queen Mary University of London), Vani Saraswathi (Migrant-Rights.Org)

Ever since oil production started in the immediate post-II World War period and following the oil boom in the 1970s, the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states of Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Qatar and Oman have evolved into one of the most prominent destinations for migrant workers in the world – and have fairly consistently remained so. Awash with ‘petrodollars’, and with comparatively small populations, the Gulf states turned to recruiting migrant workers from across the spectrum of occupations to meet the labour needs in their expanding economies. As a result, quite a distinctive and contrasting pattern of migration took shape in the Gulf states in response to the significant boost in the states’ wealth.

The key change associated with the internationalisation of the Gulf states’ labour markets to the global migration story that stands out is the new model of labour migration: worker employment under the kafala system, by which migrant workers engage in employment through a sponsor, an arrangement that locks workers into a contract with no right to terminate or prematurely end the arrangement, meaning they have no right to escape from an abusive employer.

This paper will analyse this particular model of temporary hiring of foreign labour across the GCC states because, although temporariness has become a global phenomenon, the options for the great majority of low-skilled temporary migrant workers are particularly limited in the Gulf. Limited-duration employment generally does not prevent migrant workers from signing onto new contracts, but temporariness denies any recognition of continuity of service which can impact on social security entitlements and rights to apply for permanent residence. Temporariness impacts on the ability of migrant workers to contest untoward employment practices and to exercise their employment and industrial rights. Many GCC states also ban temporary migrant workers’ right to organise.

Drawing on ILO regional statistics and regional Gulf labour market statistics, we will combine insights on population growth, growth in economy, growth in migrant population, to show that even with nationalisation schemes, dependency on migrants in GCC countries has only been on the increase. This scenario raises the following questions: Has the policy narrative of temporariness reinforced the focus on migration to the detriment of labour rights? How do these policies that disallow collective bargaining, building networks, engagement locally have an impact on the labour market and the individual constituents? Has recent scrutiny and exposure of malpractices in Qatar due to it hosting FIFA World Cup 2022 resulted in more than “reform on paper” and if so, is there a trend across the GCC countries toward labour management reform?

Based on information gathered by key migrant rights advocates in the region, we will argue that by focussing policy reform primarily on the migration dimensions is restrictive as this brings borders, policing and ties with global migration policy to the fore. Approaching reform by taking a labour perspective, however, would provide more scope for fighting for rights in the pursuit of tangible outcomes for migrant workers.



The place of work in the Portuguese automotive sector: Global value chain, production regimes, power imbalances and types of governance

Eugénia Pires, João Lopes (CoLabor)

The automotive global-value chain (GVC) is characterised by regional manufacturing networks and strong polarisation between core and periphery. Original Equipment Manufacturers (OEM) control the value chain capturing higher value-added and controlling decision-making activities. As the recipient of OEMs and part suppliers Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) periphery specialises in lower value-added activities offshored from core regions, featuring low labour costs, geographic proximity to end-markets, and membership to trade agreements. In Portugal, an integrated periphery, the automotive sector is considered strategic due to its contributions in terms of employments, exports and added-value. The automotive GVC is very competitive and dynamic, particularly exposed to the twin green and digital transitions. In the recent past the sector has benefited from EU and national policy incentives. However, Portugal positioning in the automotive European production network was sustained in recent years not by productivity enhancement but by a cumulative comparative wage devaluation, in contrast with most Central and Eastern European countries, creating additional challenges both to the local managers and workers. Moreover, organizational and technological change seeking to optimise the production process is not neutral, impacting working conditions and labour process as well as the construction of the ‘manufacturing consent’.

The interdisciplinary approach will rely on mixed methods. On the one hand, it will introduce the concepts of the value chain smile curve and core-periphery dynamics, analysing quantitative data on employment, gross value added, investment, wages, apparent labour productivity and foreign control to outline Portugal’s place within the automotive Global Value Chains. Cross-country comparisons on these dimensions will be analysed, along with industrial production statistics from Eurostat’s Prodcom list. The latter will be used to estimate country’s automotive product specialisation, namely in what pertains to carbonised automotive parts and accessories (e.g. silencers and exhaust pipes). On the other hand, qualitative research underpinning on 41 semi-structured interviews to relevant industry stakeholders, from OEMs and part-suppliers top-managers, line-managers and workers representatives, to entrepreneurial associations and Union representatives, aims to untangle the contradictions underpinning the dynamics introduced by GVC management the impacts technological and organizational change introduced in the recent past while differentiate among distinct production regimes in order to distinguishing the forms of labour control and uncover power imbalances.

As an applied research contribution, the paper aims to contribute to enrich the literature on global value chains and labour process by studying the Portuguese case-study on an integrated periphery, adding to the vast literature on the automotive sector in Central and Eastern Europe countries.

The Materiality of Digital Platforms: the Case of Uber in Portugal

Giorgio Pirina (University of Verona)

The pandemic phase has made clear the degree of pervasiveness of digital technologies in everyday life. If in one hand, during the lockdown digital technologies had positive effects acting as "social



glue" by helping to maintain mediated relationships between people, on the other side the pandemic glaringly made clear: 1) the pivotal role of some workers categories (i.e., delivery rider), 2) the ambivalence and contradiction of lean digital platforms business model and 3) the ecological issues of digital infrastructures, concerning primary-commodities extraction, over-consumption of artifacts and electricity.

Starting from a literature review of critical media and digital labour theory that investigate the abovementioned topics, this contribute deal with a critique to the digital myth of dematerialisation of economy and productive processes. In fact, there is an International Division of Digital Labour which consist of a multiplicity of modes of production and exploitation of workforce (forced labour, extra-waged coercion etc.) and environment. At the center of the reflection there is the dialogue with the Ilo's Decent work agenda and indicators (suchs as social protection, decent working day, adequate income etc.), which help to grasp the concrete conditions of works botj in a local and supra-local scale.

The focus of this contribute is the case of platformized ride-hailing labour in Lisbon. Against the narrative of digital (platforms) myth - that can be inscribed in the general frameworks of the Californian Ideology and the digital utopianism - of which the assumption of the invisibility of digital platforms in the urban context is a pillar, this presentation opposes a material and geographically tethered work approach. In this way it is possible to highlight the socio-geo-institutional specificities of the contexts in which platforms operate. In fact, as the Portuguese arena well show, digital platforms (in this case Uber) adapt their business model to the specificities emerging from the context in order to obtain and maintain their dominant position, establishing a "good dialogue" with local and national policy actors. Furthermore, the (socio)materiality is expressed by 1) the bodies of workers, 2) their agency and capacity to self-organizes and propose alternative paths and use of digital platforms' architecture, and 3) the infrastructural assemblage which enable the operations of platforms. The case of "Uber Law" in Portugal is effective to investigate the abovementioned dynamics, since it introduced a new sector (so-called TVDE) and a particular labor organization on the basis of a threefold relation: driver – partner company – digital platform. This labour organization raised several controversies regarding working conditions, such as long work shifts, low wage margins and the self-entrepreneur rethoric.

The theoretical framework it is accompanied by a qualitative methodology, in particular in-depth interviews to drivers and TVDE entrepreneurs and a netnographic approach. The latter consist of the analysis of content wrote by drivers and entrepreneurs in the major Telegram and Facebook TVDE groups.

Algorithmic Subjectivities and the Urban as a Battlefield

Maurilio Pirone (University of Bologna), Mattia Frapporti (University of Bologna), Niccolò Cuppini (University of Applied Sciences and Arts of Southern Switzerland)

Elaborating the research outputs of H2020 project PLUS (Platform Labour in Urban Spaces), our contribution aims to analyse the role of urban spaces in the definition of both new class subjectivities and growing forms of labour struggles.

In the first part of the speech, we will argue that cities more and more become places of circulation playing an essential role in the capitalist valorisation nowadays. The workerist intuition summed up



in the motto “from the factory to the metropolis” found in the platform the device the become effective on large scale. Consider the evolution of 7 European cities (Barcelona, Berlin, Bologna, Lisbon, London, Paris, Tallinn) in the shift from Fordism to Post-Fordism we will argue that platforms contribute to a more general reorganization of production.

In the second part of the contribution, we will take into account the features of urban class segments embedded into platforms. Thanks to the analysis of more than 200 semi-structured interviews with platform workers operating in the 7 investigated cities, we may consider the role of algorithms in stimulating invisible and over-exploited labour. Dismantling the rhetoric of the urban entrepreneur, we will prefer to replace the dichotomy employee/autonomous with an updated notion of dependency taken from the analysis of Moulier-Boutang.

In the third part, we will provide a large spectrum of conflicts generated around the development of platform services in urban spaces and the growth of algorithmic subjectivities. The empirical map of existing struggles in the 7 investigated cities will support a more general theorizing around the overlapping between labour struggles and urban struggles for the improvement of working conditions as well as the democratization of platform governance.

Construction of political subjects in pandemic times: organizing precarious workers at the Immigrant Workers Centre (IWC) in Quebec, Canada

Susana Ponte Rivera (University of Montreal, Udm), Cheolki Yoon (University of Montreal, Udm), Manuel Salamanca Cardona (University of Quebec in Montreal, UQAM)

In North America, specifically in the United States and Canada, over the last 30 years, workers' centres have become crucial actors within the labour movement (Fine, 2007, 2011). They have developed as an alternative path of organizing precarious workers, mostly migrants and immigrants, out of the limitations that unions have (Fine 2010).

The pandemic, however, has posed a major challenge to the organizational capacities of these centres (Hanley et al. 2020). In the specific case of Montréal (Québec) and the IWC, the pandemic has meant the proliferation of precarity and abuses which have soared the asymmetry of power between employers and racialized precarious im/migrants. The pandemic has impacted these communities not only in their workplaces, but in their private and community life while the majority group of white people, citizens, and permanent residents who were able to work from home and with more resources, particularly with public subsidies, to minimize the negative impacts of the pandemic in their lives.

The current presentation explores these effects linked to the IWC's responses. Despite various forms of barriers, migrant and immigrant workers, with the support of organizations such as the IWC, have pursued their collective efforts to retain and build solidarity and mount their voice in the public sphere. The strategies unfolded from the IWC evolved into a movement which was able to question the faint welfarism of the Canadian State and the negative impacts of its immigration policies during the pandemic. The categories of “essential workers” and “guardian angels” produced and reproduced by the State (provincial and federal) and the mainstream media to classify those im/migrants who “deserved” symbolic recognition were questioned by im/migrants leaders and workers. These strategies include the renewal of the Coalition Against the Precarious Work, the visibility in the media through denunciation of the harsh conditions experienced by im/migrant communities, and the maintaining of democratic and educational spaces where im/migrant workers created their political



agenda. The final aim of this presentation is to describe in a dense way the process of construction of political subjects, and understanding the pandemic as a political opportunity instead of a barrier to organize precarious im/migrant workers.

Our research particularly discusses three subcases: The Dollarama agency workers' organizing for health and safety at work and better labour conditions, the responses from groups of workers pertaining to the Canadian temporary foreign workers programs, and the Women's Committee of the Temporary Agency Workers Association (TAWA) addressing specific gender oppressions during the pandemic. Each case shows how the most marginalized people in the labour market of Quebec could constitute themselves as collective political subjects and fight back for their rights. The research is mainly based on in-depth ethnography of three authors, who have been actively involved respectively in each subcase, complemented by interviews and document analysis.

Let's Move Outside: Identity Claims and Social Ties in Platform Work

Valeria Pulignano (KU Leuven), Karol Muszyński (KU Leuven), Maite Tapia (Michigan State University)

Platform work is defined as an employment form in which specific services are delivered in exchange for payment via platforms (Eurofound, 2018). Platforms enhance information asymmetries between workers and clients that effectively narrow workers' decision-making capacities and therefore undermine the actual self-employed or 'freelance' designation (Shapiro, 2018), while increasing workers' dependency on platforms (Schor, 2020). Several studies have pointed to different strategies platform workers deploy to reduce the asymmetry of the relationship within platform work. These strategies mainly refer to off-line local services, such as ride hailing and food delivery, and they indicate the engagement with grass-root initiatives (Tassinari & Maccarrone, 2020) on social media (Irani & Silberman, 2013; Kellogg et al., 2020), and the establishment of online communities (Schwartz, 2018; Fitzmaurice et al., 2020; Schor & Attwood-Charles, 2017) as essential tools and mechanisms of workers conflictual actions against platforms. Very few studies have engaged in examining conflict and discontent in remote on-line platform work or tasks that are done virtually, such as graphic design and data entry (for an exception see Lehdonvirta 2016 and Wood and Lehdonvirta, 2021); yet, how conflict and discontent in remote on-line platform work embeds into issues of trans-nationalization of employment and identity work are poorly investigated. This is particularly important since online platforms contribute to the 'un-socialization' of economic exchanges (Öberg, 2018) by dis-embedding economic relations from their social context (Denning, 2014). Therefore studying whether and how freelancers working within platforms foster their identity claims as self-employed freelancers through actions is especially important.

Findings illustrate that freelancers who work remotely engage in action by re-creating 'social ties' with co-worker freelancers and with platform-based clients on-line outside the platform, thereby circumventing algorithmic control. Outside the platform, and through social media, online freelancers develop sustainable forms of platform work by engaging in information-sharing with platform-based clients and co-workers regarding 'fair' pay and working standards. This occurs, for example, by indicating which tasks should be paid on piece-rate or hourly rate and how to renegotiate imprecise contracts in order to avoid unpaid work. Moreover, freelancers set common conditions with clients in order to ensure the availability of services and reduce the volatility of fees, which often enhances



competition among freelancers. By moving the economic transactions outside the platform, freelancers and clients can play around elements of algorithmic control imposed by platforms. In this way, both clients and freelancers are able to substituting the platforms' terms and conditions by their own commonly agreed rules and conditions. Establishing shared rules and conditions helps setting up durable and long-term relationships between freelancers and clients by increasing the predictability on the demand of services.

We focus on 75 narrative interviews with freelance workers engaged in remote work in Belgium, France, Italy, the Netherlands, and Poland in times of COVID-19 pandemic. Data have been collected between 2020-2021 within the scope of a large ResPecTMe project.

Migration and Workers' Struggles in the Informal Economy: a growing field of research in São Paulo

Karina Quintanilha (Department of Sociology, University of Campinas, UNICAMP), Ana Lídia Aguiar (Department of Sociology, University of São Paulo, USP), Vera Telles (Department of Sociology, University of São Paulo, USP), Tiago Rangel Cortês (Department of Sociology, University of São Paulo, USP)

In Brazil, connections between informal economy and migrant labour have historical relations, and should be understood as part of the formation of the Brazilian reality, as analysed by the sociologist Bruno Durães (DURÃES, 2013). Especially in the city of São Paulo, the presence of internal and transnational migrants has always been important in the composition, production and history of popular markets and informal work. Since the beginning of the 2000s, in the context of a global migration rearrangement influenced by a new division of labour, with sociosexual-racial and ethnical characteristics (RONCATO, 2020), Brazil has become an important migratory destination. In the Brazilian labor market, informal work is one of the sectors that most absorb migrants (VILLEN, 2018). In the gig economy, migrants of various nationalities are part of this trade mediated by digital technologies, in the supply of goods, but also on the most precarious fringes – mainly in the “corre”, especially in popular markets where they need to deal with the interference of municipal public powers that often act in accord to the interests of the big business of the private sector. A large part of this population joins the ranks of the undocumented, threatened with imprisonment and without access to any emergency aid or social benefit during the current multidimensional crisis (DELGADO WISE, 2016). The purpose of this abstract is to unveil the way in which migrants in São Paulo are affected by the crisis, in particular during the pandemic, their articulations, cultural resistances and solidarity networks, bypassing State racism (BASSO, 2015), repression and building work alternatives. It also aims to understand how migrants organize themselves in other workers' struggles and in urban solidarity networks, seeking to investigate their relationship with other social actors that make up the spaces, especially in light of local disputes over digital surveillance and control of the city. In this sense, we look at migration in relation to migratory flows in the dynamics of cities on a global scale, shuffling the formal/informal, redefining fields and work practices. That is, we consider the global processes that reconfigure the urban and “the internal processes that unite actors to this location in neoliberal times” (ÇAGLAR; GLICK SCHILLER apud FELDMAN-BIANCO, 24: 2009).



This research agenda is based mainly on the discussions raised by the authors during the Seminar Street Vendors and the City: cartographies of the popular economy, tensions in the territories, conflicts and practices of resistance during the Covid-19 pandemic, organized in September 2020 by a group of Brazilian interdisciplinary researchers dedicated to urban studies, multi-situated ethnography, sociology of work and migration studies, with the collaboration of some of the street vendors unions and auto-organized groups. Despite the specificities of the Brazilian platformization context, those growing researches under development in São Paulo demonstrate how migrant work constitutes the “tip of the iceberg” of the new tendencies of informality, precarity and lacking social rights faced by the global working class (ANTUNES, 2018), but also indicates that migrants are in the center of the new social struggles era.

Struggle for recognition, a lever to establish industrial relations from below. Reinterpreting riders' mobilisation in food delivery sector in Italy

Nicola Quondamatteo (Scuola Normale Superiore, Florence), Marco Marrone (University of Venice)

The so-called ‘gig economy’ has been interpreted as one of the most advanced peaks of deregulation and informalisation of work (De Stefano, 2016; Scholz, 2015). Nevertheless, at least within certain segments of platform capitalism, there has been a wave of mobilisation by gig workers as food delivery riders or Uber drivers (Maccarone – Tassinari, 2020). From this point of view, platforms are characterised by an ambivalent nature; on the one hand they are a vector for work deregulation, on the other they can encourage processes of recognition of pseudo-employers as counterparts (Ford – Honan, 2019).

This seems particularly true for the case of food delivery sector in Italy (Marrone, 2021; Quondamatteo, 2019). Indeed, a significant wave of mobilisations has produced attempts from below to initiate industrial relations in a sector that before its “platformization” had historically been part of the informal labour market. Achievements are still contradictory: while Just Eat-Takeaway signed an agreement with the major trade unions, other multinational platforms - united in the employers’ association Assodelivery - chose to sign a widely contested contract with an unrepresentative union (Aloisi – De Stefano, 2020). However, considering both the outcomes of riders’ struggles and the difficulties that still exist in collective bargaining, Italy may represent a watershed in defining possible directions for the future of gig economy as pointed out by an editorial in Financial Times (Ghiglione – Sciorilli Borrelli, 2021).

Thus, taking Italy as a case study, the aim of this paper is to investigate how riders’ struggles have been able to establish industrial relations in the previously unregulated food delivery sector. More specifically, the authors want to face the following questions: what have been the crucial steps of the struggle? How did the different social actors involved act to establish industrial relations in a sector that did not have them before? What are the most relevant successful practices adopted by various social actors to achieve their goals?

Authors will attempt to answer these questions using empirical evidence from a participant observation within the unionisation process that has taken place in Bologna since 2017.

The keyword that emerges from the research is that of recognition which, despite a solid theoretical background represented by the work of Pizzorno (1978) and Honneth (2002), is still little explored in Industrial Relations debates. In this sense, the authors want to highlight the potential of this keyword



in understanding platform workers' struggle as a "struggle for recognition". First, the authors stress the importance of an internal recognition through which a highly fragmented workforce has been able to identify itself as a class thanks to the role of solidarity practices. Secondly, it is crucial to talk about an institutional recognition by the State, which more than regulating the sector produced the necessary condition for establishing industrial relations. Finally, the authors discuss recognition by platforms: this type of recognition seems to be the most difficult to achieve, thus confirming the peculiar tendency of platforms to escape from labour laws and industrial relations.

Labor Control Regime through Job contracts, Intermittent unemployment and Social reproduction among the Bangladeshi workers in Fincantieri, Italy

Al Amin Rabby (University of Padova)

Research on labor control regime (LCR) has mainly focused on the labor processes inside the factory regime. However, a few studies addressed LCR as linked with the labor process, social reproduction, and migration policy. Migrant laborers are generally positioned in the 'bottom-end' of the new international division of labor predominantly in construction, shipbuilding, hospitality, care, and domestic laborers (Sassen, 2001). To address this gap in the literature current paper concentrates on Fincantieri, the leading Italian state-owned shipbuilding industry in Europe. It draws on data gathered during four months of ethnographic research, 42 in-depth interviews with Bangladeshi workers, field observations, and reflections on the LCR in Italy's two port cities: Monfalcone and Venice Marghera. The characteristics of LCR in Fincantieri are threefold. First, labor process by means of intermediaries and subcontracting firms (informality as precarious labor, short-term contracts). Second, workers lead recruitment and social reproduction processes in the community. And third, the state policy to regulate migration through a permit to stay. All these elements intersect with each other and actively constitute LCR within this leading industry. The majority of the Bangladeshi workers are recruited with the help of intermediaries who are co-ethnic and working inside the shipyards. The subcontracting firm owners take advantage of migrant workers' vulnerabilities to control them in various ways. Most of the laborers who have family in Italy live on the edge of subsistence, others have to support their family 'back home' or to repay pre-migration loans. As some workers face family demands for reunification or financial responsibilities towards those 'left behind' they often turn to bank loans. To be approved for a loan, however, they require long-term work contracts. Consequently, workers often compromise their wage rates and agree to work longer hours. Some of the workers bribe their supervisors by paying back a percentage of their wages to ensure continuity of the job. This paper explored the ways in which laborers are controlled such as; often penalized, intimidations of losing jobs, threatened and discouraged to join trade unions, combined with forced transfer to other shipyards. These Bangladeshi workers suffer from intermittent unemployment despite the nature of their job contracts. However, the LCR is not limited to workplaces but it functions through social ties as well. This research reveals a complex interconnection between the labor process, social networks, and the reproduction of labor. The informal practice of recruitment through workers lead social networks limits the scope of bargaining. Some of the laborers have to live in the houses of Bangladeshi supervisors who also manage their jobs. Moreover, being an obedient and well-behaved worker in the community ensures further extension of job contracts. Those having short-term stay permits or irregular migratory status leads to more vulnerability as workers'



permit to stay in Italy depends on their work contract subsequently imposing further constraints on workers. Overall, this paper argues that labor is controlled not only inside the factory regime but also through workers' social reproduction process within the community and the immigration policy of the host state.

