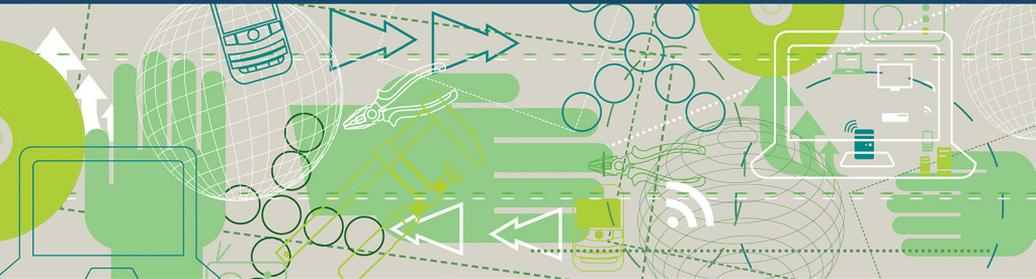


The SAGE Handbook of
Sociology of Work
and Employment



Edited by
Stephen Edgell,
Heidi Gottfried and
Edward Granter



The SAGE Handbook of
**the Sociology of Work
and Employment**





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Contents

<i>List of Figures</i>	viii
<i>List of Tables and Boxes</i>	ix
<i>Notes on the Editors and Contributors</i>	x
1 Introduction: Studies of Work and Employment at the Global Frontier <i>Stephen Edgell, Heidi Gottfried and Edward Granter</i>	1
PART I HISTORICAL CONTEXT AND SOCIAL DIVISIONS	15
2 The Disciplinary Career of the Sociology of Work <i>Tim Strangleman</i>	17
3 Work and Social Theory <i>Tracey Warren</i>	34
4 Class and Work <i>Barry Eidlin</i>	52
5 Gender and Work <i>Harriet Bradley</i>	73
6 Race, Racialization and Work <i>Evelyn Nakano Glenn</i>	93
PART II THE EXPERIENCE OF WORK	109
7 Good Jobs, Bad Jobs <i>Arne L. Kalleberg</i>	111
8 The Origins of the Idea and Ideal of Dignity in the Sociology of Work and Employment <i>Philip Hodgkiss</i>	129
9 Capital and Labour: The Shifting Terrains of Struggle and Accommodation in Labour and Employment Relations <i>Miguel Martínez Lucio</i>	148
10 From Management to Leadership <i>Leo McCann</i>	167
11 Unruly Subjects: Misbehaviour in the Workplace <i>Stephen Ackroyd and Paul Thompson</i>	185

12	Rediscovery of the Labour Process <i>Chris Smith</i>	205
13	The Skill Debate: Concepts, Measures and Evidence <i>Alan Felstead</i>	225
PART III WORK AND ORGANIZATION		243
14	From Bureaucracy to Networks <i>Charles Heckscher</i>	245
15	Organizational Culture and Work <i>Mats Alvesson</i>	262
16	Fordism and the Golden Age of Atlantic Capitalism <i>Matt Vidal</i>	283
17	Beyond Fordism <i>Huw Beynon</i>	306
18	Interactive Service Work <i>Amy S. Wharton</i>	329
19	The Organization of Service Work <i>Kiran Mirchandani</i>	348
PART IV NON-STANDARD FORMS OF WORK AND EMPLOYMENT		365
20	Employment Uncertainty and Risk <i>Vicki Smith</i>	367
21	Destandardization: Qualitative and Quantitative <i>Françoise Carré</i>	385
22	Informal Employment: Theory and Reality <i>Martha Alter Chen</i>	407
23	Precarious Work <i>Kevin Hewison</i>	428
24	Unpaid Domestic Labor <i>Janeen Baxter and Tsui-o Tai</i>	444
PART V WORK AND LIFE BEYOND EMPLOYMENT		467
25	Unemployment <i>Ken Roberts</i>	469

26	Volunteering and Unpaid Work <i>Rebecca Taylor</i>	485
27	Work-Life Balance <i>Abigail Gregory</i>	502
28	Working Time <i>Michael Bittman</i>	520
29	Work and Social Policy <i>Karin Gottschall and Irene Dingeldey</i>	541
PART VI GLOBALIZATION AND THE FUTURE OF WORK		557
30	Global Value Chains, Organizations and Industrial Work <i>Paul Stewart and Brian Garvey</i>	559
31	Globalization and Outsourcing <i>Winifred R. Poster and Nima L. Yolmo</i>	576
32	Globalization and Labour Migrations <i>Eleonore Kofman</i>	597
33	Critiques of Work <i>David Frayne</i>	616
34	Global Labour Politics in Informal and Precarious Jobs <i>Jennifer Jihye Chun and Rina Agarwala</i>	634
35	The Future of Work: Escaping the Current Dystopian Trajectory and Building Better Alternatives <i>Peter Evans and Chris Tilly</i>	651
	<i>Author Index</i>	672
	<i>Subject Index</i>	689