Australian government reactions to COVID 19: response strategies of unions and civil society groups

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Losing control of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Australian government increasingly tightened controls over workers and the poor. Border closures re-enacted long-standing national traditions of labour relations, migration and refugee policies. The implications for levels and models of employment in agriculture and frontline service industries were profound. Patterns of employment and labour relations during pandemic lockdowns and flawed roll-outs of vaccination and testing/isolation procedures revealed the fault lines in Australian society. Particularly vulnerable to job and income loss, exploitative and insecure ‘gig’ work, lockdown stress and slow vaccine access were Indigenous and immigrant communities, women, young people and the aged. These fault lines were deepened by neoliberal opposition to state welfare intervention, and a militarisation, of both the movement of goods and of controls over the movement of people. Government first-wave support for business and those losing jobs was inequitably distributed, not extended to the unemployed, and then unevenly and chaotically withdrawn during the second wave. As labour shortages escalated, national and state governments in Australia “opened” the economy before vulnerable groups had been vaccinated, seeking to recruit backpackers and international students into unregulated work.

Through critical discourse analysis (Fairclough, 2014), we explore how neoliberal government responses to COVID-19 built on 25-years of legislative erosion of trade unions’ capacity for collective organisation, on welfare state attrition, and increased government surveillance of the poor (eg. McCrystal, 2019; Phillips and Narayana, 2021; Bielefield et al., 2021).

We present a preliminary analysis of selected commentary by academics, the organised labour movement and civil society advocacy groups, in the face of restrictions on industrial action and collective bargaining (Roles et al., 2022 forthcoming), erosion of public administration and education, and exhaustion of over-stretched front-line workers (Smallwood, 2021). We discuss the emergence of individualised resistance and the mobilisation of right-wing dissent, including within union ranks (eg Adams, 2021).

Our starting point is a much-cited collective editorial, published in 2020 in *The Economic and Labour Relations Review*, which looked at the possibility of emerging from COVID-19 with a more equitable and sustainable society (van Barneveld et al 2020). That article advocated, within the overarching need for accelerated action on global heating, a program for enhanced public health and aged care; a new industrial relations system; improved labour standards and job security; the equitable inclusion of young people, women, migrant and First Nations people in meaningful and productive work, and enhanced social protection. Two years later, this program appears very over-optimistic.

The paper is an initial analysis of current collective strategies in Australia for challenging the inequitable social order that COVID-19 has laid bare. It foreshadow a further, rigorously scoped



(Tricco et al., 2018) meta-evaluation of change strategies advocated by progressive civil society and labour organisations in Australia.

A sociological study on the role played by economic networks and social institutions in enabling platform mediated service-work in India

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Gig-work refers to the delivery of services (ride-hailing, domestic help, food delivery, etc.) where the consumer places a demand, often online, to an intermediary (the gig-work platform), which then passes it on to the service provider (gig-worker) for its completion offline. Existing platform literature, pushes us to conceive the issues with platform mediated gig-work from an individualistic lens, where the risks of engagement (between platforms and gig-worker) is completely borne by the gig-worker. From the field-view I would like to put forward two questions: How can we categorise gig-workers in India (Keeping in mind the existing distinctions: Migrant-non-migrant and urban-rural)? What are the individual and networked strategies that gig-workers employ to bear the risks and uncertainties of platform mediated service-work?

The methodological approach has informed both the manner in which we raised and answered this enquiry. Gig-work is primarily considered through the prism of individuality, across a wide range of actors, such as platform companies, the Indian state and even platform scholars. In contrast, we situate gig-work within networks of social ties and everyday exchanges. In this paper, we drew on ethnographic fieldwork conducted in the cities of Kanpur and Kolkata from the period January, 2019 to June 2021. We studied and observed gig-work in the ride-hailing and food-delivery platforms through semi-structured interviews (both in-person and telephonic), participant observation and detailed study of government notifications since the start of the pandemic in India.

Our findings show that gig-workers turn to a stratified coping mechanism for enduring economic distress and also use their pre-existing social ties to understand gig-work. From our field, we have found that both migrants (recently migrated or intergenerational) and non-migrants participate in gig-work. We found that gig-workers turned to four pillars during this period: the family, the neighbourhood, co-workers and kinship ties. We found that gig-workers first seek help from household members with whom they share living space and hearth. The liminal nature of gig-work (part entrepreneur, part employee) is situated within the household-as-enterprise and relies on it during times of distress. Second, gig-workers actively sought assistance from people in urban neighbourhoods. Many gig-workers in this study emerged from a long chain of migration from rural hinterlands to cities. Consequently, common regional (district level) connections influence assistance available in the urban neighbourhood. Third, gig-workers often turned to their “co-workers”, or other gig-workers with whom they either shared spatial proximity and/or regular interactions in the course of undertaking gig-work. Fourth, they relied on assistance from kinship networks, which initially stemmed from their villages of origin but were currently spatially dispersed.

Our findings bring forth various forms of essential reciprocal and redistributive exchanges that occurred during pandemic and pre-pandemic times. Our findings elucidate how realms of social reproduction - the family, the neighbourhood and the community act as an essential infrastructure that is supporting the platform ecosystem in the developing world. Thus the externalised risks and



losses (eg. unpaid work) are borne by the economic networks and social institutions that the gig-worker is a part of.

Explaining Variation in Trade Union Responses to Restructuring: Evidence from France

Ruth Reaney (University of Glasgow), Genevieve Coderre-Lapalme (University of Birmingham)

Research on trade union responses to employer-driven workplace restructuring indicates that unions can choose to pursue a variety of strategies to protect the interests of workers when under pressure from employers. These strategies range from ‘cooperative’ approaches such as concession bargaining and the negotiation of social plans, to more ‘confrontational’ tactics such as political mobilisation to prompt negotiations about alternative plans (Pulignano and Stewart 2013; Foster and Scott 1998; Jalette and Hebdon 2012; Greer et al 2013). The literature suggests that various internal and external factors can explain how unions make strategic choices in this regard (Connolly and Darlington 2012; Pulignano and Stewart 2013). External circumstances including social and economic change, the institutional environment, and employer tactics can influence unions’ choice of response, as well as the success of union action (Frege and Kelly 2003; Greer et al 2013; Martinez-Lucio and Stuart 2005). However, as external factors tend to ignore inter- and intra-union variation in action, internal characteristics have also been highlighted as important in influencing unions’ strategic choices. In particular, union identity is considered key in shaping and sustaining union strategy (Bacon and Blyton 2004; Lévesque and Murray 2010; Hodder and Edwards 2015; Hyman 2001). Others have emphasised resources (Lévesque and Murray 2010; Gumbrell-McCormick and Hyman 2013; Silver 2005) and framing processes (Benford and Snow 2000; Lévesque and Murray 2013). These concepts are especially helpful in elucidating enduring union path dependencies, but struggle to explain changes in union strategies, whether isolated or longer-lasting.

Drawing on case studies of ‘critical restructuring incidents’ from two of France’s most unionised sectors, public healthcare and automobile manufacturing, we seek to untangle the factors which impact union responses to restructuring. In doing so, we offer insight into the dynamics between the different factors that shape trade union strategic choice. Whereas some unions in the cases had confrontational responses because this forms part of their usual repertoire of action and general union identity, others opted for a confrontational response to ensure future access to resources. Unions which are generally considered to be “non-militant” engaged in confrontational action in instances where it was deemed necessary to protect their legitimacy and power within the organisation and in the eyes of employees. Thus, our research demonstrates that unions may engage in ‘non-routinised’ strategies when they need to access resources and uphold their legitimacy, shedding light on the processes through which unions break from their traditional repertoires of action (see Bacon and Blyton 2004). The findings highlight that, to understand the dynamic nature of unions’ strategic choices, research must examine the interplay between the pursuit of legitimacy, union identity and resources.



Labor reform impact on labor relation on the Brazilian steel industry

Flavia Ribeiro (Universidade Estadual de Campinas - UNICAMP), João Gabriel Tury (Universidade Estadual de Campinas - UNICAMP), Marcela Sales (Universidade Federal de Juiz de Fora), Marco Tulio Vieira (Universidade Federal de Juiz de Fora)

The Brazilian government issued a legislation that substantially changes the institutional regulation of labor relations in the country in 2017. This reform follows the latest trend in worldwide capitalism, based on news patterns of labor relations. The current research discuss the labor reform in Brazil and assess its impacts on employment and labor relations in the steel industry conducted through a case study of Usiminas, a large steel company.

The changes occurred in labor relations and social security are not new, but in recent years and especially after the 2008 crisis, a new wave of reforms has emerged and gained strength in the international context. These recent modifications resulted in an increase of social insecurity and a broader precarity, causing a structural vulnerability and instability on employment. In Brazil, labor legislation has been modified since the 1990s. Even though new laws in the period have changed important elements in labor legislation, the fundamental institutional landmark was not profoundly altered. The recent labor reform can be pointed as the first structural change in labor legislation after the creation of the CLT (Consolidacao das Leis do Trabalho or labor law consolidation) in 1943. It is worth noting that the labor reform not only changes labor relations but also modifies the central locus that defines the institutional and legal landmark from the State to the private companies, thus increasing employers' power and capacity of defining new rules.

Therefore, the current article assesses the fundamental elements of the Brazilian labor reform, in its political, economic, theoretical and ideological aspects. It also aims to deepen the understanding of the elements involved in the regulation of labor relations, mainly the role played by the State and other public entities.

In the second part, the paper shows the results of a case study conducted in the Usiminas Company, one of the greatest steel industries in the country. Historically, the steel industry has a high percentage of formal workers and a steady tradition of mobilization and negotiation, what allows the observation of the impacts caused by the reform. The steel industries suffered a new crisis period due to low industrial production and to international changes in steel supply and demand in the years of 2014 and 2015. In this context, business associations from the sector started to request once again the flexibilization of the labor relations and played an important role in the approval of the reform.

Usiminas has specific traits that highlight the assessed points. The company was privatized in 1991, undergoing a rapid productive restructuring process. During the crisis in the steel sector in 2014, Usiminas shut two blast furnaces and conducted a 15% reduction in workhours and wages for some of its workers. Therefore, the company represents an important industrial sector in the country, allowing a throughout assessment of the impacts caused by the labor reform approved in Brazil.



‘If I keep working at this pace, I fear becoming seriously unwell’: Exploring leaveism and employee well-being

James Richards (Heriot-Watt University), Jesus Canduela (Heriot-Watt University), Vaughan Ellis (Edinburgh Napier University), Toma Pustelnikovaite (Abertay University), Siddartha Saxena (Ahmedabad University)

Leaveism involves working during annual leave, taking work home, and working when on vacation (Hesketh et al., 2014). Leaveism occupies an under-researched space between presenteeism and absenteeism (Hesketh and Cooper, 2014). Research surrounding leaveism typically adopts a managerial/employer perspective, capturing prevalence (CIPD, 2018), linking sickness absence with sickness presenteeism (Gerich, 2015), impact on police force objectives (Hesketh et al., 2015; Houdmont et al., 2018), and impact on organisational and individual performance (Hesketh et al., 2014). As such, the employee perspective is neglected, not least in terms of how leaveism impacts on the well-being of those most likely to work in such a manner.

The paper aims to explore the impact of leaveism on employee well-being, drawing on findings from a self-administered e-survey based on a convenience sample of 1145 participants. Participants were UK employees with experience of leaveism. More specifically, aims included exploring leaveism and well-being, drawing on demographic characteristics (e.g. sex, age, disability), amounts of leaveism performed over time, organisational factors (e.g. union recognition, annual leave policy), but also 18 internal (e.g. love for job, poor time management skills) and external variables (e.g. stop working piling up, short staffing).

Headline analysis reveals approximately 60% of participants believe leaveism has a negative/very negative impact, rising to around 85% when including those who reported leaveism having a slightly negative impact on well-being. Further analysis suggests those doing more leaveism and those doing less leaveism during the last 3 years had a higher probability of a negative impact over their well-being than those with no change on intensity. The probability of a negative impact on well-being decreases with age. Not having policy on flexible working increases the probability of negative impact on well-being. For those who usually take their full annual leave the probability of a negative impact on well-being was reduced. Other factors as sex, disability, job type or union recognition, were found to be not significant in the explanation of the probability of a negative influence on well-being.

Additional analysis involved a two-stage approach. Firstly, exploratory Factor Analysis was used to investigate the underlying constructs behind the reported pattern of reasons, from the original 18 variables 3 factors were created retaining 79.61% of the original variation. These factors represented 3 dimensions of reasons behind performing leaveism; Factor 1 related to internal push reasons, factor 2 was related to external reasons and factor 3 represented internal positive reasons. The second stage of the analysis involved the fitting of a binary logistic model to assess the impact of those dimensions over well-being while controlling for demographic and other relevant characteristics. Results showed a score increase on internal push reasons or external reasons resulted in a higher probability of a negative influence over well-being, with external reasons having a higher impact of that effect. On the other hand, increase of scores on internal positive reasons decreased the probability of a negative influence over well-being.

The findings extend the knowledge of leaveism in relation to employee well-being, and generate a range of practical implications.



Ideologies of Work, Learning, and Development: Rethinking digital skills programs for refugee youth.

Genevieve Ritchie (University of Toronto)

During 2017, while conducting research with young adult refugees from the Middle East and North Africa (MENA), I had the pleasure of meeting a number of politically active young people who were excited by digital possibilities. They saw digital platforms as an accessible activist tool and were keen to discuss opportunities for working in the information and communication industry (ICT). In other words, the digital economy appeared to these young refugees as a pathway to meaningful and politically relevant work, one which bridged their interests in social justice with the necessity of securing a wage. These conversations gave me cause to consider how the ICT industry engages with refugee youth and to investigate the development projects that link refugee management and ICT development with rights for refugees.

Surveying the grey literature, I mapped civil society programs that target refugee youth for digital skills development. I looked for common objectives with regard to rights, work, learning, and social justice, and considered how civil society programs assemble ideas and orient young people's consciousness. Digital skills programs operating in the MENA region have set grand agendas with promises of ending the digital divide, educating a new generation of young people, and creating labour market access for a population with the highest rate of youth unemployment in the world. Digital skills programs, thus, promise a particular vision for the future of the region and its young people. Such visions, however, need to be read through the classed realities of financialization, war, and displacement within the region. It is also worth consider how the lives of young people will be oriented by an educational emphasis on building skills for the digital economy.

In particular the research was interested in excavating the capitalist ideologies that reconfigure forced migration as economic development and present digital skills as a form of peacebuilding and social justice. The analysis suggests that digital skills are presented as an empowering response to war and displacement yet actually expand conditions of insecurity for refugee youth. Weaving digital skills programs into the uneven conditions of economic development in the MENA region, I raise questions about the global conditions of de-/re-skilling and draw from Marxist-feminist discussions of war and imperialism to critique the prescribed role for young people in processes of rebuilding the region.

Community unionism, bricolage and collective action. Spanish and Italian migrant workers in Berlin

Beltrán Roca (University of Cádiz, Spain), Simone Castellani (Lisbon University Institute, Portugal)

This paper analyzes how Southern European workers create bricolage by combining creatively organized practices of collective action, such as those of conventional labor unions, with self-created practices when facing oppressive labor relations and widespread downgrading of social mobility. We compare two cases of networks formed by Spanish and Italian migrant workers in Berlin: the Grupo de Acción Sindical and Berlin Migrant Strikers. Drawing on an ethnographic study of these groups, the article argues that the networks have different logics of action and political strategies. Their dissimilarities are manifested in different outcomes and organizational dimensions. Key factors



include their founding members' social and activist backgrounds and leaders' countries of origin. It can be argued that, through these networks, migrants produce and reproduce political practices and collective actions, shaping a transnational social space that connects migrants and non-migrant individuals and organizations from both origin and destination countries.

Online Platforms as Potential Disruptors for the Gender Gap in Employment: Evidence from GoJek in Indonesia

Yana Rodgers (Rutgers University), Yesim Elhan-Kayalar (Asian Development Bank), Yasu Sawada (Asian Development Bank)

The COVID-19 pandemic has generated devastating health and economic crises around the globe and disrupted the livelihoods of countless individuals and households. Yet the pandemic is not the only disruptor to global economies; accelerated digitalization has also contributed to enormous changes in the jobs people hold and in their terms of employment. When exogenous shocks (such as a pandemic) disrupt business models that thrive on physical supply and logistics chains, online platforms can offer an alternative means to generate jobs and support business continuity for micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs). With the pandemic have come important push and pull factors via the increased subscription of MSMEs to online platforms to generate and sustain their revenues, and the expanded demand for online services due to restricted physical access during a quarantine period. Further, low to no entry barriers, low operations costs, autonomy, and flexible location and work hours built into some online business lines have created fertile ground for women “entrepreneurs by necessity” to thrive during the pandemic.

With both push and pull factors at play, an interesting and important question is the extent to which online platforms have helped expand the labor market for women entrepreneurs during the COVID-19 pandemic. We explore this question using data from GoJek, one of the largest online platforms in South East Asia, with a focus on GoJek’s GoFood merchants in Indonesia. We focus on the impact of this food app on employment generation and business resilience of women entrepreneurs during the pandemic. The analysis uses a mixed-methods approach and examines changes for women as a cohort as well as changes relative to men. The quantitative approach is based on a difference-in-differences approach in which we identify the impact of the pandemic on food app sales and employment by leveraging differences across different points of time before and during the pandemic as well as the plausibly exogenous spatial requirements for social distancing.

To conduct the analysis, we use four sources: (1) administrative and transactions data from GoJek; (2) new primary data generated through a census conducted among GoFood merchants in Indonesia (close to 300,000 merchants across the country, including women-headed enterprises); (3) a follow-up phone interview of selected GoFood merchants; and (4) publicly available data from Indonesia’s statistical bureau and other sources on online platforms, MSMEs, and women entrepreneurs in Indonesia. The survey and interviews also allow us to examine the potential benefits, especially in terms of business resilience, for entrepreneurs who access and leverage platform ecosystem services that support supply-chain access, marketing, financing, and delivery.

Preliminary results indicate that women-owned businesses were more likely than those owned by men to diversify their operations and adjust the scope of their business using online platforms, which has helped to mitigate some of the negative effects of the pandemic. This study provides insights for



opportunities to scale up good practices of an online platform in generating employment for women, with lessons for other digital platforms within and outside of Indonesia.

"This is what they believe we can do": Essentialism in the recruitment and selection of migrant women with tertiary education

Anne-Iris Romens (Department of Sociology and Social Research, University of Milan-Bicocca)

In the context of the global competition for talent, skilled migration has become one of the most acceptable forms of entering Western European countries (Boucher, 2016; Mezzadra & Neilson, 2013). However, although holding tertiary education is expected to facilitate access to rewarding positions within European labour markets (OECD, 2019), returns on education for migrant women seem to be reduced (Grigoleit-Richter, 2017; Kofman, 2012; OECD, 2014). In order to better understand why migrant women, including those with tertiary education, continue to be confined to the bottom of the employment structure, I argue that it is necessary to analyse how essentialism and stereotyping based on colonial legacies and the intersection of migratory background, racialization, gender and class reproduce stratifications of the labour market.

Based on comparative fieldwork, the contribution stresses that recruiters' essentialist representations are influenced by the colonial past and global inequalities, causing them to devalue the skills of migrant women. More specifically, it emphasizes how essentialism and stereotyping influence recruiters' assessments of education, work experience, language skills and soft skills while reinforcing the eroticization of migrant women's bodies. Moreover, the results contribute to the literature on the social construction of skills, as the recognition of skills is the result of workers' social performance and recruiters' perception of degrees, knowledge, technical expertise and work experiences (Vasey 2021).

The paper is based on fieldwork, involving 52 interviews, that was conducted in France and Italy. It adopts an international comparative perspective which allows the researcher to contextualize the processes of essentialization and stereotyping based on colonial legacies, racialization, migration background, gender and class, which limit migrant women's access to jobs. To analyse the issue from multiple perspectives, the contribution considers the views of labour market gatekeepers, including recruiters and social workers, on the one hand, and potential candidates, namely migrant women with tertiary education, on the other hand.

Where have all the workers gone? The Retreat from the Restaurant Industry in the U.S.

Jacqueline Ross (University of Bristol, UK)

The restaurant industry is notorious for difficult working conditions including long hours, abusive customers/management, and meagre wages. When the U.S., and New York in particular, began to ease restrictions due to Coronavirus, there was a wave of cabin-fevered people flocking to restaurants and bars only to be met with significant closures of establishments (100,000 in the first six months of the pandemic (National Restaurant Association, 2021)). Of the restaurants that were still open, many were struggling to survive and most were significantly short-staffed. Where did all of the workers go,



and more importantly why? There were 11.26 million persons employed in the restaurant industry in 2020, a significant drop from the 13.49 million employed in 2019, and a low-number not seen since before 2010. Understanding this significant reduction in numbers as not simply a consequence of the Coronavirus pandemic (although it may have served as a catalyst), but more importantly as a response to the unsustainable labour processes of the industry is necessary.

I witnessed significant changes in the restaurant from, pre-covid, the height of the pandemic, and the post-lockdown period. ‘Nobody wants to work anymore’! was a phrase repeatedly heard during my ethnographic fieldwork in a restaurant in New York in the latter period. The popular myth circulating through media stations and the general population blamed extended covid-19 unemployment benefits for the lack of workers, but this is marginal at best. The story is much more complicated than that.

The restaurant industry relies heavily on flexible labour, immigrant labour, mobile labour, and labour willing to work for very little guaranteed pay, no benefits, and under great stress. Precariousness, individual responsabilisation, and informal financial incentivization are part and parcel to the labour process of this industry. The coronavirus pandemic exacerbated these issues, workers left the industry for reasons including, an increase in abuse, significant reduction in business and tips (the main form of income for many restaurant workers), and fear of working in a customer facing role during the pandemic – workers were deemed ‘essential’ although some made as little as \$2.13 an hour in wages, etc. After the height of the pandemic, enforced lockdowns, and restaurant closures, many did not return to the industry and fewer than normal new employees appeared. The aim here is to understand this labour shortage, dynamics of control in the industry, and the retreat from the industry as an individual yet collective form of resistance to it.

Methodologically, this paper uses Burawoy’s extended case method in an attempt to see the general in the particular. I use my critical ethnographic work on the experience of restaurant work in an attempt to see the more general trends in work and labour in the industry. Pointing to elements of post-Fordist neoliberal capitalism, I explain how the aforementioned (general) creates a need for flexible, unorganized, and precarious labour, and point to this in the particular working conditions and experiences of the restaurant (the production of value in experience and service, emotional labour, internal responsabilisation, tipping, etc.).

COVID-19 and the Politics of Labour in Canada

Stephanie Ross (School of Labour Studies, McMaster University), Larry Savage (Department of Labour Studies Brock University)

This paper explores the ways that the COVID-19 pandemic has presented both significant obstacles and opportunities for reimagining the politics of labour in Canada. As Swartz and Warskett (2012) argue, labour movements under capitalism are pulled between conflicting visions of solidarity, either emphasizing the defense of narrow identities and concerns or seeking “broader social, economic and cultural transformations” for all. The impact of the pandemic (and of government and employer responses to it) has thrown these dynamics into sharp relief. In the pandemic’s early days, conditions created some optimism about the prospects for building broader forms of solidarity around class-wide demands, and some sections of the labour movement made the case for expanding existing universal programs and renewed the fight for new ones, including paid sick days, universal public child care, basic income, and universal prescription drug coverage. On the other hand, the differential impact of the pandemic on various sections of the working class saw other unions react defensively and posed



renewed challenges to building inclusive, non-sectionalist, and solidaristic responses to the pandemic's economic and social crises. These divisions have most recently been reinforced by the varied union responses to the introduction of mandatory workplace vaccination policies. This paper maps the diversity of unions' political responses to the pandemic with the intention of identifying those political strategies pushing the labour movement towards a broader culture of solidarity.

Invisible Processes at the Nursery: Changing Dynamics of Work in Turkey under Covid-19

Öykü Şafak-Çubukçu (Ankara Yıldırım Beyazıt Üniversitesi, Turkey)

The Coronavirus pandemic affected certain sectors significantly and education is among these sectors. Especially in the early days of the pandemic, the schools were shut down in most of the countries, including Turkey. Although the shift to online education prevented a severe interruption at the university level, with the help of new technologies; for younger students, the adaptation to digitalization came at a slower pace and was experienced more unequally. This process was even harder for preschool children. For most of the private preschools, command over new technologies became a prerequisite, while the duty of childcare is now combined with healthcare under pandemic conditions, as these institutions were among the first reopened places. The service provided by the nurseries has never been limited to education, but it got much more complicated due to the pandemic. The burden here is on the shoulders of mostly female and mostly young nursery teachers, who have already been working under increasingly precarious conditions in Turkey. The covid provided a new pretext for their short-term contracts, high workloads, and irregular working hours. This article focuses on the experiences of nursery teachers in Turkey during the pandemic. Based on 25 in-depth interviews, conducted with female nursery teachers under the age of 30, working on non-permanent contracts in private nurseries/preschools; it analyses changing dynamics of work within these places, changing relationship of these teachers with labour market, and their changing everyday experiences. It is suggested that the pandemic not only increased mobility of young teachers in and out of the jobs, but also worsened the working conditions during their employment due to new forms of pressures. In addition, taking over some of the burden of social reproduction, as childcare is essential for the continuation of the labour market; the contribution of nursery teachers to the labour market is beyond and above what they get out of it. In this sense, the article also underlines how the reproduction of gender inequality is linked to the composition of the labour market, especially in the countries of the Global South.

Workers' Support Centres in Quebec – Learning and "Forgetting" How to defend Agricultural Migrant Workers

Manuel Salamanca Cardona (McGill University, University of Quebec in Montreal -UQAM-SHERPA Institute Immigrant Workers Centre)

After the approval of the IRPA (Canadian Immigration Act) in 2001, the Temporary Agricultural Workers Programs have undergone a strong expansion in Canada. The institutional and regulatory framework of the Canadian Immigration Policies have allowed the expansion and consolidation of temporary agricultural labour. Most of these programs respond to a neoliberal paradigm called



"regulated immigration" (Vosko, 2019) which has institutionalized a working model for the generation and administration of transnational labour which exalts the qualities of the international mobility for development (Paquet, 2016). However, from more than 20 years ago, these programs have been severely questioned because of their "perverse social effects" in terms of labour and human rights violations (Soussi, 2016) and they have been called "unfree labour" (Choudry and Smith, 2016) because of the non-economic restrictions for navigating in the labour market.

By another side, the UFCW (United Food and Commercial Workers) in Canada and the Federation des Travailleurs du Quebec (Quebec Workers' Federation) -FTQ, have applied an innovative strategy since 2001 to organize and unionize these workers. This strategy was the implementation of the Worker's Support Centres. The first one was opened by the UFCW in Leamington Ontario in 2001 and the third one in Quebec in 2004 (another one was opened in 2007 in Quebec). Sadly, in this province the two centres have closed their doors in 2015.

In this presentation I address the evolution and development of the ways of organizing and mobilizing migrant workers implemented through these centres. The analysis includes the role of Patricia Perez's activism in Quebec -a Mexican activist who brought a different way of activism to the UFCW and the FTQ for approaching precarious agricultural migrant workers -. I also analyze the impact of the FTQ and UFCW structures and bureaucracy on the evolution of the role of these workers centres, and on the reasons why they closed in 2015 after more than 10 years of operation. Although their closure is closely linked to the legal constraints approved in 2014 by the provincial government to prevent agricultural workers from joining unions, it is also related to the restricted approaches of Unions to deal with migrant workers organizing. This historical analysis aims to retrieve lessons learned about the scopes, achievements, and limitations to organize precarious migrant status workers from established unions through the strategy of the provision of services and support to migrant workers. Therefore, the goal is to contribute to the development of the historical memory of the unions of Quebec, so they can rethink or re-create new alternatives for organizing these workers and thus revitalize the labour and union movement of this province. This presentation is part of my post-doctoral research "The relations between union organizations defending the rights of the Ethno-Racialized Im/migrant Workers in Quebec: A Socio-Historical Analysis (1995-2019)".

Linking patterns of migration with labour market integration: Analysis of intra-European movers

Justyna Salamonska (Kozminski University)

While migration studies focus predominantly on migration turning into the settlement, many migration projects encompass more complex trajectories than moves of a permanent character. Repeat migrants move back and forth between their origin and destination. Seasonal and circular migrants are some examples of repeat mobility (for an overview, see Constant et al., 2013). In turn, multiple migrants embark on migration journeys involving stays in various destinations. Existing accounts of multiple migrations examine people who move to various destinations, both at the top and at the bottom of the labour market (see e.g. Beaverstock, 2005; Paul, 2017). This study makes a distinction between one-off, repeat and multiple migration patterns in order to examine how they affect labour market integration in the destinations. The paper focuses on the specific example of the intra-European movers in selected countries of the EU. The EU context provides an interesting field for this study. Free movement of people within the EU facilitates various migration forms, but



existing research rarely addresses the consequences that these patterns have for the economic performance of migrants.

This presentation is based on data coming from the European Internal Movers' Social Survey (EIMSS). Survey respondents were nationals of Britain, France, Germany, Italy and Spain who had moved to one of the four countries and resided there for at least one year. First, the paper offers an overview of migration patterns among EU movers. Second, it examines differences in how these different migrant types fare on the labour market in their destinations.

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Intermediaries in intra-EU (education-to-) work transitions of (becoming) welfare professionals

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This paper looks at intra-EU mobility and migration of (becoming) welfare professionals, whose education-to-work transitions are nationally regulated and whose welfare services play important role in social reproduction. It centres on their transnational (education-to-) work transitions and their engagement with various labour market intermediaries in this process. An increasing body of research explores the role of transnational intermediary industry in intra-EU and global migration of skilled workers (Samaluk 2016, Van den Broek et al. 2016). Nevertheless, still little is known about intra-EU mobility and migration of those entering welfare professions and their engagement with transnational labour market intermediaries in this process.

This paper departs from Slovenian context, where education-to-work transitions of welfare professionals have become increasingly long and precarious (Samaluk, 2021). It draws upon in-depth interviews with intermediaries and other key informants, and students, unemployed and precarious teachers, social workers and others qualified for state regulated education and social protection welfare professions. Findings show that low prospects for post-graduate employment and actual unemployment and precarity of graduates stimulates transnational mobility at various stages and from various social statuses that also provide access to particular mobility schemes and intermediaries interlinking sending and destination labour markets. Intra-EU mobility is for students facilitated by Career Centres at various faculties and for unemployed by Public Employment Offices, who in turn also offer local services to specialised transnational recruitment or matchmaking agencies promoting training or career opportunities to students, unemployed and precarious early careers, mainly in English and German speaking EU countries.

These transnational services were utilised by most students, unemployed and precarious early careers to search for and/or take up internships, specific niche market or lower-skilled welfare jobs abroad. Some were also organising their own migration and ended up using matchmaking portals or specialised recruitment agencies in destination countries, which were channelling them mainly to



lower-skilled welfare or other service sector jobs. In foreign labour market some migrants also became co-opted in recruitment process or themselves turned it into an entrepreneurial activity. Overall, intermediaries channelled migrants to specific entry-level, lower-skilled and/or niche-market jobs that fixed them in place and/or hindered their career progression within chosen profession, at least until they've gone through time-consuming and costly process of recognition or acquisition of additional qualifications/experience recognised within destination countries. This article thus contributes by uncovering the growing role of various (trans)national intermediaries in facilitating intra-EU mobility and migration of (becoming) welfare professionals and the effects this has on their professional and career progressions.

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Neither here nor there: experiences of discontinuity in women's circular labour migrations

Marija Saric, Valerija Barada (Department of Sociology, University of Zadar)

Paid care work in the private household, seasonal work in agriculture and in the hospitality and tourism industry are typical sectors for women's employment through international circular labour migration. These three sectors are examples of non-standard employment, but they greatly differ in the organization of work, most notably exhibited through differences in the duration and rhythm of migrants' circularity. Additionally, recent research on social reproduction shows that the organization of unpaid work helps shape the organization of employment and the labour supply, not only vice versa as has been posited thus far (Rubery and Hebson, 2018). Therefore, the different organization of non-standard employment in these sectors create a distinct lens to examine the ways in which the processes of social reproduction and the labour process are interlinked. The aim of this paper is to show how such linking occurs in the migrant women's work and life experiences while especially bearing in mind the possibilities of maintaining transnational ties in the context of contemporary migration. For this purpose, twenty-five narrative interviews were conducted with women of various ages and family structures from the Croatian region of Slavonija who circulate for low-skilled employment in care work, agriculture and hospitality and tourist industry to Austria, Italy, and Germany.

The interview analysis reveals that circular labour migrations create discontinuities in women's work-life experiences regardless of their age and family structure, which are manifested through periods of concentrated paid and unpaid labour. During their employment abroad in all three sectors, work becomes an all-pervading and intensified element in their experience, with limited possibilities for the migrant's immersion in the receiving society. Their presence abroad is manifested only through their work, and not any other social activity. Transnational contact with the migrants' domicile region has become easy and affordable due to mobile telephone technology, but also draws them into



performing some aspects of invisible housework while abroad. Notwithstanding differing lengths of employment and stays in the domicile region in these three sectors, the migrant women's immediate return to their domicile region, as well as their departure abroad, is characterized by the period of intense housework, childcare or elderly care. Due to their migration, such work becomes imperative for them in order to restore the household, and family and kin relations to regular life or prepare them for another cycle of their absence. This way, women as circular labour migrants are never here, at home, nor there, at work, since they are either immersed in non-standard employment, or are involved in personally carrying out or remotely managing their home life. Such concentration of labours creates discontinuities in circular migrant women's work-life experiences. Thus, the findings of this paper aid the understanding of how paid and unpaid labour is organized and experienced in the lives of circular migrant women.

State's moralistic agenda and sex workers' movement in India

Santanu Sarkar (Xlri Xavier School Of Management)

Sex work is not illegal in India, but the country's laws on legalising sex work is a mixed bag that leads to enormous complexity. We made a humble attempt to study how the State's moral judgments of sex work have made the relation between sex work and the law complicated and suppressed the sex workers' rights movement in India. By reviewing 171 Court judgments and interviewing 27 sex worker activists of one of the largest political organisations of brothel based sex workers in India, we found that the State had taken advantage of sex workers' vulnerabilities by either foisting an innocent victim status on sex workers or creating notions of gender's performativity for a woman so that society could see her engagement in sex work as a contravention of exemplary perception of female sexuality so to suppress the sex workers' movement.

To elaborate on the position of the State, we have drawn upon 'moral order,' 'victim,' and 'public nuisance' discourses. The State used the first discourse in the context of the trafficking of women (Kantola and Squires, 2004). Advocates of the victims of trafficking held that a vast majority of trafficked women to escape a depressing state of poverty ended up in the sex industry (Ditmore, 2003; Wikers and Lap-Chew, 1997). Upon establishing the trafficking in women immoral, to push the moralistic agenda, they drew upon the victim discourse to handle women rescued from trafficking. Sex workers were seen as innocent victims in need of support. But, when she refused to get recognised as a victim, the State used the third discourse or created notions of gender's performativity for women so that society can see her engagement in sex work as a contravention of exemplary perception of female sexuality.

However, the moral ground on which prohibitionists got to their feet is lame because there are limitations to prohibitionism. By underestimating people's ability to make a concerted choice for themselves, the State has taken away the moral rights of people. A poor woman cannot anymore choose between one more source of livelihood, which is legitimate, and stays hungry to abide by natural performances of femininity.



Conceptualizing the reasons for migration: The role of infrastructure and intermediaries in out-migration

Sudipta Sarkar (Department Of Geography, Visva-Bharati, Santiniketan, West Bengal, India)

India is experiencing rural out-migration to different urban informal sectors and the nature of migration is diverse. There are several factors that fuel the out-migration process from rural peripheries to the urban areas along with the factors that help migrants to continue or perpetuate this migration process.

The present study conceptualizes the reasons for the out-migration of rural men from Uttar Dinajpur of West Bengal to different urban construction sectors in the country. The reasons for migration further reveal the role of intermediaries and infrastructure that help men to out-migrate for work and earn. Due to the intervention of intermediaries and developed infrastructure, even the poorest of the region are participating in the out-migration process. The majority of these migrants work under poor and vulnerable work terms and conditions. They are engaged in different layers of urban construction industries as Daily, weekly and monthly waged workers as well as contractual workers locally called Dadan workers.

The study argues that very poor economic conditions, irregular availability of employment at the origin and comparative wage differences between origin and the destination are the primary reasons that compel able-bodied men to move out for work in the urban construction sector. This is followed by the factors like advance payment of money to the workers by the agents/thikadars before migration, an assured payment of travel expense, food and stay facility at the destination provided by the agents and employers after migration, the social network of the migrants and the development of new transportation routes help men to continue the out-migration process.

The data of the study is based on primary field survey results of 323 male migrants of a backward region of West Bengal, India. It also uses the NSSO, 64th round database 2007-08 on out-migration and human development report of the state. Logistic regression has been conducted to understand the determinants of male out-migration.

Hybrid Labor Relations in Germany: The Rise of “Häuserkämpfe” as a Harbinger of a New Labor Movement?

Stefan Schmalz (University of Erfurt), Dirk Müller (Friedrich-Schiller-University Jena), Lea Schneidmesser (University of Erfurt, WZB Berlin)

During the last two decades or so, the German model of labor relations has become increasingly fragmented and disorganized. Two different worlds of labor regulation have developed: A “first world” in which collective agreements are still valid and which primarily comprises large private companies with co-determination institutions and the public sector, and a “second world” with de-standardized labor relations which mainly comprises SMEs, but also many large private companies without any presence of organized labor. However, with the increasing fragmentation and precarization of the labor market in the “second world” of labor relations, new strike activities have emerged. Although, for a long time, strikes in Germany used to be tied to industry-wide collective bargaining rounds, today a number of fierce, so-called “Häuserkämpfe” (labour conflicts at single plants or companies) have developed, in particular in the service sector and the labor-intensive



industry. These struggles have been often waged by precarized workers and been supported by local trade union structures, thus, being the most visible expression of the struggles of new “precariat”. By referring to theories of precarity and labour conflict and by analyzing a self-created dataset (the so-called “Streikmonitor”) with 991 labor conflicts and 2786 strikes from 2016 to 2020 (applying descriptive statistics) and selected qualitative plant-level studies (semi-structured interviews), we observe both offensive and defensive plant-level labor conflicts. The offensive “Marxian” labor struggles are often about better payment and working conditions in former public sectors with workers with high structural power (e.g. private hospitals and transport sector). In the industrial sector, the picture is divided: Offensive “Marxian” struggles over higher payment and working conditions coexist with defensive “Polanyian” conflicts about plant relocations and downsizing in core sectors of the German economy (e.g. in the automotive industry). Geographically, there is a strong regional focus of both forms of strike activities in structurally weak East Germany (e.g. in the states of Saxonia, Thuringia and Brandenburg). We conclude that existing views of a stable German model which tends to contain labor conflict needs to be rethought. Today, plant level bottom-up initiatives have forced established trade unions to change their strategies towards more conflict-oriented approaches. However, up to now, most of these new “Häuserkämpfe” have nonetheless remained fragmented and loosely connected.

Between a Rock and a Hard Place: Migrant Work in Singapore

Julia Schoonover (University at Buffalo, SUNY)

To establish themselves as an independent country and regional leader, Singapore undertook an intensive modernization model that was framed around an at all costs economic model. In many ways this prioritization of profits is also evident within the city-states migration system. Migration into Singapore is marked by a distinctive tiered system, with those at the bottom often having the least bargaining power. WP holders in Singapore are some of the most likely workers in the world to experience injury and/or mistreatment at work. WP holders are primarily from Bangladesh and India and are traveling to Singapore to work in sectors of construction, manufacturing, and other industrial jobs, like shipping. Many migrants undertake this migration to better their economic standing without understanding the complexities of a system that will often leave them indebted, working for years before starting to save. This article seeks to provide a qualitative as well as quantitative analysis of the outcome of WP holders in Singapore. While this analysis helps provide a better understanding of the trends in experiences of WP holders the work is also uniquely situated within this conference as all of my data was collected during the pandemic and goes into detail on some of the terrible conditions workers were subjected to throughout the course of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Class Consciousness of precarious workers. A comparative study of food couriers in Germany and the UK

Alexandra Seehaus (Leeds University Business School)

The situation of platform workers is one striking example of the reinforcement of class inequalities (Piketty 2014) and the ongoing process of precarization (EP-Report 2016, da Silva & Turrini 2015,



Vallas & Prenner 2012). The improvements promised by a ‘new digital economy’ widely turned out to be an illusion, bringing casualization and neo-taylorization (Biziarelli 2018).

While the working conditions and organizing of food couriers is widely studied (Cant 2018), the beliefs, perceptions and identifications of these workers have not been the focus of empirical research, and few researchers systematically applied a class perspective when investigating precarious platform workers in western welfare states.

This paper investigates what awareness platform food couriers have of the class relations that shape their working and living conditions, and how this awareness is mediated.

To do so it uses the concept of class consciousness, which is here generally understood as a set of individual perceptions, beliefs and identifications regarding their socio-economic position within society which develops over the life course and is based on the interplay of work and life experiences (see Mann 1974; Wright 1985, 2000; Gurin 1995) as well as experiences of collective action (Langford 1994). The research is sensitized by contributions that update and refine the concept of class consciousness for the use under changed conditions of flexibilized capitalism, and account for the role of gender and emotions (Keefer et al. 2015, Crean 2018).

To explore forms of class consciousness, it is asked whether and how these workers (1) experience inequality, (2) make sense of social inequalities and their own position in relation to that of others, (3) identify collectively, (4) perceive and legitimize social conflicts and (5) envision alternatives and believe that egalitarian change is desirable and possible?

The paper is based on 40 in-depth interviews (currently 18) with food couriers in Germany and the UK. The analysis follows the coding system of the Grounded Theory (Glaser 1978, Hadley 2019) and uses learning circles with participants to include the workers in the process of analysis.

Besides presenting different forms of class consciousness found among the workers in both countries, the paper focuses on four aspects that shaped their experience and perception of class relations (1) their biographic experiences of social mobility and agency (related to mental health problems, family conflicts), (2) their status and perspective as food courier within different national contexts (self-employed/employee, short-term/long-term); (3) the ambivalent experience with the App (absence of direct control and communication) and (4) negative views on unions.

The paper presents in-depth insights on the experience, perception and resistance of riders as part of a rapidly growing platform economy workforce, whose working conditions reflect important trends in contemporary capitalism. It contributes to academic discourses aiming to understand class mechanisms in the 21st century by exploring known as well as new forms of class consciousness among the modern workforce. Through the focus on platform work and by using a comparative lens the development of class consciousness is contextualized within changed labor relations in different national contexts as well as within dynamics of ongoing collective action within the sector.

Digitalization of public service: three case studies from the British civil service

Roger Seifert (University of Wolverhampton, University of Keele), Wen Wang (University of Wolverhampton)

Digitalization, in one form or another, has an impact on work, workers, and work processes. Its introduction, usually by unilateral management decree in responding to technological or social development, changes work organization, job security, contractual arrangements, pay and status. Applied classical labour process theories in public services context, we researched the role of



workplace trade unions, to be specific Public and Commercial Service Union (PCS), in the implementation stages of digitalisation. Three sets of staff employed by government departments which have different management-Union relations in the UK were studied: staff work for the Ministry of Justice in the courts and in a separate central function – in both cases union membership is low and relations with management are contentious; Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) in the UK, employs 8000 staff in one site with high levels of unionization but patchy relations with management; 800 staff employed by the Registers of Scotland (RoS) with high union density and good union-management relation. In each case, we have a considerable number of interviews with staff and union activists, and where possible a questionnaire was used. These data were supplemented by other secondary sources, such as online recruitment job reviews, management and union documents and agreements.

This paper examines in particular how digitalisation altered patterns of work flow, shifting the internal skill mix, and changing pay and status arrangements. In the Ministry of Justice case, court officers were overwhelmed by digital developments which have speeded up work flow but without removing the choke points. At the DVLA, for example, the digital process meant a realignment of staff with more answering public questions in a call centre, while at the same time more difficult issues (on health matters) were dealt with traditionally by better paid staff. In the Registers of Scotland staff had become more customer-facing as a result of digitalisation, workload and employment insecurity had increased since many staff had been down-graded.

We found that union involvement in negotiating changes was mixed with little bargaining in the DVLA and more at the RoS, but in all cases digitalization has affected work organisation and reduced job autonomy which has resulted in staff losses, skill mix confusion, and a greater sense of alienation in the public sector. We further revealed roles of PCS, its relationship with management, impact on staff and public services in general.

Key words: employment relations, trade union, public service, managerialism, digitisation, work process

"Tem vaga de cleaner?" The transnational digital practices of Brazilian cleaners in London

Ana Luisa Sertã (Birkbeck, University of London, UCL, Knowledge Lab)

Across different social media platforms, there are hundreds of groups, channels, accounts and forums that bring together a growing community of Brazilians in London. These busy digital spaces reflect two major trends: the increasing presence of Brazilians abroad and their intensive use of social media, as Brazil holds one of the highest rates of internet access in the world. In these spaces, Brazilians share migration strategies, rooms to rent, religious events, advice to navigate the city and, most of all, menial work – especially for cleaners and delivery riders. Women make up the majority of Brazilians in London, and cleaning is the most common job they find in the UK, which is often distant from the type of work they had before migrating. Drawing from a digital ethnography of 11 months with Brazilian cleaners in London and 35 in-depth interviews with cleaners from different backgrounds, this paper explores migrant women's relationship with the digital as well as their everyday strategies to make a home in London across virtual, urban, and domestic spaces. In the large online landscape of Brazilian migrants in the UK, cleaners create their own spaces to discuss the job market, share details about their cleaning routines, buy and sell work in Brazilian 'cleaning rotas', and post videos about how Brazilians must adapt their cleaning practices in order to clean British houses. In online



groups, newcomers also learn informal tactics to use 'gig-economy' platforms and job search websites, which are added to their many online/offline strategies to find work. Importantly, these everyday interactions foster the creation of solidarity networks and negotiations over women's identities as 'cleaners' that challenge stigmatised notions of domestic work from Brazil. For cleaners who are also producers and consumers of online content, the mobile phone becomes a gateway to communities of belonging that extend the meanings of home between the online and the offline, and between 'here' and 'there'. Engaging with intersectional approaches to digital diasporas, I therefore discuss the particular ways in which Brazilian cleaners dwell on and make use of digital platforms as an embedded part of their everyday lives as they make home in London while making other people's homes through domestic work.

Employer perspectives on the value of paid and unpaid internships

Nidhi Sharma (Research Fellow at Centre for Work Informalisation and Place, Nottingham Business School, Nottingham Trent University)

Unpaid internships reinforce social inequality and divisions in the workplace and beyond the labour process by forming a barrier to social mobility in two ways: the absence of remuneration means candidates must be financially secure through family or personal savings, and many internships are secured through personal contacts rather than public platforms. This study focuses on why some internships are paid whereas others are unpaid.

The use of unpaid internships is exclusionary and has negative consequences for both the applicant and the employer. Applicants are indirectly selected from the outset according to financial security and personal connections rather than merit or their potential competence in the labour process. This practice restricts the 'talent' pool from which employers recruit.

The current labour market is increasingly segmented and it is difficult for young people when transitioning from education to employment. The unregulated nature of unpaid internships places significant responsibility on applicants, who are necessarily inexperienced, to judge whether the internship is viable as well as valuable. This study turns the focus to employers as they possess knowledge and experience of the labour market that informs the rationale behind the use of internships.

Empirical research: Qualitative interviews

Methodology: Interviews with employers from a range of UK sectors, including the creative industries and business, which will inform an appreciation of inequality both in and beyond the labour process.

Findings: The findings will provide insight into the labour process from the employer standpoint in terms of bargaining power in relation to applicants, and the employability and monetary value attributed to paid versus unpaid labour.

Contribution to knowledge: Past studies have compared paid and unpaid internships relating to employment outcomes, content and intern experiences. However, those who have interned have already overcome the barriers discussed. This study addresses a gap in labour process research by focussing on employer motivations and rationales when deciding on paid and unpaid internships.

How this will advance relevant debates: By extending the scope of existing research to understand employer motivations which both underpin and sustain the creation and use of unpaid internships.



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Performing at home: technological control in home-working in Denmark after the Covid-19 pandemic

Elena Shulzhenko (Department of Business and Management, University of Southern Denmark)

Following the pandemic, home-working has become an important topic of both the scholarly and the public attention. Although the time of lockdowns in the developed economies is over, the greater share of employees working from home is likely to stay when the pandemic is over (McKinsey 2020). A key issue related to increased share of working from home is employees' productivity: how this change affects employee performance and what management does to assure it. Using the perspective of contested terrain (Edwards 1979) as a starting point, the study analyses how the use of technological means of control is discussed in the public, union and employer debates on home-working in Denmark. The study retraces the publications on home-working starting from the first lockdown and up to the present time. The outlets analysed include main Danish newspapers, union outlets and publications by employer associations and management consultancies.

The evolving research on home-working in Denmark during the pandemic draws a remarkably positive picture of employee productivity and indicates a greater use of virtual meetings as a means to negotiate employee performance during home-working (Ipsen et al. 2020; Navrbjerg and Minbaeva 2020; Wunderlich et al. 2020). While the existing studies analyse home-working as a response to a



crisis, there is a need to understand the role of technological means of control in the patterns of work that emerge as ‘the new normal’.

Preliminary findings show that the initial expectation that the reduction of the simple and bureaucratic control in home-working was compensated by a greater application of the technological means of control was not fulfilled. Remarkably, technological surveillance is rejected in both the union and the employer sides of the debate on home-working in Denmark in contrast to other developed economies, as, for example, the UK. The reluctance to use technological surveillance in Denmark is explained by a combination of institutional and cultural factors. On the one hand, unions have a strong presence in the public debate on employee surveillance and provide employees with the necessary information about their rights and possibilities to resist. On the other hand, the Danish work culture is traditionally been characterised by high trust and search for consensus between the conflicting parties of the labour process.

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(Re)building social dialogue in Scotland? The challenges of employer representativeness in negotiating responses to crisis

Melanie Simms (University of Glasgow)

The labour market challenges of the coronavirus pandemic have brought into sharp focus the benefits of social dialogue both in response to immediate labour market crises and to ‘building back better’. Coming at the same time as Brexit, the scope for social dialogue to shape responses to labour mobility is striking.

However, the UK has few formal structures of social dialogue outside the public sector, despite notably different paths being taken to the collective regulation of work and employment by the four devolved jurisdictions of England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. This has become a pressing challenge in Scotland where a suite of economic and labour market policies and regulations have



been developed without systematic engagement of social partners, thus constraining the engagement of both employers and unions.

In this space, policy makers have started to consider the opportunities to (re)build more systematic structures of social dialogue. Employee representation is clearly structured through trade unions and the Scottish Trade Union Congress. While there is limited capacity and many pressing demands on their time, there are effective mechanisms to articulate and represent workers' collective interests. Employers, by contrast, lack systematic representation. There is currently a complex bricolage of organisations that claim some representative capacity and this raises important questions about representative legitimacy. There are also some forums for collective consultation between government and employers (especially in the form of what are known as Industry Leadership Groups). However, these are incomplete in their coverage, vary in their remit, and are generally highly dependent on the strategic action of key representatives.

The reported research, funded by the Scottish Parliament Information Centre (SPICe), interviewed 44 key actors from employer representative organisations and dialogue forums about the challenges and opportunities presented as the Scottish labour market struggles to respond to the twin crises of Brexit and pandemic. Findings confirmed the constraints imposed by complexity and a lack of clarity of roles and remits with regard to employer representation. Questions about representative legitimacy and capacity of employer representative organisations (EROs) were key concerns.

Recommendations of the published report include placing social dialogue more centrally within policy making, and developing clearer and more systematic structures for employer representation. The need for clearer and more legitimate employer representation within systematic structures of social dialogue is no panacea, but seems crucial to building necessary support to engage with policy makers and organised labour around wider issues of collective regulation of work and employment including, but not limited to, labour mobility. The theoretical findings of the paper highlight how devolution of powers to Scotland has helped reinforce and create a context where new forms of institutional regulation have developed in the context of the UK which is typically classified as a liberal market economy.

Labour regimes, migratory infrastructures and food security: state policy, social reproduction and insecure work in glasshouse horticulture

Adrian Smith (Queen Mary University of London)

Glasshouse horticulture in Europe has historically relied on a shifting political economy of migrant (as well as other) forms of labour. In England, this reliance on migrant labour has given rise to a contemporary crisis in food security in which crops were destroyed in the absence of sufficient workers to harvest them. This current 'crisis' in migrant labour followed the U.K.'s departure from the European Union and is being responded to by the 'emergency' extension of the government's pilot seasonal worker scheme. The contemporary crisis is, however, but one moment in a long-run historical transformation of the relationship between state policy, migrant labour, food security and the shifting geographies of 'labour supply chains' in U.K. horticulture. I seek to conceptualise this relationship between labour regimes in glasshouse horticulture clusters and state policy as a form of 'dis/en-abling migratory infrastructure'. I examine this entanglement in two ways. First, the paper traces the historical geography of glasshouse horticulture labour regimes and their articulations with



the ‘dis/en-abling migratory infrastructure’ of state policy. Second, the paper links state migratory infrastructures to the systems of workers’ social reproduction, such as struggles over housing provision by growers, through three critical conjunctures. The first conjuncture that the paper examines is that of the 1930s economic crisis. It explores the failure of state infrastructure responses organised around the relocation of the mass of unemployed industrial workers to new centres of glasshouse horticulture in a state-led project to create an agrarian system of co-operative, smallholder horticulture. The second conjuncture is the post-Second World War transformation of glasshouse horticulture attempting to create a total environment of agrarian techno-scientific and bio-political control and, in the context of labour supply shortages, an increasing reliance on shifting geographies of seasonal and precarious workers alongside grower provisioning of migrant worker housing. The third conjuncture that the paper explores is the contemporary “crisis” of labour supply and reliance on relatively low-wage migrant workers in the context of the UK’s withdrawal from the European Union. Through these three moments the paper seeks to highlight the different ways in which ‘dis/en-abling migratory infrastructures’ and social reproduction via worker housing come together across a long historical period in order to illustrate the intertwined but common insecurity of work, labour regimes and food security in glasshouse horticulture clusters.

Rethinking flexible work in distribution centres: a case study

Chris Smith (Royal Holloway University of London), Yu Zheng (Royal Holloway University of London)

This paper looks at the issue of flexible work in a UK distribution centre (DC). Like most other DCs, the workforce is segmented, in this case 70:30 between agency workers and directly employed. This was to handle to peaks and troughs of workflow to match the pattern of demand. It was also to reduce labour costs, and was also used as a selection mechanism. There was an avenue to move from one status to the other, and the majority of the regular workers started as agency. The paper looks at the meaning of both statuses and challenges simple assumptions about the desirability and benefits of being a regular worker as opposed to being agency. There was a lot of discussion about the two categories, as being a regular worker (or partner) meant a lot due to the cooperative ownership structure of the company. Workers worked alongside each other but were identified as ‘agency’ or ‘partner’. Through interviews the paper looks at the meaning for the worker in both statuses. We suggest there is a material difference between the two, that does not straightforwardly translate into an advantage or superiority of working as a regular against working as an agency. In the labour process management use the two sets of workers differently, and we suggest place additional demands (which are not always remunerated) on regular workers. The extra skills, access to training, flexible working between tasks and opportunities to move around different jobs ‘enjoyed’ by regular workers, are not self-evidently seen as positive. Similarly, the insecurity, lack of training opportunities, fixed character of work, for agency workers are not seen as negatives. How employment status is evaluated by workers depends on circumstances.

In discussing the differences within and between the two categories of workers we return to the literature on ‘orientations to work’ (Goldthorpe, 1966; Loscocco, 1989). This approach in the sociology of work suggested that workers doing the same job held different orientations depending on the individual circumstances, hence the same ‘conditions of work’ (whether mass production or



process production) did not determine the outlook of workers, as individual orientations needed to be factored into the equation. Often orientations were down to the standpoint of the worker, especially regarding gender differences (Crompton and Harris, 1998; Walsh, 1999).

In our research we suggest there is a material support for different orientations – regular workers have secure employment but also more demands placed on them; agency workers, may calculate that this status allows them to do multiple jobs with less engagement with one organisation which they see can produce additional work without remuneration. Call this ‘company work’ versus ‘worker’s work’. With regard to flexible work, we suggest that this needs to be examined from the perspective of managers and workers. While flexible working and the segmentation of the workforce can be read of a managerial control strategy of divide and rule.

The Inequality of Voice: The Impact of the Supervisor on the Voice of Precarious Workers

Arjuna Snoep (Radboud University Nijmegen), Agnes Akkerman (University of Amsterdam), Katerina Manevska (Radboud University Nijmegen)

In this study, we examine the relational dynamic between supervisors and workers who belong to precarious groups within the labor market (women, workers with a migrant background, and workers with a low level of education). We study how supervisors respond to these workers speaking up for themselves (i.e., worker voice), and how this response impacts their subsequent voice. Due to changes in the labor market of most capitalist nations over recent decades, individual level voice has become increasingly important for workers in standing up for their interests. We argue that this interaction between supervisor and worker is an important factor in the access of precarious workers to higher wages, a promotion, a better working environment, or fair treatment, and over time plays a role in shaping the level of inequality in the workplace and within society. In order to link organizational inequality with this interaction between supervisor and worker, we build on Relational Inequality Theory (RIT) and theory on cultural status beliefs. We see worker voice as a form of claims making on organizational resources. Studies have shown that precarious workers are less likely to make claims and are also less likely to succeed when they do. We presume that precarious workers hold lower cultural status beliefs of themselves compared to non-precarious workers, and are thus more likely to be discouraged from trying again when they are suppressed. Therefore, we hypothesize that supervisor suppression of worker voice will have a stronger negative effect on subsequent voice for precarious workers. The hypotheses are tested using our rich dataset, consisting of panel data collected via the Work and Politics Panel Survey. The data were collected in two waves, in 2018 and 2020, among a representative sample of the Dutch labor force. This dataset offers a unique overview of workers’ voice behavior in the Netherlands. We expect to have results of testing our hypotheses at the time of the conference. Our study emphasizes the importance of studying the supervisor-worker relationship, and how this can influence the voice behavior of precarious workers. Furthermore, this study provides scholars, policy makers, organizations, and workers with insights how the interaction between supervisor and worker impacts inequality at work and in society.



Different pathways of software development in the energy sector and their impact on work and organization

Johannes Sonnenholzner (Wissenschaftszentrum Berlin für Sozialforschung, WZB)

Software development has become an essential part of the contemporary economy. From agile methodologies to software development environments and programming languages, new practices and knowledge are becoming part of almost all industries. New positions such as product owner, scrum master, IT project manager, IT coordinator, etc. are being created. Companies need to decide what role they want to play in the software development process. Given these new developments, mediating structures linking users and programmers are becoming more important for understanding effects of digitalization on work and organization. Different actors from managers (at different levels), employee representations, IT specialists and users can exert influence and shape the outcomes of software development, affecting work processes in terms of control, skill demands, or substitution of human labor. Little is known about the structure and role of the software development process as a whole (from specification via programming to support) in changing work processes and work organization.

The presentation wants to close this gap in previous research by examining to what extent and in which way software development as a process is related to aspects of rationalization of work processes and work organization. How are labor-related and technology-related rationalization intertwined? What actors are involved in the different phases of the development process and how are they shaping the outcome? In how far do they affect new skill and knowledge demands on the one hand and types of direct and indirect control on the other hand? These questions will be answered through firm-level case studies and expert interviews in the German energy industry, with respect to industry-specific software solutions. This industry is of interest not only, because it is scarcely researched, but also because of its recent history of liberalization, it's regulated and unregulated parts and its diverse companies of private, public, big and small. As the energy sector is not a front runner in digitalization, clashes between "digital natives" and "digital immigrants" are particularly striking and observable.

First results show that companies in the energy sector pursue different pathways on developing software and that they come with different outcomes for workers. Among the several possibilities we can observe two (rather extreme) different pathways: (1) Optimizing the process of software development and at the same time rationalizing their entire organization according to its needs. As a consequence, the software development work process becomes more interwoven with industry-specific work processes with the latter becoming subordinate to the first. (2) Focusing on the role as a software user. As a consequence, these companies experience a kind of social downgrading as knowledge-intensive work migrates to the software-developing areas of the industry. Eventually, the case studies show that the mediation between industry-specific knowledge and software knowledge will become the new leading head work in the energy sector (no matter where it is located). The mental labor of the users will not be completely substituted by automated processes, but subjected to the software development process and its outcomes. They become e.g. buffers for software development that does not run perfectly.



From Shop Floor to the Global Union: Alternative and Institutionalized Practices in the Building of Unions' International Power

Julia Soul (CEIL Labor Research Center Argentina, CONICET National Council of Scientific and Technological Research)

In this paper, I present some preliminary conclusions about the building of international power by a union network promoted by several national unions and by Industriall Global Union: the “TG Workers’ World Council” (TWWC), which is formed by national or local unions organizing steelworkers of two steel companies owned by TG – a transnational corporation – named as FTG and PTG. Both companies have internationalized their structures and operations since 2000 and this significantly shifted relationships among labor unions from different locations. Since 2014 I have conducted fieldwork in local and national unions in Argentina and Mexico and in the TWWC annual meetings in Argentina, Belo Horizonte and Mexico and in Industriall regional events, like seminars and sectorial meetings.

My own concerns engage with current insights on international unionism, highlighting the importance of industrial constraints to the potentiality of international strategies (Anner et al: 2006; Fox – Hodess: 2017) as much as the emerging networked activism; international campaigns and organizations and forms of labor resistance across global value chains (Gray: 2009; Palpacuer: 2009; Anner: 2015; Zajak, Egels-Zanden and Piper: 2017). I propose an approach focused on labor and union practices (Ortner: 2006; Menéndez: 2002) in order to understand union development from the shop floor to the international scale. The research question is about the interplay between global and national scales in the shaping of union power and its uneven impact in local contexts (Soul: 2019; and forthcoming).

To expose my results, I draw upon three tensions I have identified in the fieldwork to analyze the global/local relation in the performing of trade-unions dynamic: the tension between “democratic” and “bureaucratic” practices; the tension between workers’ local experiences and corporation’s global policies and the tension between international solidarity and global union power. Then I discuss global and local dimensions of union policies as constitutive of a dominant labor movement strategy.

Erosion of German Co-determination. The curse of non-symmetrical forces

Ronald Staples, Michael Whittall (Friedrich-Alexander-University, Erlangen-Nuremberg Department of Philosophy and Social Sciences)

Since the 1990s, various commentators have noted that the jewel in the crown of German industrial relations, plant level co-determination, has lost some of its gleam. A decline in density levels and participation in works council elections point towards an erosion of this German employee representative institution. Furthermore, as the mantra on global competition has been ramped up those bodies that exist have had to contend with a neo-liberal management culture increasingly sceptical of the social partnership ideal.

This about change has not come over night, though. Managerial attempts to cut costs and undermine the strength of collective representation has followed a piecemeal approach. This has involved moves towards a decentralisation of collective bargaining in the form of open clauses, de-recognition and company level collective agreements, opposition to the founding of works councils and more recently



a side-lining of existing works councils. It is this last point, one whereby management intentionally overlooks the representative rights of works councils that this paper focusses on.

Global competition has not only seen management question tried and tested industrial relations procedures, it has seen it utilize Industrie 4.0, also referred to as the 4th revolution, to reconfigure relations within the labour process to the possible exclusion of collective representation. As the paper exemplifies, under the pretext of a new technological paradigm management is promoting a “modern”, their term, culture of organising work that poses questions about the relevance of works council or workers representation in general. Central to this revitalized Unitarist hegemony is a renewed belief in the individual nature of the employee relationship – the management assumption that employees work best when left to their own devices. Moreover, this process of employee empowerment creates an exclusive interactive arrangement between management and the workforce to the detriment of works councils.

Drawing on the findings of a Hans-Böckler Stiftung financed project, Paradigma, the following paper considers how six works councils struggle to retain a place at the negotiation table. Although the six firms in question differ in size, branch, the level of unionization and maturity, the paper exemplifies how each works council has developed different participative strategies deemed necessary to tackle a re-energised Unitarist management culture made possible an asynchronatic digitalised labour process.

Seeking for class: survival, moral economy and collective struggle among Tanzanian informal economy workers

Ilona Steiler (Tampere University)

This paper analyses the prospects of collective organizing in informal and precarious work by focusing on class formation, shared identities and the articulation of common interests among workers. Previous research has identified a set of multiple factors and instruments that contribute to the creation of shared identities and successful organizing for hard-to-reach and structurally disadvantaged workers in the informal economy: for instance, information, education and training, networking, trade union attitudes, social dialogue, financial support, legal advocacy, and legal reform. The paper draws on fieldwork in the sectors of street vending and domestic work in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, to contextualize these factors and instruments within wider political and ideological discourses over the nature and function of the informal economy. It is suggested that, in policy-making and academic debate, informal economy workers’ struggles are variously framed in terms of three strategies: community and group support in a moral economy; individual survival and accumulation; and collective organization. Adapting Althusser’s conceptualization of ideology and ideological state apparatuses, the paper analyses how these competing frames represent and reproduce the infrastructure and superstructure in the informal economy, interacting with class identities and perceived interests of workers.

Informal economy workers, who make up more than 75 per cent of the Tanzanian labour force, in practice often rely on a combination of individual, community and collective struggle. For street vendors and domestic workers, factors such as gender, education, or work experience, access to and ownership of means of production, working conditions and the relations with their employers, co-workers and customers influence their strategies. However, only a minority considers themselves as workers, as opposed to an identity as small-scale entrepreneurs or household members. Their



aspirations, identities and strategies reflect public discourses on solidarity and competitiveness. On the other hand, attitudes and strategies of trade unions and other actors towards collective organization, as well as legislation and government policies, reflect presumptions of labour relations and of worker identities that are politically and ideologically informed but do not always match with the realities faced by street vendors and domestic workers. In consequence, collective action shows some but so far limited success.

The findings present a nuanced and complex picture of workers' class identities and strategies for struggle, revealing the limitations of too pessimistic views of collective organization but also criticising the conception of community support in moral economies as alternative to collective political struggle.

Eigensinn in the market driven digital taylorismus –Modes of appropriation in the labor process of Amazon

Hans-Christian Stephan (Technische Universität Chemnitz, Germany), Felix Gnisa (Friedrich Schiller Universität Jena, Germany), Georg Barthel (Institut Arbeit und Qualifikation, Universität Duisburg-Essen, Germany)

Labor process organization based on Digital Taylorism is getting more relevant for workers. Amazon and other logistic companies are the most discussed examples for this development. We want to contribute to this debate about the changes of work in the context of the digitalization.

The role of subjectivity of the workers is strongly underestimated in these debates. Often, workers are only described as objects determined by algorithmic control (e.g. Nachtwey/Staab 2016). Diagnoses about Digital Taylorism at Amazon thereby often just adopt the even then never completely realized idea of classical Taylorism. In contrast we argue that the Factory Regime of Amazon is better described as a market driven Taylorism, which combines hierarchic forms of the division of labor with an informal management by objectives. Algorithms and Managers are communicating market information to the workers and thereby dynamizing the organization of work. The Factory Regime is constitutively dependent on the subjectivity of the workers, who have to react autonomously to dynamic logistical flows. In these gaps of managerial determination, workers develop own demands concerning productivity, health and recognition, and try to promote them on the shopfloor individually and collectively. Thus, they are developing own ideas of an effective organization of work and of a moral economy of respect and recognition, which can be sources of resistance. We use the concept of Eigensinn (stubbornness) by the historian of work Alf Lütke as a category to describe those workers' logics of acting. We understand Eigensinn as a divergent and autonomous relation of the workers to their work which differ from the logic of value production. Furthermore, besides from being alienated from the labor process, we see moments of an appropriation of the labor process by the workers themselves in this relation to work.

Our contribution is based on four problem-centered Interviews of Amazon workers in Leipzig about their labor process and moments of Eigensinn in their daily working experiences as well as the longstanding accompaniment of the labor struggles at Amazon. Due to that we were able to further differentiate the concept of Eigensinn. In addition to Alf Lütke's concept of Eigensinn, we refer theoretically to Michael Burawoy, Richard Edwards and Sabine Pfeiffer.



Looking for work between available resources and pitfalls: refugees and asylum seekers' working trajectories outside reception in Trentino (Italy)

Giulia Storato (University of Turin, University of Padova, Italy)

This contribution is driven from a research conducted in the Autonomous Province of Trento (Italy), which aimed at exploring, through ethnography and in-depth interviews, refugees and asylum seekers' housing and working trajectories while outside the reception system. Adopting the border as method (Mezzadra, Neilson, 2013), the study analysed the structural barriers that refugees and asylum seekers met once they exited the national reception system or while they were waiting to enter in it, since in Trentino the phenomenon of the “out of quota” is widespread. They are a particular category of asylum seekers which arrived in the national territory through the Balkan route and who do not immediately enter the reception system once they asked for international protection. From a structural point of view, a labour market greedy of unskilled labour force to be employed in the seasonal jobs in agriculture and in the tourism sector emerged: characteristic which represented an attractive force, also for asylum seekers and refugees who have been received in other Italian regions. By contrast, given the inner features of this work demand, migrants' working conditions revealed to be extremely fragile and their precariousness to be worsened by that one associated with their juridical status (above all of asylum seekers and of humanitarian protection holders). Within this panorama, interviewed refugees and asylum seekers inscribed their working trajectories, moving throughout some resources which aimed to promote their working inclusion within the territory. These resources have been identified in the initiatives put in place by the the reception system, local social services, associations and informal groups of volunteers, as well as in the help of their social networks (both migrant and native) and of the job agencies. What emerged is how all these resources were differently available and accessible according to migrants' recognised social and cultural capital, juridical status, and experience and place of reception. Moreover, some of these resources presented some ambivalences: if by one side they were “sea buoys” that helped them, by the other side they could also be “sea nets” that entrapped them in an neverending precariousness with the imminent threat to be exploited. Nevertheless, asylum seekers and refugees demonstrated to be able to navigate among them, sometimes developing strategies that allowed them to partially overcome or to take advantage from these ambivalences.

(Undesirable) migrant labour brokers. A criminological insight into the 'black box' of economic immigration to Poland

Monika Szulecka (Institute of Law Studies, Polish Academy of Sciences)

Following theoretical reflection on migration industry and migration infrastructure (e.g. McCollum and Findlay 2018; Gammeltoft-Hansen and Sorensen 2013; McKeown 2012; Lindquist, Xiang, and Yeoh 2012; Xiang and Lindquist 2014), the paper aims at identifying and explaining crime-related aspects of the development and operation of formal and informal labour brokers in the Polish context. In recent years, the role of formal intermediaries (especially temporary work agencies) has become crucial in economic immigration processes. At the same time, intermediary actors have been often associated with fraudulent or exploitative practices, and thus demonised by control agencies. One of the reasons pertains to the linkages between instruments of admitting foreigners to the labour market



and policies of issuing visas and residence permits. This issue, however, requires more in-depth reflection, since both positive and negative consequences may be attributed to the way migrant workers have been admitted to the Polish territory and the economy. Undoubtedly, policies deployed in Poland in the recent decade (regardless of their shortages) brought the desired increase in the number of migrants ready to work on both short- and long-term basis in Poland. Certainly, the developing intermediary services contributed to this increase. The mentioned demonisation of intermediary actors, involved in recruitment and emolument of migrants, has not interrupted the flourishing of the intermediary business. Applying the metaphor of a 'black box' and recognising the significant role of intermediary actors, I look at the phenomenon of migrant labour brokerage in Poland and investigate the criminal phenomena ascribed to it in the Polish context. In particular, I pay attention to what is claimed 'undesirable' (from the perspective of migrants, the host state's administration, employers) and whether it translates into formal recognition of 'undesirability', as well as formal reactions of the authorities or control agencies. I base my analysis on the selected qualitative data (including in-depth individual interviews with employers, representatives of temporary work agencies, labour inspectors, migrant workers; official documents and available court verdicts). The analysed data come from three studies conducted between 2015 and 2020, focused on 1/ migration control, 2/control of migrants' access to the labour market in Poland and 3/ links between criminal law and migration policies.

Is 'extreme' the new normal? The changing nature of supermarket work during COVID-19 pandemic

Safak Tartanoglu Bennett, Scott Tindal, Alexandra Stroleny, Minjie Cai (University of Greenwich)

This paper examines how extreme work that emerges on the UK supermarket shopfloor is managed and reproduced during the COVID-19 pandemic. Extreme work is characterised by heightened physical and/or psychological intensity associated with either the nature of specific professions, such as the ambulance service (Granter et al. 2019), or changes to work environments, such as supermarket shopfloor during Christmas (Bozkurt 2015) and the pandemic (Cai et al. 2021). Despite being usually temporal and subject to the immediate context of work tasks, the intensity embedded in extreme work can be exacerbated by organisational practices that transform the mundane aspects of work into extreme (Turnbull and Wass 2015).

The practices of promoting and normalising extreme work that prevail in both the private and public sector (McCann, Morris and Hassard 2008) are reminiscent of neo-normative control mechanisms (Fleming and Sturdy 2009), which legitimise work intensification with an emphasis on personal choice in competitive labour markets (Peticca-Harris, Weststar and McKenna 2015). This problematic discourse of personal choice can be observed in working practices that promote extreme work (Gascoigne, Parry and Buchanan 2015) and the Taylor Review's narrative of flexible work (Moore et al. 2018), which perpetuates structural issues related to work conditions. In the context of a public health crisis, these issues have detrimental implications for not only individuals but also the society.

Evidence of work intensification and control on the supermarket frontline predate the pandemic (Newsome, Thompson and Commander 2013). While many workers on flexible contracts experience forced availability in food retail (Hadjisolomou, Newsome and Cunningham 2017), supermarket



frontline managers also face constant pressure to meet performance and budgetary targets (Price 2016). These issues resulted from the business priority of profit have a critical impact on both workers and managers who worked on the supermarket frontline during the pandemic (Hadjisolomou and Simone 2021). The UK government's classification food retail work as 'essential' and the workers as 'key workers' in the pandemic has implications for how the narrative of extreme work is constructed and perceived during the crisis.

The research focused on the production and reproduction of extreme work on the shopfloor of four UK supermarket chains. The analysis draws on semi-structured interviews with 20 workers and 20 managers on who worked on the supermarket frontline before and throughout the pandemic. The narratives captured elements of extreme work that include heightened physical and psychological intensity with exposure to risk coupled with unpredictable working hours, changes in skill demands, and responsibilities. These elements fluctuate with institutional and organisational policies, labour and goods demand and supply, and changing consumer behaviours during the pandemic. The findings also revealed institutional, occupational, and organisational factors that shape individual perception and experience of being 'key workers' and engaging with extreme work. The research contributes to the scholarship on reducing heteronomous work (Granter, McCann and Boyle 2015) by identifying the structural issues and relevant consequences associated with sick pay arrangements, contractual statuses, and market competitions.

Challenges for Employees and Interest Representation in Reaction to COVID-19 Responses in the German Automotive and IT Sector

Christina Teipen, Helena Gräf, Fabian Mehl (HWR Berlin)

The presentation seeks to examine the effects of the COVID-19 crisis on global value chains (GVC) and labor in Germany. The first step will be to analyze the short- and medium-term economic and social effects of the COVID-19 crisis in the automotive and IT-value chains, as well as the policies of trade unions, works councils, companies and public actors adopted in reaction to it.

The COVID-19 crisis has demonstrated the vulnerability of GVCs, which have been optimized for just-in-time production and cost savings. In view of asymmetric power relationships between lead firms and suppliers, the governance constellations determine who will carry the heaviest burden. After the financial and economic crisis of 2008/2009, relocations of production to the Global South increased. Reactions after COVID-19 will be analyzed in the cases of the IT and automotive sectors, including the re-shoring of activities to the Global North.

The COVID-19 crisis has revealed the shortcomings of GVCs. Export-oriented sectors – for example the German automotive industry – have severely been affected. A certain reshoring of production may take place. The COVID-19 crisis has the potential to transform GVCs and the existing globalization model substantially.

In this presentation, beyond the short-term effects of the COVID-19 crisis in the two selected industries, it will be analyzed whether more fundamental changes can be expected and in which directions they are likely to go. The automotive and IT industry are particularly suitable for investigating such developments. With regard to the IT services sector, increasing demand for cloud computing as a result of increasing work-from-home arrangements benefits tech firms. With regard



to the automobile industry, political agreements over state subsidies for the sector result in spurring investments into electric mobility, thereby transforming production models and supply chains.

We can build upon insights on economic and social upgrading trajectories from our current research project in two sectors: IT services and automobile. As a first step, the economic and social effects of the COVID 19 crisis and policies in the two GVCs will be analyzed. This will include analyses of company reactions, the effects of financial and labor market policies, as well as the consequences for employees and the involvement of trade unions. Analyzing GVCs in the automotive and IT-Industry will produce important knowledge to this end. The presentation can deliver valuable knowledge concerning short-term developments and strategies in the automotive and IT industry in the debate on the restructuring of GVCs in general.

We intend to discuss Germany's role as an economy whose export model and jobs might be affected by restructurings. Already-existing qualitative empirical data from expert interviews will be included.

Warming up to work, Warming up to Corporate Capital: The techniques of psychosocial control on Indian E-commerce warehouse shop floor

Suraj Telange (Department of Development Studies, SOAS, University of London)

The paper details the account of warming up sessions of everyday work-shifts of an e-commerce warehouse shop floor in India. Through such detailed narration, the paper argues that these daily warming up sessions are powerful mediums of transferring neo-liberal narratives to the shop floor workers.

The warmup meetings are held daily just before the start of the work shift, which involves the summary updates of last completed shifts and last day's production targets and its attainment, felicitation of top-performing workers and attempts of boosting of workers' morale through social examples. It is through these everyday work-social gatherings that the values of higher productivities and loyalty to company are transferred to workers where absence of any economic incentives for higher labour productivity sketches the landscape of Indian labour market. The available literature surrounding labour control regimes in India misses this aspect of everyday functioning of industrial shopfloors whilst studying the labour control regimes. Its sole emphasis on coercive aspects of capital, mainly huge reserve army of labourers (Patnaik, P. 2019), migrant labourers (Bremen J. 1996) and wretched of the earth-lower caste labourers (Parry, J. 2020) proves insufficient and incomplete explanation for the control of labour in industrial settings in India.

The levels of labour productivity are maintained and continually increased through psychological indoctrination every day. These meetings use individual human relationships to meet its end of higher productivity by mundane functions of appreciation for the highest performers, making such meetings instrumental to production targets. The paper analyses the roles played by labour, management, and supervisors in order to make this warm-up regime effective. Each actor in the meetings is seeking an appreciation of some sort and wanting to make his/her presence felt on the shop floor and thereby in the company. The locus of gender, caste, physical appearances and color of the skin plays an important part in here. The social appreciation of an individual is so important in the world of labour where the only identity that a worker relates with is of being the worker on the shopfloor.

The paper analyses such ideological attempts of capital through Michel Burawoy's framework of manufacturing consent and argues that it has become an integral part of capital's strategies of control



of workforce on the shopfloors in 21st century. The paper extracts parts from intensive year-long immersive ethnographic fieldwork by the author on the shopfloor of an e-commerce industry in India. The author worked as a shop floor labourer during the time of his fieldwork embedding and subjecting himself to the same levels of capital controls as any other workers working on that shopfloor. It is this understanding that aims to take labour control regimes studies to the new realms of capital's ways of labour controlling behaviors and engineering of labours' consciousness on the daily basis through these gatherings.

Processing the Product, Catching the Worker: A case study of technological surveillance in an Indian warehouse

Suraj Telange (Department of Development Studies SOAS, University of London), Manikantha Nataraj (Department of Work, Employment and Organisation University of Strathclyde)

A celebrated aspect of the information and communication technology led workspaces is its illusion of offering Spatio-temporal flexibility to the workers (Wood et al. 2018 and Shrenik, N. 2019). In this literature, the absence of a human managerial 'eye' provides a sense of freedom to the workers regarding how they plan to deliver their tasks (Waters and Woodcock, 2017). Many authors in this tradition have argued that the very absence of human managerial surveillance mechanism in technologically embedded works makes it a unique and a new production practice (Jabagi, Croteau, Audebrand, & Marsan, 2019). However, other researchers have also pointed out that even within the algorithmically directed work processes, human managerial surveillance persists (Newlands, G. 2020).

Drawing on an immersive year-long embedded ethnographic fieldwork in an e-commerce warehouse from Western India, this paper argues that the absence of human agency as a surveillance mechanism is far from the truth in new-age work settings such as e-commerce. The fieldwork used the extended case study method of Michael Burawoy (1998) to uncover the subjugation of labouring bodies working in high-tech work settings. While the fieldwork confirms the parallel existence of technology and human-led surveillance, it also uncovered the newer ways in which labourers are tracked in this matrix by using barcodes as an instrument of tracking and thereby compelling workers to self-surveillance just in order to meet the required individual production targets.

Our findings suggest that human-mediated managerial surveillance not only exists but also has a hierarchical power structure, controlling different decision-making points in the labour process. It carries forward the 'Taylorist' control mechanisms that have been seen in previous factory work settings. This undermines the argument that an algorithmically controlled work process creates a new managerial system. It can be further argued that the employers do not necessarily have a technological preference while selecting the surveillance strategy over their workers but it is a combination of multiple incentives to make the work process more 'efficient' and endures less resistance from the workers. They are ready to resort to all mechanisms, be it from the past or a new mechanism or a combination of both in order to effectively manage the labourer's agency.



Freedom of Fit: How Matching for Organisational Fit Reproduces Inequality in Hiring

Gerbrand Tholen (City University of London)

It has been well established that organisational fit is a critical selection criterion in hiring decisions (Chatman, 1989; Kristof-Brown and Billsberry, 2013). Sociologists have found that judgements and criteria relating to organisational fit may play a distinct part in the exclusionary hiring practices in some labour markets. In particular, research in the elite labour markets has shown the importance of cultural matching linked to assessors' social background and the relation between firm and candidate (Rivera, 2012a, 2012b, 2015). Less is known about whether and how judgements on organisational fit in other professional contexts lead to bias against certain groups. Despite its importance as an accepted hiring criterion, a systematic account of how and why employers use organisational fit to discriminate against candidates is missing. Furthermore, to what extent do organisational fit criteria show congruence with those used in the elite labour market, where they have been associated with class-based homophily through cultural matching? This paper explores how employers define and apply organisational fit in professional occupations such as engineering, marketing and finance. It considers the consequences for the promotion of equal opportunity and reduction of inequalities.

The paper draws on interviews with 47 recruitment consultants working for 45 different recruitment consultancies based in England, predominantly in the London area (N=40). The consultants were identified with the help of the professional social media website LinkedIn and the websites of recruitment companies. The sample consisted of consultants recruiting for positions in marketing (N=10), finance (N=10), the public sector (N=9), engineering (N=9), management consultancy (N=5) and law (N=4).[i]

In the paper, I argue for a renewed sociological conceptualisation of organisational fit to capture the significance and multitude of ways it serves as a tool to discriminate. Exclusion through organisational fit depends on active boundary work by employers about who is considered an acceptable candidate. The paper draws on relational inequality theory (RIT) (Avent-Holt and Tomaskovic-Devey, 2014; Tomaskovic-Devey and Avent-Holt, 2019) to explain how the assessment of organisational fit is supported by relational claim-making in hiring. Organisational fit can be used against candidates once the claims about the nature of the organisation's culture made by those in powerful positions are accepted. The findings show considerable similarities in how organisations in the elite labour market exclude candidates, yet marked differences exist. Organisational fit matches are not necessarily based on similarities, nor does the assessment of organisation fit exclude candidates based on social characteristics.

The digital transformation of air traffic management (ATM)

Huw Thomas (University of Bristol), Peter Turnbull (University of Bristol), Geraint Harvey (Western University)

The adoption of digital technologies is never automatic as it is delimited by socio-organisational and wider political forces that reflect not only the relative cost but also the relative power of capital and labour. Digital transformation of ATM is reshaping not only the labour process of air traffic control officers (ATCOs) but also the location of work as service provision becomes 'decoupled' from local infrastructure and 'disconnected' by the move from airports to remote tower centres. We explore the



impact of this digital transformation in air traffic management on management control, peer support/pressure, safety, stress, fatigue, and other human factors, as well as questions concerning the mobility of labour.

Our paper draws upon rich (pre-pandemic) observation data at several air traffic control towers and air control centres as well as over 50 interviews from 17 countries with ATCOs, union officials, managers, and regulators.

We argue that new relations of power and domination in the labour process have created what Sewell (1998) calls ‘chimerical control’ disrupting the current balance between concerted (horizontal) control exercised through teams responsible for a specific sector of airspace and management (vertical) control exercised through supervision (human observation) and surveillance (electronic monitoring). New technology both connects different teams of ATCOs (e.g. those responsible for different sectors) and disconnects them from the mental tasks that currently define their professional identity, training and autonomy (e.g. the ability to monitor and evaluate traffic flows, formulate plans to ensure safe and efficient routing, and then implement this mental plan). These tasks could in future be performed by AI instead of ATCOs, echoing the fear expressed by Spencer (2018) about work ‘being turned into a robot-like experience’ rather than ‘robots replacing work’.

Even more telling is the move from the outdoor (3D) world of airport towers to the indoor (2D) world of remote tower control centres. ATCOs are thereby not only disconnected but also dis-embedded from the community of local/regional airports to a far-away remote tower control centre. Such relocation has important implications for labour mobility and the loss of well-paid jobs in and around local/regional airports.

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From recalcitrance to resistance: further reflections on the repertoire of oppositional practices

Paul Thompson (Stirling University)

Labour agency is one of the central focal points of LPT. one of the great contributions of this perspective, as Belanger and Thuderoz (2010) observe. is to expand our understandings of the repertoire of oppositional practices by employees. The concept of organisational or workplace misbehaviour has played an important role in this regard. By focusing on the basic infrastructure of everyday practices of self organisation, autonomy and identity, the concept facilitates the capture of informal and often neglected dimensions of Labour agency. The first edition of *Organisational Misbehaviour* (Ackroyd and Thompson 1999), played a vital role in refuting claims of the disappearance of worker resistance asserted by scholars of different persuasions. The second edition of this book, due out just before the conference, offers an opportunity to revisit and update some key themes in debates. This paper highlights some of these contributions of particular relevance to this stream. In particular, it will focus on:

a reconsideration of the boundaries between misbehaviour, resistance and class-based worker agency.



the changing nature of managerial regimes and the relative spaces for traditional and innovative action.

the significance of employee dissent and negative voice.

Changing pathways between everyday recalcitrance and collective mobilisation.

With respect to the latter, what trends in areas such as the gig economy demonstrate is that despite technological and social challenges and power imbalances, pathways between every day recalcitrance, informal collectivism and resistance, including wider class-based actions, remain open to be remade. The dialectic of control and resistance will continue, in some cases spilling over previous workplace boundaries and generating new forms of activism. What is experienced at the frontier of control is not always easily translated into effective grievance formation and action. Recalcitrance and misbehaviour don't guarantee resistance, but, without it, prospects for its development are correspondingly more limited.

Warehousing consent? Labour conflicts, worker mobility and union strategies in Italian and French warehouses

Lucas Tranchant (CRESPPA-CSU, CNRS-Université Paris 8, and CEET, CNAM, Paris), Carlotta Benvegnù (CRESPPA-CSU, CNRS-Université Paris 8, Paris)

By comparing two case studies in Italy and France, this presentation examines the effects of the casualization of the employment in the logistics sector on collective labor movements and current forms of resistance at work.

Logistics is particularly interesting because it is at the same time an important vector of the casualization of workers in economies characterized by deindustrialization dynamics, and a sector of renewed conflictuality. Whereas over the last ten years Italy has seen the emergence of a large-scale labor movement in the warehouses of the north of the country, including in Padua, a movement in which migrant workers have been the main actors, the rare episodes of labor conflicts in France are mainly defensive and rarely go beyond the scope of the single warehouse. The comparison of two case studies highlights the factors of demobilization in the French case, and of mobilization in the Italian case. This analysis is based on two field surveys conducted in the logistics sector: courier services and retail logistics, respectively in Italy (in Padua) and France (in Sénart). The data were collected through participant observations as well as through a series of biographical interviews with employees and trade unionists in both areas.

In both cases, Padua and Sénart, the logistics sector is a source of significant job insecurity: in France, through the segmentation of the workforce produced by the use of temporary employment agencies, which mainly recruit low-skilled workers belonging to the subaltern fractions of the labor force ; in Italy, through the subcontracting of the workforce to cooperatives that mainly recruit migrant workers. By focusing on the occupational mobility practices of the workforce and on local trade unions strategies, this presentation shows that the relative captivity of the workforce and the strength of migrants' community networks, on which Italian trade union strategies relayed on, played a central role in workers' collective organization in Padua. On the contrary, in Sénart, workers' mobility strategies tend to restrict labor actions to a small group of union activists belonging to the most stable segment of the workforce. However, some recent changes in recruitment strategies in France – e.g the growing use of employer's alliances or permatemps contracts - could carry within them the



potential for the construction of logistics precarious workers organizing on a more local basis. This is especially true in the context of the fast-growing construction of logistics zones - within which workers move from one warehouse to another - giving rise to localized labor markets and to new workers' social networks that go beyond the scope of the single site.

Workers, trade unions and climate change: an (ambivalent) representational gap in the UK

Vera Trappmann (University of Leeds), Jo Cutter (University of Leeds)

The climate crisis affects work and workers in many ways. In this paper, we compare attitudes of workers in the UK regarding climate change and the politics of organised labour's policies and positions around decarbonising the economy. To this end, we undertook an analysis of TUC congress motions and the unions that proposed them from 2006-2021 related to the environment and climate change and classified them along an axis of market led measures, through those depending on technological innovation to more radical economic and social change. This includes market driven policy options, carbon capture subsidies, wealth taxes for green investments as well as phasing out domestic flights and prohibition of airport expansion to the public ownership of energy production on a more socially oriented spectrum of policy design. While we see a clear 'Corbyn effect' in time that brought about more socialist policy suggestions, the most interesting question is how these policies resonate with union members and workers more generally.

To address this, we carried out a nationally representative survey with 2,000 UK workers in April 2021 followed with boosted samples in several diverse union constituencies, investigating workers' attitudes and emotions around climate change, views on responsibility for action approval of different policies and interventions to bring about protective measures to address decarbonisation and work-related change. The results illustrate that workers are highly aware of the need for action on climate and are supportive of both political and workplace action. The analysis shows that unions members are better informed, more involved in workplace action around climate change, and have stronger emotions about climate change than the general worker population and are more in favour of socialist-oriented measures to address climate breakdown. Most of the workers were ready for change, happy to take up new jobs and positive about restructuring to achieve decarbonisation as long as this happens in a fair way. Comparing these two sets of data, trade union bureaucracies have been less ambitious in climate change policy than members, where radical policy solutions have more approval from members than official union policy.' This indicates forms both internal and external representation gap (Towers 1997, Heery 2009) where union policy making on this topic appears to limit negotiation over the evolution in 'vocabularies of motive' (Hyman 2007:205) and the evolution of a working-class ecology (Barca and Leonardi 2018)

This indicates forms both internal and external representation gap (Towers 1997, Heery 2009) where union policy making on this topic appears to limit negotiation over internal differences and the evolution in 'vocabularies of motive' (Hyman 2007:205) and working class ecology (Barca and Leonardi 2007).



Towards an affective turn in precarity: emotional histories and work orientations of young insecure workers

Vera Trappmann, Ioulia Bessa, Kate Hardy, Alexandra Seehaus, Charles Umney (University of Leeds)

Wider sociological literature has witnessed an affective turn, in which greater attention is given to emotions and affect, and overly-rational approaches to social analysis are criticized. However, this affective turn has barely touched the sociology of work or the study of precarious employment. While some of the affective outcomes of precarious employment are documented (for instance, its effects on mental health, social lives, or biographical trajectories), questions of how affective factors shape the experience of precarious work have gone unexplored. In this paper, we show how individuals' responses to, and strategies for dealing with, precarious work are influenced by their affective experiences.

We conducted in-depth biographical interviews with 40 young precarious workers in Germany. During interviews, we identified that over half of participants reported negative affective experiences in their early lives, including experiences of domestic violence, neglect, dislocation, or exclusion due to disability and health problems. By contrast a substantial minority reported almost entirely positive experiences of stable and nurturing and positive relationships with family and friends. We observed that these differences appeared to lead participants towards different sets of attitudes and aspirations regarding precarious work.

To further understand this variation we inductively identified four work orientations: career (where individuals see precarity as a step on the way towards an individually rewarding career); work as normality (where individuals hope to find stable work as a means of providing material security, independence, and integration into social structures); bohemian (where individuals see precarity as a price worth paying for the pursuit of projects which interest them); and communitarian (where individuals seek to use work as a site for building reciprocal and supportive social relationships). We find that individuals with negative affective histories are more likely to seek "work as normality", whereas career orientations are found almost entirely among individuals without these negative experiences. Communitarian orientations are found across both types, but individuals with negative affective experiences are more likely to struggle to realise this aspiration.

In reflecting on these findings, we make the following contributions to the literature. First, we demonstrate the empirical importance of affective experiences in shedding light on the subjectivity of precarious workers. Second, we seek to encourage a greater conceptual engagement with the "affective turn" within the sociology of work. We also reflect on the way affective experiences may intersect with other, better-documented factors, such as class background.

Beyond national institutions: accounting for union success in addressing precarity in Central and Eastern Europe

Aurora Trif (Dublin City University Business School, DCU, Ireland), Valentina Paolucci (Maynooth University Business School, Ireland)

Is it futile for trade unions to fight precarity in an unfavourable global context? Although existing research suggests this is possible, there is limited understanding of the interplay of resources that



enable unions to address precarity under adverse circumstances. This study employs a power resource approach to investigate how unions overcome their external constraints. It draws upon 130 in-depth interviews with key informants across nine Central and Eastern European countries to investigate successful and unsuccessful union actions in sectors with differing external resources. In each sector, unions that mobilise their internal resources can improve precarity dimensions, such as low wages, lack of voice, and irregular working time. The results reveal that unions whose objectives are based on convincing win–win discourses can make strides, acting as drivers of change in precarity patterns even in dire circumstances. Moreover, the study introduces a multi-dimensional conceptualisation of union success, identifying union actions that result in measurable improvements in precarity dimensions for all worker types.

When lean management becomes heavy: (re) definition of care practices in nursing homes

Maria Cecilia Trionfetti (Université libre de Bruxelles, Belgique)

The general objective of the presentation is to examine the effects of the commodification of the health care system on the (re)definition of care practices (Arborio, 2001; Divay, 2010; Molinier, 2013). In this framework, the detailed analysis of the creative contribution of the workers to carry out the prescribed work (Dejour, 1998) as well as the factors that stop carers to achieve well-done work (Clot, 2015), will be used as two complementary dimensions to understand the mechanisms of (in)visibilization of occupational risks (Vogel, 2001).

In Belgium, as in most European countries, during the first wave of the pandemic, the largest number of deaths due to Covid-19 (64%) occurred in nursing homes (Sciensano, 2020). In this context, the staff had to face an enormous work overload. Without the necessary equipment or additional staff, nursing home workers had to take charge of the care of the sick Covid-19 residents who were denied hospitalization by the hospitals. This unprecedented crisis suffered by the workers and residents revealed the structural dysfunctions of the model of care for the elderly, as well as the degradation of working conditions within the health and care sector. Indeed, the evolution of the Belgian nursing home sector is an archetypal case of the phenomenon of commodification of care and health systems at the European level (Deloutte et Nirello, 2017). In Belgium, the privatization of the sector, in the broad sense of the term (André, 2006), appears marked by the articulation of three main processes: the reduction in the volume of public and associative establishments, the concentration of the sector in the hands of large investment groups, and the use of public funds for the development of the for-profit sector.

As to the methodology, the mobilized data are part of an ongoing doctoral research on the mechanisms of occupational health prevention and the analysis of the mobilization of collective knowledge to make occupational risks visible. A mapping of the privatization of the nursing home sector will be presented in order to account for the structural transformations of the sector, the emergence of the current business model and its direct impact on the (re)definition of work processes. Qualitative data collected from semi-structured interviews, individual and collective, with workers and union representatives, between May and September 2021, will be mobilized to examine the articulation between the material conditions of work execution and the subjective experience of work



Health, Job Precarity, Employment, Poverty, and Life Expectancy

Aviad Tur-Sinai, Daniel Gottlieb, The Max Stern Yezreel Valley College, Israel

Advances in medical knowledge and technology have helped to raise both general and healthy life expectancy (HLE), causing a secular upturn in the share of the elderly population and challenging PAYGO systems of Social Insurance (SI) by increasing their default risk. One way to tackle this problem is to raise the age of old-age-benefit entitlement, aka the retirement age. Such a policy, however, requires an unpopular decision to extend working life, thus creating an adverse policy bias. Several countries have implemented an automatic linkage of the entitlement age to life expectancy (LE) as a solution to the increased default risk of SI and pension funds. Such an extension of employment presumes, at least implicitly, a steady improvement of people's health in tandem with the increase in their life expectancy. Analyzing the determinants of self-perceived health (SPH) by use of the SHARE longitudinal multi-country database, combined with data on life expectancy and its healthy part, from EUROSTAT, and were missing, from WHO, we find that past and present employment improves health while the gender effect of job quality on SPH is detrimental for women and positive for men. We found that job precarity is particularly widespread among women and that its negative effect on health rises with age, whereas job quality among men is mainly positive and peaks in the mid-fifties. This empirical result has an important implication for the policy of automatically linking the retirement age to healthy life expectancy: We argue that it justifies the progressive reduction of the linkage, certainly for women, with increasing age. One way to achieve this is to attach weights to the existing and the linked retirement age—a weight increasing with age to the existing RA and a complementarily falling weight with age to the linked RA. This would obviate the front-loading of the linkage of RA to healthy life expectancy as occurs in current typical discretionary RA policies. We find health degraded by poverty and various disabilities, among other things. Longevity is found to raise self-perceived health, while SPH, employment, and job quality are found to affect each other simultaneously. Age dynamics and job quality are also found to differ substantively by gender. The negative effects of job quality for women need to be addressed in any suggested automatic balancing mechanism of the retirement age. Our findings show that for countries with an elasticity coefficient exceeding 1, HLE at age 65 rises faster than general life expectancy at a given age, implying that people's ability to work until a higher age is improving over time, thus making the retirement age a potentially powerful tool to improve SI sustainability. We also find that LE and HLE raise SPH, the effect of HLE on SPH being dominant. We conclude that SI sustainability should be linked to healthy LE rather than to general LE. Finally, poverty rates are found to affect SPH negatively but there is no evidence of poverty feminization with respect to this effect.

Work in call centres: organization and conditions of immaterial labour

João Gabriel Tury (Universidade Estadual de Campinas, Instituto Federal Sul-rio-grandense), Flávia Ribeiro (Universidade Estadual de Campinas)

The present investigation aims to map and discuss the main characteristics of the work in call centres in Brazil. As part of the objectives, we sought to analyze the organization of work in Call Centers, examine the working conditions of the call centres employees, and identify the relationships in the labour market within the sector. The methodological procedures were centrally based on interviews



carried out with workers and former workers. Through semi-structured interviews, an attempt was made to reassemble work dynamics in the sector based on the interviewees' reports. The content of the interview, in turn, was contrasted with the bibliography on the work of telemarketing employees in Brazil, in order to confirm or refute the theses consolidated by academic production on the teleservice sector within the sociology of Brazilian work. The spatial cut of the research sought to incorporate the current dynamics of geographic expansion of the Call Center industries in Brazil. As of 2007, companies of the sector have moved from big southern cities to the interior, in medium-sized cities, and to the northeast region, capitals and inland cities. As an expression of the geographic relocation of companies in the sector, the study was carried out in the city of Juiz de Fora (MG), in the state of Minas Gerais, contributing with a unique look on the object. Finally, we can summarize in three points the results achieved: 1) A Taylorist work organization can be observed in the call centres: division between planning and execution tasks, work prescription, parcelling of tasks and control of times and movements. 2) Intensified work rhythms and strict control generate a work activity based on pressure. A series of working conditions lead to illness among workers: a maddening pace of work; absence of rest breaks; stressful work goals; repetition of movements; control of work and pressure from superiors; unhealthy work environment; inadequacy of furniture and equipment; static posture. These conditions generate muscle diseases, such as RSI, hearing, respiratory, voice, and psychological diseases, such as depression and anxiety. 3) The precariousness of the telemarketing industry is evidenced by subcontracting. As a result, there is a substantial turnover of the workforce. In addition, there is a prioritization of hiring oppressed social groups: young women, black women, LGBTs. It is concluded, from the results achieved, that although it presents peculiarities in the concrete execution of the work, it is not possible to characterize the call centres' employees work as a creative activity that has overcome the external control and the lack of freedom of the factory worker, as was supposed from some theses of post-industrial society or immaterial labour.

Visibly invisible: invisibility dynamics and disputes over the visibility of Chambermaids in Spain

Alan Valenzuela (Autonomous University of Barcelona), Ana Galvez (Universitat Oberta de Catalunya, Spain), Verna Alcalde (Universitat Oberta de Catalunya, Spain)

Hotel cleaning work is described as dirty work that becomes invisible to other hotel actors, in which the possibility to build a positive work identity relies on their activity and themselves. However, outsourcing of housekeeping departments has intensified the invisibility of chambermaids, displacing them from the space hotel and intensifying the invisibilization of their work. Although that, chambermaids in Spain have set up a movement called "las Kellys" generating a strategic subjectivity, which renders themselves as a visible social actor with the power to influence their work conditions. From the analysis of the case of Kellys, we explore how outsourcing works as a dispositive of invisibilization by which workers are legally downgraded as cleaners and segregated from their workplaces. At the same time, workers report an intensification of control and surveillance over their activity and any attempt of collective organization. Against this dispositive of invisibilization, it is described as a practice of visibility of las Kellys.



We discuss how the processes of visibility and invisibility are complementary to build work identities and how the case of “Las Kellys” allows understanding the production of positive identities in precarious work settings characterized by the disqualification of work and outsourcing.

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An attempt to operationalise the precariat

Erik Valestrand (Norwegian University of Science and Technology, NTNU)

The precariat concept has received a good portion of critique – and rightly so, the concept is imprecise. A large portion of the discussion about the precariat centres around Guy Standing’s (2011) relatively vague and ambiguous description. Erik Olin Wright (2015) argues that the precariat is not a class in a traditional way, but the precariat certainly plays a role in contemporary class analysis. The concept has come to stay – either we like it or not.

In this presentation, I have two main points. First, I want to propose a Weberian view on the precariat concept. Instead of searching for an abstract social force independent from human action within the precariat, it might be more helpful to look the other way: at individual life chances, and how this shapes economic interest.

In short, Standing’s (2011) precariat is part of a class pyramid. After the publication of Standings (2011) of book, a line of critics formed with an arsenal of analytical perspectives, ready to attack the dramatization of contemporary labour market consequences. The challenge with Standing’s description of the precariat concept is that he is partly using the concept of the proletariat as a foundation, and partly trying to distinguish the precariat concept from the proletariat. Regarding the challenge Erik Olin Wright (2015) poses considering how the precariat’s interests differentiate from the proletariat’s interests, a Weberian perspective releases a potential.



Second, want to show an attempt to operationalise the precariat concept using Norwegian register data. Following earlier findings on the precariat using register-based data, I want to discuss the use of broader criteria of selection. I aim to present an empirical approach using Norwegian register data when asking if there is a precariat or precariat-like group on the Norwegian labour market.

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Translocal migrant brokers in the Thai-Swedish wild berry industry: Moral economies and labor intermediaries

Peter van Eerbeek (Karlstad University, Sweden), Charlotta Hedberg (Umea University, Sweden)

Migrant brokers constitute a central link in the larger migration industries that underpin migration processes, including seasonal labor migration for global agri-food businesses. This paper adds a translocal perspective to the literature on the role of these labor intermediaries, highlighting the multi-sited embeddedness of migrant brokers in sending and receiving countries, their role in the broader systems of labor and production, as well as their role in the reproduction of these systems. In a formalized migration system, around 5000 Thai travel to Sweden each year to perform seasonal labor in the Swedish wild berry industry, paying high fees to Thai staffing agencies and risking indebtedness upon their return. For a chance to supplement farming income, they endure precarious and exploitative working conditions during the berry season. This seasonal labor migration is also characterized by a high degree of circularity, with many workers partaking each year. While the actual berry picking takes place in the Swedish forests under Swedish berry companies, their employment is subcontracted to Bangkok-based staffing agencies. For the recruitment of workers in Thailand's peripheral Isan region, these staffing agencies rely on two groups of translocal brokers that operate in multi-sited space. First, Thai women brokers residing in rural Sweden, and second, local brokers residing in rural Thailand. Regarding methodology, this paper is based on fieldwork in both Thailand and Sweden, including interviews and participant observation. Its findings shows how translocal brokers are enabling migration industries access through multi-sited embeddedness, both at the site of recruitment in Thai villages and at the site of work in Sweden. The translocal embeddedness comes into play, first, through moral economies and trust in the recruitment process, and second, by transferring moral economies across space to the site of work. Moreover, this paper highlights that migrant brokers' biographical histories, (e.g. migration histories and experience in the industry) are important to understanding the creation of the translocal relations across space that reproduce seasonal labor migration for the Swedish wild berry industry. Also, spatial divisions of labor are creating social hierarchies among workers, where the broker's shift between different roles in multi-sited space. The analysis foregrounds the moral complexity of the migrant brokers, by showing how the social relations of their 'moral economies' are commodified within for-profit migration industries.



The process of social reproduction of migrant workers in Youth and Adult Education, in Florianópolis, Brazil

Célia Vendramini (Federal University of Santa Catarina, Brazil)

The permanent nature of a relatively superfluous workforce in Marx's terms, generates a mass of workers available to be thrown into different branches of production or different places of destination. This phenomenon affects the social reproduction of the migrant working class. They have to have the resources to produce and sustain life and to replace it generationally in and out of work. In this article, we will deal specifically with the social reproduction of migrant workers who attend Youth and Adult Education (Educação de Jovens e Adultos - EJA) in the city of Florianópolis, Southern Brazil. They are national migrants and constitute around 64% of those enrolled. In some EJA nuclei, the number of migrants reaches 75%. The research was carried out by surveying the enrollment forms of students in the years 2018, 2019 and 2020 to identify the place of origin. In the schools that have the largest number of migrants, physical enrollment forms were consulted to seek data on work, housing and education. Focus groups were also held with migrant students on living, working and study conditions before and after migration to Florianópolis. The link with Youth and Adult Education (EJA) reveals the low level of education of migrants caused by a school journey interrupted by work or by difficulty in accessing school. Migrant students perform jobs that do not require further qualification, such as construction work, hotel, food and cleaning workers and some other services. Some of them were unemployed. The working day is intense, in general from 8 to 12 hours per day. Family income varies from one to two minimum wages. The vast majority does not have a formal contract or has never had one. The educational trajectory of migrant students is marked by interruptions, school changes, difficulties in following issues and getting new ones, and school dropouts. "Spare time" is regulated by work, workers need to take care of their family's reproduction, rest and replenish their working force. Therefore, there is a lot of difficulty in reconciling study with work, time for school is subtracted from the few hours of sleep and rest. There is an absence of cultural spaces and activities in the daily lives of students, as the immediate struggle is for survival. Youth and Adult Education (EJA) largely serves young people expelled from regular school, adults who for various reasons could not complete their education, students who need to work in the first place to provide for themselves and/or their families. It constitutes a teaching modality clearly marked by the scrutiny of social class. They are workers, poor, migrants who come to school at night in search of certification, perhaps knowledge, with the expectation of improving their lives. However, EJA is also a space for welcoming, socializing and sharing life stories in common.

A theory of organizational political economy: Organization theory within a historical materialist foundation

Matt Vidal (Loughborough University)

This paper summaries the theory developed in my forthcoming book: *Management Divided: Contradictions of Labor Management* (Oxford University Press). It is a form of political economy because it builds on a classical marxist foundation; it is organizational because it incorporates key concepts from organization theory. At the macro level, I flesh out a marxist stage theory of socioeconomic development using the organization theoretic concepts of institutional logic and



organizational field. At the micro level I develop labour process theory using the organization theoretic concepts of institutional logic, individual satisficing and organizational routine.

Managers face contradictory pressures to both deskill and upskill/empower labour. Workers experience contradictory pressures between alienation and their productive socialization (the upgrading of their productive capabilities, inside and outside of the workplace). But the nature of these pressures and contradictions varies across growth stages.

Growth stages are based in institutional settlements around cornerstone institutional logics in the domains of production, competition and the state. The dominant logic of production entails a specific articulation between sectors (manufacturing, finance and retail) around which a web of organizational fields develops, being more or less influenced by the cornerstone logics specific to each stage. During the fordist period of the western world (roughly from the 1910s through the 1960s), the cornerstone institutional logic of labor management was fordist-taylorism. In the postfordist period in the west, the cornerstone logics of labor management are lean production and worker empowerment. However, formerly dominant institutional logics of work organization and valorization continue to influence some managers and workers (and may have become taken-for-granted beliefs).

In the postfordist era, managers and workers thus face increasingly intense contradictory pressures for deskilling/standardization versus empowerment (multiskilling plus participation on problem solving and decision making). When managers do offer workers substantive forms of empowerment, workers often resist. This resistance stems from two concrete manifestations of alienation. First, managers routinely dismiss workers' ideas, either by never considering them in the first place or by asking for input but then rejecting it. Second, workers attempt to make work meaningful, realize a purpose, or feel pride in response to their alienation by embracing particular notions of efficiency and the proper ownership of responsibilities, which often conflict with managerial initiatives.

This leads to routine politics of production, in which routines are the focus of conflict between workers and managers, which are a primary form politics of production takes in the postfordist era (in advanced economies). Workplace politics largely revolve around managerial attempts to change routines and workers' defense of their existing routines, based on competing visions of efficiency, concerns for product quality, and understandings of the proper division of labor between management and workers. In response to the labour process contradictions and routine politics of production, managers often satisfice – settling for deskilling and standardization over substantive worker empowerment. Capitalist management is increasingly producing organizational inefficiency.

Algorithm says «no»: insights from TAP airlines' restructuring through automated decision making devices

Tiago Vieira (European University Institute), Phoebe Moore (University of Leicester), Robert Donoghue (University of Bath)

Can algorithms, particularly in the sphere of labour relations, live up to the promises of fairness and synchronicity of enhanced productivity and workers' well-being? Or does the usage of algorithms and other computation surveillance transform the employment relationship inexorably? As a means to continue the prolific scholarly debate around these increasingly important topics, the present article presents a critical recent case study of massive staff reduction at TAP Airlines - the Portuguese flagship air carrier – which was introduced and justified based on algorithmic decision-making.



While management portrayed this as a double emergency brought on by the airline industry's COVID-19 slump, the dismissal algorithm, which was promised by the Portuguese Minister of Infrastructure himself to provide a fair process, we argue firstly, assisted the company to create a generalised perception of a blind process; secondly, revealed traces of unaccountability and unreliability, standing as a smokescreen for pre-existing unbalanced power relations; thirdly, as shown in a series of interviews with workers, demonstrated how the use of computational processes such as these introduce very real problems for the standard employment relationship, in the areas of trust, accountability, and potentially eliminates the capacity for democratic contestation.

At the boundary between production and reproduction. Investigation on social work in the Bologna area

Luca Villaggi (University of Padua, Italy)

The paper focuses on the transformations of social work and welfare systems within two greater theoretical perspectives. On the one hand, it shows how in the context of contemporary capitalism the logic of market and value extraction is extending from the sphere of production to the sphere of reproduction of everyday and material life. On the other hand, it reconceptualizes welfare regimes as agencies providing reproductive labour, which contributes to the satisfaction of social needs and to the production of collective well-being. Previously excluded from the grasp of market and profitability logic, welfare services have been caught in a long-term trend of privatisation and commodification that has created a social market in the Italian context. The phase of austerity and crisis has put under pressure the arrangements of welfare mix and imposed the activation of practices of value extraction from social work.

The paper is based on qualitative empirical research carried out in Bologna (Italy) through in-depth interviews with a sample of social workers. In Bologna, many social services are publicly funded and outsourced to social cooperatives according to the model of quasi-market, triggering competition between the managing organizations and dumping the costs and the flexibility onto social work. The findings show how the need to maximize the value extracted from social work allows public and private actors to manipulate variable costs and cope with the crisis phase, how it affects labour process and working conditions, how it determines phenomena of self-exploitation and informal and free labour, and definitively how it contradicts the mandate of care and social citizenship which pertains to social work. The outsourcing of welfare services to social cooperatives increases the precariousness and the fragmentation of social work which is ultimately interlinked with affective and relational skills. The paper seeks to renew the literature concerning the transformations of welfare and social work and to address these topics paying attention to the growing spreading of market and valorisation logic within the field of social reproduction. The restructuring of social work allows to examine the contradiction between production and reproduction in contemporary capitalism, which is inextricably intertwined with changing labour processes.



‘Retrenchment’, ‘Disruption’ and ‘Re-organisation’: Double Mobility Practices and the Impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the European Shipbuilding Sector

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Ships and sickness have a long shared history. The word quarantine is derived from the 14th-century practice of isolating ships if plague was suspected on board. The latest disease is a global pandemic that put the world economy, and with it the European (and global) shipbuilding industry full steam reverse. Usually the shipbuilding industry is portrayed as the archetype of economic globalization. Yards in the EU and elsewhere employ strategies of offshoring production to lower cost countries as well as importing mobile labour from lower to higher cost countries in order obtain competitive advantages in a fiercely volatile global industry. The global covid pandemic disrupted these transborder production and staffing strategies, yet, so far we know little about the impact of the pandemic on an internationalised sector. How does the pandemic reduce or intensify the existing tensions in employment relations caused by European integration? Based on qualitative interviews we anchor this examination in Norway, Germany, Italy, Poland and Romania – all central shipbuilding nations. These countries provide variation in the actor constellations and institutions governing employment relations.

We draw on studies of European cross-border mobility that focus on sectors where capital production mobility is prominent (Meardi et al. 2009) or on those where labour mobility is prominent (Lillie 2010). We contribute to theory by combining the research on capital (production) and labour mobility in a situation when these connections have been disrupted through social distancing measures.

Three preliminary, and seemingly pandemic induced processes, can be identified in the shipbuilding industry in the five countries. First, there has been a collapse in orders, which is more pronounced for passenger ship orders than, bespoke yachts, for example. The effect of the pandemic on the industry likely depends on the position of the national industry within the European division of labor/production. We will thus pay attention to the role the national shipyards play in the changing division of labour in the European industry. Second, production flows that are made up of the combination of extensive national and international sub-contracting and associated cross-border movements of labour have been disrupted. This stems from the quarantine requirement in times of the covid-19 pandemic. We will explore the ways in which employment relations actors in the different context react to these developments. Third, there has been a reorganization of capital in the shipbuilding industry through, for example, takeovers, mergers or even closures that stretched across national borders. How will this affect the future direction of employment relations in this interdependent European industry? Through the lens of these three processes of ‘retrenchment’ (the change in orders), ‘disruption’ (impact on production processes) and ‘re-organisation’ (mergers, takeovers, closures) we explore the impact of the pandemic on tensions in employment relations when European cross-border flows suddenly stop.



Employer awareness of working poverty: a qualitative case study

Victoria Walker (Glasgow Caledonian University), Ian Cunningham (University of Strathclyde)

The majority of people who experience poverty in the UK belong to a household where at least one adult is working (Tinson et al., 2016). Various evidence highlights how employer strategies create and sustain the conditions that cause poverty, with low wages and insecure working hours key determinants (Shildrick et al., 2012, Findlay et al., 2019, Richards and Sang, 2019). However, poverty is not simply an economically disadvantaged position, but a lived experience that is strongly associated with stigma and shame, in which ‘the poor’ become othered by the ‘non poor’ (Lister, 2021). This stigma stems from what are still highly popular notions of the undeserving poor, in which the individual is blamed for their hardship. Those experiencing poverty themselves will also participate in this othering, in an attempt to disassociate from the shame of being poor (Shildrick and MacDonald, 2013). However, limited literature has considered how employers are also complicit in this othering, despite their role creating the conditions that sustain poverty.

This paper will present and compare qualitative data from employers in low paying service sectors. Semi-structured interviews were carried out with line managers, senior managers, and HR practitioners from four organisations within the hospitality and social care sectors. Participants were asked about their awareness of working poverty and financial hardship amongst their staff, as well as initiatives and support available for low paid staff to support their financial well-being. The data reveals a strong disposition for managers to place the blame firmly with employees for their circumstances, in an attempt to distance themselves from the existence of poverty within the organisation. The welfare system was criticised for creating dependency cultures and not incentivising employees to work more hours. Interesting nuances were uncovered in comparison of the two sectors. In hospitality, managers were often wilfully unaware of financial hardship amongst low paid employees within their own organisation. Where it did exist, poverty was very much considered the failure on the part of the employee to budget appropriately, rather than as a result of low wages or insecure hours. In contrast, managers in social care were more willing to concede the existence of financial hardship among staff, on the basis that they were prevented from paying better wages due to the limited funding provided by local authorities. However, awareness was still limited, with poverty often perceived as happening elsewhere, rather than within their own teams. This paper concludes by reflecting on moral categorisations of people in poverty.

Precarious work among higher educated

Niels Warring (Roskilde University)

Precarious work, understood as work conditioned by a lack of security and predictability (Standing, 2014), has traditionally been associated with increasingly insecure wage and work conditions for unskilled or lowskilled workers, vulnerable groups, and migrant workers in the private sector (Kalleberg 2009). However, precarity is spreading to public servants and higher educated, and Danish numbers show that the amount precarious work is growing faster among higher educated than among other groups on the labour market.

In Denmark the labour market is strongly regulated by collective agreements and influential labour market organisations. The so-called flexicurity model combines a high level of flexibility with a high



level of social security. During the last decades the balance between flexibility and security has tipped in favor of flexibility and it is becoming increasingly difficult to access social benefits (Hastings & Hayes 2016). On a global level precariousness must be seen related to the escalation of different forms of flexibility, postfordist and neoliberal labor market (de)regulations and state policies (Lambert & Herod 2016).

There is a growing interest in providing qualitative data on how precarity is experienced by the ones affected by it. Research on subjective consequences of precarious work among higher include Sander's (2012) construction of four different typologies that categorize ways higher educated experience and handle precarity. Others have analysed how the prospect of a precarious work life can influence how graduates plan family life, (Chan & Tweedie 2015), while Armano and Murgia (2013) discuss how knowledge workers' strong identification with the work can lead to self-exploitation.

The paper presents results from a Danish research project with empirical data based on semi-structured interviews with higher educated affected by precarity. Analytical themes include participation in workplace communities, development of professional competencies and emotional consequences as guilt and shame. Conclusions and perspectives point to the need for unions to develop strategies and support for the growing number of members affected by precarity.

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Workplace Algorithms as ‘Objects of Belief’: The Case of Jira Software

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This article focuses on the sources of legitimation of managerial control exercised through the introduction of a workplace platform called Jira. Jira is an online platform that enables software companies to manage their development projects. Rather than limiting our analysis to the interplay of workplace control and resistance, our goal is to explore the way algorithmic control is transformed into workplace authority through a legitimation process. We examine several questions: Do high-tech workers see Jira as a legitimate means of workplace control? From the viewpoint of software engineers and technicians, what are the specific sources of the legitimacy of Jira? Does the authority



of Jira differ from the authority of other technical offline methods of control? Do workers regard Jira as an extension of the management or as an independent social agent? From a theoretical perspective, we examine the implementation of Jira using several key concepts. The first is Althusser's 'interpellation' concept, which states that an ideology can be implemented by imposing patterns of action on social actors or by motivating them to do so, rather than by having them internalize values and systems of belief. We also utilize Fleming and Spencer's (2005) concept of 'object of belief,' which states that organizational objects can sometimes act as ideological agents, forcing workers to adhere to a normative framework embedded on behavioral scripts through active engagement with an object, with no need to internalize these values. This qualitative research is based on 20 semi-structured interviews with software developers and their managers in 13 startup companies in Israel that use Jira daily. We interviewed 12 software engineers, 5 software team leaders, 2 R&D vice presidents and one program manager. The initial analysis of the empirical material was based on grounded theory (e.g., Strauss and Corbin 1998), which requires interpolation between theoretical concepts and empirical analysis. Data coding began with the construction of broad descriptive categories. More fine-grained coding then took place within each category, and hierarchical relationships among the categories were established. We identified four sources of legitimation of this workplace platform. First, the employees see Jira as an efficient tool that improves their work performance. Second, they see Jira as a transparent and objective tool. Third, they see Jira as a technological object that can sometimes exercise independent agency and even empower them. Finally, the employees see Jira as a necessary solution to dealing with the high level of uncertainty. We conclude that Jira operates as an 'object of belief' and facilitate the operation of interpellation leading technical workers to implement the management's ideology without necessarily agreeing or identifying with it. Bibliography Althusser L (1971) Ideology and ideological state apparatuses (notes towards an investigation). In: Althusser L (ed.) *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays*. London: New Left Books, pp. 127–186 Fleming, P., & Spicer, A. (2005). How objects believe for us: Applications in organizational analysis. *Culture and Organization*, 11(3), 181-193. Strauss, A., & Corbin, J. (1998). *Basics of qualitative research techniques* (pp. 1-312). Thousand oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

There is power in (new) Unions

Vera Wegmann (University of Greenwich)

Frustration with and the perceived exclusion from established trade unions has caused many migrant, precarious and low paid workers and their supporters to organise independently through new grassroots trade unions. This is recognised as an emerging phenomenon throughout the world (Ness 2014). Understanding the experiences of new forms of workers' organisations is especially significant in light of the consistent decline in membership in established trade unions and the rise of low paid and precarious work in many Western countries. This article offers a perspective on new independent trade unions in the UK from the perspective of an 'academic activist' (Chatterton et al. (2007)). The purpose of the article is to reflect on three interrelated themes: i) why new trade unions in the UK exist, ii) what their contribution to the trade union movement has been to date; iii) the political strategy of new trade unions and what challenges and opportunities they point to in the established trade union movement. The article draws upon on a) my own experiences and reflection as the co-



founder of the trade union United voices of the World (UVW) founded in 2014 and previously my role as being an integral part of a group that founded the trade union Independent Trade Union of Great Britain (IWGB) in 2012 and b) 40 interviews with strike leaders/organic leaders of industrial disputes fought through these independent trade unions as well as trade union officials and staff members in these unions and 4 focus groups with strike leaders and paid trade union organisers. The research is part of an ongoing book project about independent trade unions in the UK, initial findings have been presented at previous ILPC conferences.

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Labour market hierarchies between EU-West and EU-East migrants: Which role do intermediaries play for wages and occupational status?

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Free movement of labour within the EU has been characterised by the European Commission as a solution to better labour allocation and a central precondition of an economy based on knowledge and innovation. However, there is evidence that free labour mobility has also contributed to new hierarchies across the EU and within EU member states.

This study examines hierarchies on labour market outcomes between recent intra-EU migrants from EU-West and EU-East countries in Western European labour markets focusing on wages and occupational status of recent migrants. Our analyses draw on the European Labour Force Survey (EU-LFS) from the 2014 and its special ad-hoc module on migrants and their descendants. As destination countries we considered those EU15 countries that provided data for the 2014 ad-hoc module, as well as Switzerland and Norway, to which the EU free labour mobility regime also applies.

Our descriptive and regression analyses reveal that recent EU-West and EU-East migrants differ significantly in wages and occupational status, but also regarding their skill level, reason for migration and job finding method. On average, EU-West migrants have a more favourable skill profile regarding education level or destination-country language skills. Most of them have a tertiary education level and a substantial part of EU-West migrants even considers the destination country's language as a mother tongue. Whereas for both groups labour is the most important driver for intra-EU movement, EU-West migrants more often found a job already before migrating – and thus migrate with the intention of taking up this job – while EU-East migrants more often found employment only after migrating – making their intention less dependent on a specific job or career move.

The route into employment differs significantly between the two groups. Whereas EU-West migrants often found the current job through direct contact with the employer, EU-East migrants more often used formal or informal intermediaries, such as private employment agencies or social networks.



Furthermore, they are more often employed by temp agencies. This involvement of intermediaries partly relates to less favourable labour market outcomes. However, the results on the impact of intermediaries – in particular private agencies – on wages and occupational status are inconclusive and seem to be complex.

Our findings suggest that EU-West and EU-East migrants are driven by different push and pull factors such as reservation wages with EU-East migrants more often moving for economic and EU-West migrants for career reasons. Altogether, differences in skill levels, motives and job finding methods – including the involvement of labour market intermediaries – explain differences in wages and occupational status between recent EU-West and EU-East migrants. However, even if all these factors are controlled for in the regression analysis, the labour market hierarchies remain significant.

Well-being, Remote Working and Employee-led Flexibility: Informing the Post-Covid-19 Era

Daniel Wheatley, Benjamin Hopkins (University of Birmingham, United Kingdom)

Workplace well-being has risen significantly in profile in recent years, with academics, organizations, governments and international bodies highlighting the social and economic importance of worker well-being (Diener and Tay, 2015; Stevenson and Farmer, 2017; Taylor et al, 2017). Employee-led flexibility, emphasising the importance of employee choice over flexible working practices, is a central component of employee well-being at work (Scholarios et al., 2017) and raises related issues of the balance between employee autonomy and management control, and implications for social relations of trust and distrust at work (Bachmann et al., 2015; Fox, 1974).

Workplace well-being and flexibility have gained even greater relevance as the Covid-19 global pandemic prompted a significant shift in paid work to remote and hybrid working. This compares to a more gradual rise in the use of homeworking from the start of the early 1990s which, despite significant improvements in technology, resulted in around one in twenty workers in the United Kingdom reporting home as their main place of work in the late 2010s. The Covid-19 pandemic saw a rapid rise in this figure, with around two in five workers in the United Kingdom reporting home as their main place of work in mid-2020. Whilst this figure has started to reduce as people return to the workplace, both the retention of increased homeworking and the introduction of hybrid working is likely to impact workers for many years to come. Understanding the impacts of this large-scale shift, recognizing the context in which this adoption has occurred, is highly important to inform organizational workplace well-being strategy and the future of work in the post-covid-19 era.

This paper contributes to this debate through insights gathered from a case study conducted in Q4 2021 - Q1 2022 with the UK Plc of a multi-national enterprise. The case study aims to evaluate the impacts, including for workplace well-being, of key organizational change involving the adoption of flexible working routines in response to the Covid-19 global pandemic. Data collected through a series of focus groups with both leaders and groups of employees, together with follow-up interviews, provide insight and understanding of the well-being implications of the adoption of employee-led flexible working routines, informing the future of work.



Filipino migrant workers in Malaysia: Trajectories of undocumented labour

Jonathan Winterton (Leeds University Business School), Lizel Nacua (Entelechy Group, France)

This paper analyses the experience of Overseas Filipino Workers (OFW) in Malaysia, where they are mostly engaged in low-skilled service sector jobs including domestic work.

Theory: Each of the theories of migration reviewed by Massey et al. (1993) and de Haas (2010) contribute to understanding OFW in Malaysia. Despite the inadequacies of push-pull models and neoclassical migration theories, at the macro level migration from the Philippines to Malaysia reflects perceived labour market opportunities in the respective countries. Similarly, spatio-temporal transition migration theories are relevant in the creation of networks and structures of OFW migration. We follow de Haas (2010: 16) in incorporating agency ‘conceptualising migration as a function of (1) capabilities and (2) aspirations to migrate.’

Method: A realist approach (Emmel 2013) with purposeful sampling of OFW in Malaysia to explore variations in experience through in-depth interviews. After the first 58 interviews, more theoretically driven purposive sampling involving visits to Sabah and to Mindanao to explore the role of labour intermediaries. In all, 120 OFWs working in Malaysia were interviewed between January 2017 and May 2020. Face-to-face semi-structured interviews of around 50 minutes were conducted either in English or their native language (Tagalog, Bisayan or Cebuano) and transcribed into English. Additional interviews were conducted with employers (4) and agents (4).

Findings: Motives for working abroad included lack of opportunity in the Philippines and the higher wages even in relatively unskilled positions, confirming the macro-level drivers assumed. The role of structure and agency proved particularly significant, including inadequate enforcement and corruption. Two thirds (64 per cent) were recruited through agencies and the 42 who named the agency identified 37 different ones, indicating the large number of agencies operating. Of those agencies, 14 are based in the Philippines, and 23 in Malaysia, which is surprising since OFW are supposed to have complete documentation before leaving the Philippines. In terms of their legal status, 33 per cent (n = 40) had worked in Malaysia without the requisite documentation. Including those who declined to be interviewed (n = 99, of which 88 were undocumented) 59 per cent of 219 OFW described themselves as ‘back door’ migrants, entering Malaysia without the knowledge of the authorities, very close to the 58 per cent reported by the Commission on Filipinos Overseas in 2013.

Contribution: Widespread use of labour market intermediaries involves OFW paying agency costs that should be borne by the employer. Coupled with frequent non-payment of wages, these costs lead some OFW who enter lawfully to quit their employer and take up a new position without documentation. Others knowingly enter Malaysia illegally, suggesting multiple trajectories to irregularity. Many agencies and agents are involved in enabling OFW migration, and numerous clandestine routes are used by people smugglers, with no two OFW who entered Malaysia illegally describing the same route.



Data Work in Facial Recognition Production: A Topography of Invisibility

Assia Wirth (University Paris Saclay)

This paper examines the underexplored power dynamics within facial recognition (FR) production through which data work is structured, represented, and credited across FR chains of production. In the same way as other artificial intelligence (AI) technologies, FR is produced through a supply chain in which labour varies considerably in skillset requirement, working conditions, and recognition.

Those who operate at the initial stages of production deliver data work, which is an essential component of the production of AI technologies and includes, in the case of FR, the capture of facial images and the annotation process which turns human portraits into computationally ‘readable’ facial data. These individuals are among some of the technology industry’s most precarious workers (“click workers”) yet remain mostly absent of public narratives and critiques towards FR.

Through a discourse analysis of FR companies’ outward communications, FR academic research papers, and open-source facial datasets this paper highlights the absence of data work from these public records to better account for the strategic role this artificial invisibility plays in the creation of FR technologies. It reveals that data work, while key to the production of these datasets and systems becomes quasi undetectable once embedded into these products. Moreover, in the few cases where data work is mentioned, it is at the expense of data workers, whose labour either is diminished or remains uncredited.

As this paper shows, the invisibilization of data work is symptomatic of the structural power imbalance which fuels FR (and more broadly AI) development. As such, it serves a double function: it directly obscures dynamics of mass exploitation, and through the same process lays the foundations of the illusion of machinic ‘intelligence’ upon which the AI industry thrives.

Thus, this paper demonstrates that data work becomes concealed during the subsequent stages of FR production, such as the construction of datasets, the technological development and commercial production. The consequence of systematically undermining data work is far-reaching, as it creates a dangerous lack of transparency both in terms of labour conditions and technical explainability. Moreover, it illustrates a wider trend in the so-called artificial intelligence industry, in which ‘low-skilled’ human labour and intelligence are obscured by various layers of ‘intelligent’ technologies.

Understanding platform worker organising: the case study of Deliveroo in the UK

Jamie Woodcock (The Open University)

Deliveroo is a food delivery platform that has grown from the UK to operate across Europe and then internationally. Using the tools that have become widespread in platform work – algorithmic management, piece-rates, bogus self-employment, and so on – the company relies on the labour of predominantly migrant workers to deliver food from restaurants to customers. After investment from Amazon, there has been a growth of data practices and the establishment of Deliveroo’s own dark kitchens for the production of food.

It has now been five years since the first strikes of Deliveroo workers in London in 2016. Since then, workers have continued to organise in different ways. Their campaigns have involved five different aspects: first, wildcat strike action; second, developing networks, both nationally and internationally; third, union organising with the Independent Workers Union of Great Britain (IWGB); fourth, legal



campaigning; and fifth, wider leverage campaigns. What is less understood so far is the different strengths and weaknesses of these aspects, and how they have contributed to the build of workers' self-organisation and power at Deliveroo.

This presentation aims to analyse what processes have unfolded since the strikes in 2016. There has been a growth of worker organising that has experimented with different tactics. In particular, it explores how union organising has developed with workers who joined the IWGB () Couriers and Logistics Branch during the 2016 strikes. The IWGB is an 'indie' union (Però, 2019) which is not a member of the mainstream Trades Union Congress (TUC). Over the past five years, this project has involved different attempts to build worker power at Deliveroo with a range of tactics and strategies. After five years, there are important questions from this experience. First, what tactics have been successful? Second, which tactics have not worked? Third, what has the organising with a small independent union involved? Fourth, what can we learn from this experience that can be applied elsewhere in the so-called gig economy? Fifth, are there broader lessons for worker organising and trade union models that can be taken from this experience?

In order to address these questions, the paper presents new and existing empirical research. It then moves through the different dynamics of struggle at Deliveroo: wildcat strikes, networks and internationalisation, attempts at union organising, the legal campaign, and leverage and the Deliveroo IPO. It explores the different aspects and considers the effectiveness of each, concluding by considering what can be learned from these struggles for the understanding of platform work and trade union organising today.

The 9-9-6 working hour system and the big-small-week working system: Complex patterns of virtual presenteeism of homeworkers under organisational surveillance

Mo Xing (University of Birmingham)

This is an ongoing PhD program that is theoretically informed empirical research about complex patterns of virtual presenteeism of homeworkers under organisational surveillance. This research introduces two working time systems in China, one is the 9-9-6 working hour system or "996" that refers to work from nine am to nine pm, six working days per week; the other is the big-small-week working system or the big-small week that means work 5 days a week and work 6 days the next week. Similar to presenteeism, virtual presenteeism specifically refers to presenteeism when working from home; specifically, it is homeworkers' working status involving work performance and working time allocation. etc. This research focuses on the three key elements surrounding the virtual presenteeism of homeworkers, namely the working time system, including the 9-9-6 working time system and the big-small-week working system, organisational surveillance, and the impact of virtual presenteeism on homeworkers' work and life, especially in terms of job quality and well-being. Specifically, this research addresses three research questions: (1) Which theoretical approach(es) and/or framework(s) provide the most appropriate explanation for virtual presenteeism? (2) What is the role of organisational surveillance in virtual presenteeism under the 9-9-6 working hour system and the big-small-week working system? (3) What impact does virtual presenteeism have on homeworkers' well-being and job quality in the context of the 9-9-6 working hour system and/or the big-small-week working system, and organisational surveillance? A mixed-method approach will be employed. The proposed research method will combine quantitative analysis using primary data by online survey, with case studies of homeworkers in China. The online survey is to collect basic information on



homeworkers' work and life, as well as to provide potential participants for the case study. The case study plans to comprise a series of interviews with homeworkers who follow the 9-9-6 working hour system and the big-small-week working system. Through interviews to evaluate the drivers of virtual presenteeism, the role of organisational surveillance, and the impacts of virtual presenteeism.

Embodying Development: Voice of Chinese Returnee Workers Building Infrastructure Projects in Africa

Meng Xing, Yu Zheng, Chris Smith (School of Business and Management, Royal Holloway, University of London)

This paper examines China's development model in the eyes of workers returned from being expatriated to build infrastructure projects in Angola. Expatriating trained, disciplined and relatively inexpensive workforces enabled Chinese state-owned enterprises (SOEs) to extend a 'labour process regime' overseas, most significantly in the construction projects under the infrastructure-for-resource (IFR) agreements between the Chinese and several African states. Based on the reflective accounts of workers returned from building these projects, this paper offers insight into the lived experiences of reproducing domestic labour relations and industrial practices overseas, as OFDI become an integral part of China's economic development in the past two decades.

Existing research tends to view workers as 'non-traditional' (McNulty & Hutchings, 2016) or 'hidden' (McNulty & Brewster, 2020) expatriates, which obscures the labour function embodied by expatriated workers (Zheng & Smith, 2019). Our findings show that the Chinese SOEs justified high administrative costs of deploying expatriated workers by them displaying 'devotion to development' to influence the local workforce, which was echoed in the accounts of many returnees. These add to previous research which explains the incentives for Chinese firms to bring workers in response to labour shortage in the host countries, to overcome cultural barriers, to shorten the settling time in a new market, and to avoid local labour regulation (Oya, 2019: 241; Fei, 2020: 3).

It is also worth noting that conflicts between capital and labour emerge as an unintended consequence of de-territorialisation collectively embodied in the expatriated workforces. On the one hand, under the project subcontracting system, the top-tier contractor profit from transferring the investment risks to lower-tier subcontractors and the lower-tier profit by extending working time and taking pay cuts, which are like what were observed in the construction sector within China (Pun & Xu, 2011: 11; Fei, 2020: 328). On the other hand, under a labour outsourcing system, migrant workers have been recruited as casual labour with limited legal protection or collective representation, which undermine these workers' ability to negotiate with the Chinese management. These led to the returnees questioning their employment conditions are due to a temporary phase of development.

The paper also shows that inequality among the expatriated workers (Haak-Saheem, Brewster & McNulty, 2019) reflects the management control faced by different groups of workers on-site. Accounts of the returned expatriates show variation in terms of how time off-site is restricted (extending the working hours to ensure access to labour), safety measures used to divide living space and social contacts (race-based division to avoid potential conflicts with local workers; reducing the interaction to the local community), and the ways by which monetary autonomy is limited (saving costs on operation and logistic; combining production and reproduction procedure; and paying with RMB in the workers' Chinese account).



Technology upgrading and labor degrading? A sociological study of three robotized factories

Yi Xu

In recent years, technology-driven industry upgrading in China results in the replacement of human labor with robots, so called "robotization". According to the macro policy on manufacturing development formulated by the State Council, China will continue to transform and upgrade on the basis of a major manufacturing country in the future to enhance the overall competitiveness of the manufacturing industry. Intelligent manufacturing is regarded as the main direction of manufacturing in China in the next two decades, and intelligent equipment and smart production lines such as industrial robots and automated high-end CNC machine tools are listed as key development areas. This article explores the impact of "intelligent manufacturing" on workers from two perspectives: labor relations and labor process. The impact of these two aspects also points to a core issue, that is, whether technology upgrading will bring about labor degradation. Fieldwork was conducted in 2018 in the Pearl River Delta, the leading edge of robotization in manufacturing. The author use factory workshops as the field to conduct participatory observation, supplemented by research methods such as in-depth interviews, in effort to discuss the above issues. Details of three robotized factories are described in this article.

As for conclusion, the author argue that due to robotization, workers at the shopfloor are experiencing some extent of labor degradation—more flexible labor relations, deskilling, and strengthened technical control. In the process of technology upgrading of the manufacturing industry in the Pearl River Delta, capital, the state, and the labor market have played a key promoting role, and have formed an enterprise-led, machine-centered approach of robotization without workers' participation.

Developing or degrading young workers? How business strategy and labour process shapes job quality across different industrial sectors in England

Edward Yates (The University of Sheffield)

This article explores how variations in job quality for young workers (aged 18-24 years) are shaped by the business strategies and associate labour processes of employers across different industrial sectors in England. The article presents findings from a comparative thematic analysis of six employers across three different industrial sectors - advanced manufacturing (AM), business services (BS) and the creative and digital sector (CD) in the English city-region of Greater Manchester in order to better understand job quality for young people. These sectors are selected for analysis as they capture the range of good and bad work available to young people in contemporary labour markets. Four aspects of job quality are focused on: technological utilisation, work-rate, autonomy and discretion, and opportunities for training and career progression, as these are identified by existing research as central to shaping how young workers have their labour-power either developed or degraded the labour process.

Two questions guide the research: firstly, what are the variations in job quality for young workers within and across different industrial sectors, and why? Secondly, what are the opportunities for – and limits to – improving job quality in these sectors for young workers? Primary data were collected from thirty semi-structured interviews with business owners, managers and young workers, and from workplace observations at each employer.



Findings reveal job quality is high in advanced manufacturing and creative and digital sectors, but low in business services. A key findings is the continued importance of technology in the labour process for shaping job quality for young workers. A crucial distinction is whether technology is used by skilled young workers to engage in work or whether it is imposed on young workers by managers to intensify work. These findings support both skills- and effort-biased notions of technological change (Felstead et al, 2005; 2019), revealing how high-road strategies of relative surplus value generation and low-road strategies of absolute surplus generation can co-exist alongside one another within a locality.

Research findings reveal the importance of examining the relationship between high-road and low-road business strategies and the labour process in order to understand the forces shaping job quality for young workers. This contribution is important as it illuminates how – in order to understand job quality (and work and employment conditions more generally) for young people it is necessary to not focus exclusively and narrowly on young workers themselves, but rather to situate young workers within the context of a firm’s commodity production strategy. Adopting this approach allows for the theorising of young people in terms of the value of their labour-power to a firm, and how a firm either develops or degrades young workers in its production processes.

Private Intermediaries in the Migrant Labour Regime of Canada

Cheolki Yoon (University of Montreal, Immigrant Workers Centre)

Even though the number of people migrating across national borders has been constantly increased since the end of the World War II, major forms of migration have changed since the 1980, in line with the neoliberal drive (de Haas, Castles & Miller, 2020; Noiseux, 2012). The influence of the employers on the immigration process, on the one hand, has grown up, and the intervention of private intermediaries such as recruitment agencies and immigration consultants, on the other, has been expanded. The flux of temporary migrants and permanent immigrants is, therefore, largely channelled and framed by these private labour market actors, who bring important consequences not only on working conditions of migrants and immigrants but also on the labour market structure. In other words, they are thus playing a significant role both in the international division of labour and in the segmentation of labour in the domestic market (Polanco, 2014; Soussi, 2019). There is another aspect to be noted in regard to the proliferation of private intermediaries. While offering labour force to the employers, they sell immigration status (work or study permit, permanent residence or citizenship) vis-à-vis migrants and immigrants. Based on transnational networks, these market actors are explicitly merchandizing immigration itself, as theorized by the concept of “immigration industry” (Broek, Harvey et Groutsis, 2015; Gammeltoft-Hansen et Sørensen, 2013).

Given this context, my research is interested in the influence of private intermediaries on migrant labour in Canada. Despite its reputation as a multicultural society open to immigration and diversity, Canada’s immigration regime has also shifted over the last four decades. The focus of public policy put on permanent immigration and citizenship has given more space to the supply of flexible labour force (CIC, 2013; Twahirwa, 2019). The annual entrance of temporary migrants outnumbers that of permanent immigrants since 2008, and more than twenty migrant work programs – categorized in Temporary Foreign Worker Programs and International Mobility Programs – are in place. Along with the exploitation and the abuse inflicted by employers, the negative effects caused by the intervention



of private intermediaries have also been reported by researchers, media and advocacy groups (Guesualdi-Fecteau et al., 2017; Larios et al., 2020). In many cases, they exacerbate the vulnerability of migrant workers by controlling the information and charging service fees. In spite of certain measures recently put in place, the state regulation is largely insufficient to protect workers, particularly because of the transnational character of their operation.

This research thus proposes to explore practices of private intermediaries in Canada and their impacts on migrants' working and living conditions. The first part will document practices of private intermediaries, by analyzing various types of documents and testimonies of workers and practitioners in the field. The second will focus on understanding the impacts, based on interviews and observation. Lastly, the role of private intermediaries in the international migrant labour process will be discussed in light of the global transformation of labour and the changing role of state in the context following the 2007-2008 economic crisis.

The contradictory relationship with neoliberalism in Scotland: Evidence from front-line care workers and classroom assistants

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In the UK, the public and voluntary sector have both undergone a significant amount of reform, which has typically been underpinned by neoliberal beliefs (see Bach and Kessler, 2012). These reforms have had a significant impact on both education and social care. However, in the case of Scotland both education and social care are devolved powers and so fall under the aegis of the Scottish Government, rather than Westminster (Fyfe, Timbrell and Smith, 2006; Menter and Hulme, 2011). This paper seeks to understand what it is like for classroom assistants and front-line care workers to work within the unique Scottish context. Derived from two larger research projects, this paper is based on 48 interviews, 29 front-line care workers and 19 classroom assistants. Comparisons are drawn between the two in relation to the impact of government reform on the experience of work.

The reform in question originates from a variety of interconnected sources, including a neoliberal inspired belief about the role of government, customers and competition, a national recession and local authority funding cuts, with both education and social care impacted by the principles of new public management and modernisation (Bach, 2016; Bach and Bordogna, 2011). With governmental control being a devolved power in relation to both, there exists a distinct experience among workers in Scotland (Menter and Hume, 2008; Vincent and Harrow, 2005; Warhurst et al., 2014).

The experience of work across both sectors is characterised by heavy workload, a potentially challenging work-life balance, limited training and uncompetitive terms and conditions. Despite these challenges, workers consistently continued to engage with the emotional component of their roles, due to both their commitment to their job/sector and a strong desire to do their best for the individuals they look after, in this case the elderly, vulnerable adults and children (Bolton, 2005; Lopez, 2006). Working with these groups is both the most satisfying part of the role and the most challenging due to misbehaviour and severe additional support needs, exacerbated by limited training. Persistent issues emerged across all groups, including stress, burnout, disillusionment and turnover, which create a sense of jeopardy in relation to quality, consistency and continuity of service.

Drawing on the voluntary sector ethos and public service motivation, this paper highlights both the parity and difference in experience between classroom assistants and front-line care workers, using



the worker as the unit of analysis (Grünbaum, 2007; Patton, 2002; Yin, 2009). Findings demonstrate that, in both sectors, the negative impacts on experiences of work are more pronounced for workers with lower wages and less stable contractual status, though attempts have been made in Scotland to limit the more extreme neoliberal reforms witnessed in England. As workers in both types of employment are predominantly female, a gender equality issue is also present (Baines, 2006; Conley and Jenkins, 2011). These issues are likely to become more pressing due to projected constraints on local authority funding, supply chain and labour market issues resulting from Brexit and the impact of the pandemic (The Guardian, 2021; Plummer, 2021).

Understanding the Dilemma of Alienation and Emancipation: An Ethnographic Study on Freelancers in the Media and Culture Industries in Turkey

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This study examines the experiences of freelancers in the media-culture industries in Turkey in the context of emancipation and alienation debates. The media-culture industries have come to the fore as emerging areas of economy and employment in Turkey in recent years. These industries cover a wide area from art to media, from technology to broadcasting. They also play a key role in the ideological formation and reproduction of society. The dominant form of employment in these industries is freelance work. Freelance work is discussed, on the one hand, with its original, flexible and emancipatory nature, and on the other hand, with its precarious and subsequently alienating features. This study analyses how the conflict in question is experienced by the freelancers in the media-culture industries in Turkey.

The study is based on an ethnographic study on ten freelancers working in various professions (journalism, advertising, publishing, film, design and software) in the media-culture industries in Ankara and Istanbul, the two largest cities of Turkey. The study aims to collect data and to generate insights on three main dimensions: economic, professional and ideological. The economic dimension examines the conditions that persuade employees to work freelance, their earnings, their incomes and their livelihoods. The professional dimension sheds light on the components of labour process such as skill, control and technology. The ideological dimension discusses the attitudes and perceptions of the freelancers on the idea of work in general and on the freelance work in particular. Hence the freelancers will be examined within a social totality of the objective and subjective conditions. How are the conditions of freedom and alienation established? How are they experienced?

The main claim of the study is that interrogating freelance work on the duality of emancipation and alienation is insufficient to understand the real processes and the real experiences. This study considers the experiences of emancipation and alienation in mutual interaction and in a two-way movement. It aims to generate some reflections on how an alternative work experience can be. By analysing the emancipation-alienation as a terrain of struggle, this study calls for reflections on potentials to struggle beyond the current dilemma and to think on an alternative nature of work.



Double blind: “Algorithmic invisibilisation through worker voice tools in GVCs”

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Work in the global economy is to a significant extent structured in global value chains: globally fragmented systems of outsourced production and services, sustained through unequal social, political and economic structures. Companies based in the Global North capture value from labour forces in the Global South externalizing their own risks to local firms and their workers. Workers are affected unevenly by exploitative structures because race, ethnicity, migration, and gender frequently shape access to work, working conditions, and the payment of salaries (or the lack of). Marxian-feminist approaches to political economy and global value chains have shown that class, ethnicity/caste and gender are entangled dynamics in the extraction of surplus value from workers.

The continuing exploitation and oppression of workers within export-oriented production networks, despite numerous attempts by governments, international organisations, and private actors has also contributed to local, national and transnational mobilization. This coincides with increasing digital attempts of worker control, algorithmic labour governance and the platformization of the economy, which have accelerated during the pandemic. In this context, “digital worker voice tools” have been presented as a remedy and technological quick fix. Proponents suggested that it is possible to improve working conditions and to solve immediate workplace problems in the Global South by on the one hand providing workers with information about their labour rights and, on the other hand, building digital feedback technologies to facilitate communication between management and workers. Yet there are many different types of worker voice tools: They may be produced by unions or civil society organisations, social entrepreneurs or companies themselves, their design and use differing accordingly.

This article is based on a novel data set that gives a first overview of such digital worker tools in the context of global value chains. We use this dataset - containing information on the structure, aim and use of these worker voice tools – to argue that we rather see what we call a double blindness, instead of an increasing of the voice of workers. We suggest this double blindness is visible in two forms: First existing digital worker voice tools homogenize the group of workers and their problems, neglecting key differences along race, ethnic and gender lines. Thereby it is structurally impossible to use these tools for collective identity formation across different divides. Second, the growing global field of digital worker tools is increasingly dominated by digital designs, which are dominated by the spirit of managerialism, risk management and digital worker control. This structural gap makes such tools an instrument that is barely used in existing worker struggles, despite the fact that it is increasingly pushed as a key solution by its developers. In our paper, we use qualitative interviews with tools providers, companies, and unions workers in the global context and also in the Brazilian garment industry in order to show that those tools are rather a threat embedded in the digitalization of capitalism instead of a support for the labour movement as such, especially for the more invisible struggles of the most marginalized.



(Re)producing the city: Migrant service workers and the (algo)rhythms of the globalized, digitized and “gigified” urban economy

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This paper takes Henri Lefebvre’s rhythmanalysis (1999) as its starting point to discuss how the rhythms of the globalized, digitized and all the more “gigified” city impact on and become manifest in and through the bodies of service workers, and the ways that this largely migrant workforce reproduce the city, while concurrently struggling to subsist. For this task, we will draw on in-depth interviews with gig workers performing app-mediated service work, mainly within deliveries and domestic services.

While the couriers has become an indispensable and highly visible part of the city infrastructure, other categories of workers (e.g. cleaners, baby-sitters and care workers) perform their work in the private spaces of other people’s home. Nevertheless, they are all essential to the (re)production of the city and, concurrently, they are all subject to, as well as sustaining, the ebb and flows of the city’s everyday rhythms. Even so, they may not enjoy the same opportunities to reproduce themselves, because the amount, distribution and intensity of work as well as the size and regularity of income, is difficult to predict.

In this paper we argue that everyday rhythms of the city, such as peak traffic and peaks in demand of certain services, are interlinked with and reinforced by the algorithms of the apps, dictating the intensity, scheduling and hours of work. There is however an apparent risk of arrhythmia (Lefebvre, 1999; Reid-Musson, 2018) with gig workers sometimes suffering physically violent outcomes (e.g. traffic accidents), and at other instances experiencing being deprived of the right to a full and decent (working) life. The main contribution with the present paper rests in thinking the (algo)rhythms of the city and the migrant service workforce together.

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Post-diversity, precarious work for all: Un-bordering categories of socio-demographic difference in the Amazon warehouse

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This paper draws on the case of an Amazon warehouse – POZ1 – located in Poland and serving the German market to investigate the management of a diverse workforce. Relying on critical theory of borders, which emphasizes the key role of bordering in labor governmentality, our analysis identifies four organizational practices through which socio-demographic categories (e.g. gender, age, ability, etc.) traditionally segmenting labor are purposely and effectively dismantled.



First, Amazon and the labor market intermediaries working for it hire in largely without selecting workers, providing access to wage work to workers belonging to historically subordinate groups in the Polish labor market and society. Second, Amazon manages workers largely through the algorithmic Warehouse Management System closely monitoring and dynamically benchmarking their performance based on data points rather than socio-demographic categories. Third, Amazon imposes social norms of inter-personal politeness between anonymized workers, suspending societal norms differentiating inter-personal behavior along socio-demographic categories within the workplace. Finally, Amazon offers similar casualized employment to all workers, without any distinction.

Through these four practices, Amazon effectively un-does the borders of social categories that have historically fragmented Polish labor and creates an unprecedented equality between workers in their relation to capital. However, so undifferentiated, workers are more effectively made to compete, allowing capital to enforce precarious employment conditions, that is, conditions that fail to socially reproduce labor, onto all.

This equalization-with-precarization of the workforce through the un-bordering of socio-demographic categories within Amazon rests at once on the multiplication of borders at the infra-individual level (individual workers' are datafied through the algorithmic system reducing them to single productive acts), the organizational level (Amazon leverages the local super-exploitative labour market) and the national level (Amazon's business arbitrages between Eastern and continental European countries).

The paper contributes to the critical diversity literature by showing a case of 'post-diversity' workplace in which equality within labour enforces universal precarity.