List of Figures

11.1	Dimensions and forms of misbehaviour (classic forms of misbehaviour highlighted)	190
11.2	Modalities of disengagement	199
13.1	Level of influence over the day-to-day organisation of work, Europe, 2010	229
13.2	Level of influence over the pace of work, Europe, 2010	229
13.3	Qualification required trends, Britain, 1986–2012	233
13.4	Generic skill change, Britain, 1997–2012	233
13.5	Problem-solving skills at work, OECD, 2011/12	234
13.6	Incidence of over-qualification, OECD, 2011/12	239
22.1	WIEGO model of informal employment: hierarchy of earnings and poverty risk by employment status and sex	411
24.1	Women’s weekly housework hours, 2002	455
24.2	Women’s weekly housework hours, 2012	455
24.3	Change in women’s housework hours, 2002–2012	455
24.4	Men’s weekly housework hours, 2002	456
24.5	Men’s weekly housework hours, 2012	456
24.6	Change in men’s housework hours, 2002–2012	456
24.7	Women’s percent of total housework time, 2002	458
24.8	Women’s percent of total housework time, 2012	458
24.9	Change in women’s percent of housework time, 2002–2012	458
24.10	Change in sharing of household tasks, 2002–2012	459
28.1	Proportion of male workers working short and long usual hours, 1994 and 1985	530
28.2	Proportion of female workers working short and long usual hours, 1994 and 1985	531

List of Tables and Boxes

TABLES

5.1	Percentage share of employment of women and men by occupational categories in 2013	77
5.2	Daily contributions of men and women to domestic labour at different time periods	83
5.3	Female labour market participation (economic activity) rates in selected countries, 2012 (female population aged 15+)	86
13.1	Reading, maths and science test scores, OECD country rankings, 2012	235
13.2	Real and formal over-qualification, Britain, 1992–2012 (%)	238
16.1	Core organizational models, USA, 1826–present	288
16.2	Fordist regimes, USA, UK, Germany, 1945–1973	292
16.3	Phases of GDP growth, 1870–1984*	295
16.4	Phases of growth in labor productivity, 1870–1984*	296
16.5	Employment structure, 1870–1984*	297
16.6	Imports and exports of goods as a percentage of nominal GDP	298
22.1	Informal employment as a percentage of total non-agricultural employment, 2004–2010	413
22.2	Informal employment inside and outside the informal sector as a percentage of total non-agricultural employment, 2004–2010	414
22.3	Informal wage employment and informal self-employment as a percentage of informal non-agricultural employment, 2004–2010	414
22.4	Home-based industrial outworkers on a continuum of independent to dependent work arrangements	420
23.1	GDP and precarious work, most recent data	435

BOXES

12.1	Main concepts in labour process analysis	208
12.2	New Trends	218
22.1	World Bank 2007 Model of Informality: Composition and Causes	412

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production on workers' lives. Recently he co-authored *We Sell Our Time No More* (Pluto Press, 2009) and, with Tommy McKearney, *The Provisional IRA: From Insurrection to Parliament* (Pluto Press, 2011). He is currently working on the book 'Where Did You Go to Lizzy?': *Protestant Women in the Insurgency in the North of Ireland from 1969*.

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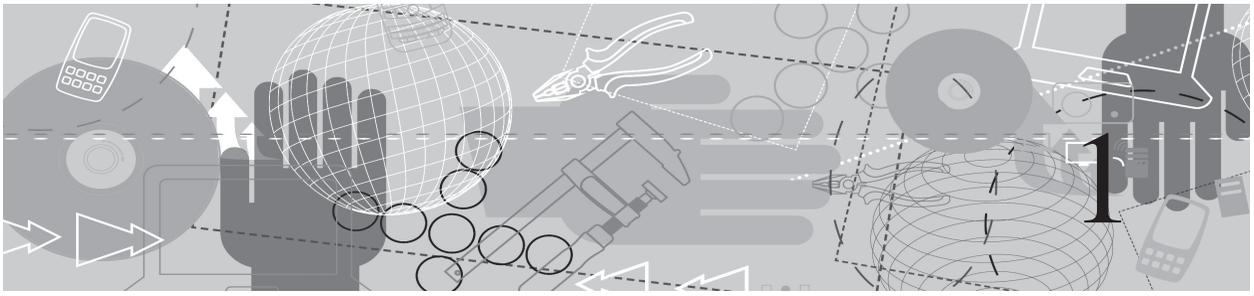
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Introduction: Studies of Work and Employment at the Global Frontier

Stephen Edgell, Heidi Gottfried
and Edward Granter

I ask the political economists and the moralists if they have ever calculated the number of individuals who must be condemned to misery, overwork, demoralization, degradation, rank ignorance, overwhelming misfortune and utter penury in order to produce one rich man. (Almeida Garrett [1799–1854])¹

The Portuguese poet, playwright and politician, Almeida Garrett, lived during the heyday of classical liberalism, a period when the Manchester School of Economics was advocating and agitating successfully in the world's first industrial capitalist city for the adoption of a *laissez-faire* policy by the national government (Grampp 1960). It was an era when 'collective bargaining by riot' was prevalent – to use Hobsbawm's (1952) memorable phrase – since labour unions were not recognized as legal entities, the majority did not have the right to vote, and the state was relatively small but its armed forces large – ready to quell protest whenever it erupted (the Peterloo Massacre of 1819, for example). Punishment included

execution or banishment to penal colonies for those who combined with other workers and/or damaged property (as with the Swing Riots of 1830), and the gap between the power and wealth of the owners of capital and the propertyless classes was a chasm. For a relatively short period in the twentieth century – the mid-1930s to the mid-1970s, often referred to as the Fordist era – the long-term trend of increasing inequality was interrupted, reversed even, due to a combination of special circumstances, notably a major depression and world war that provoked state economic intervention on a hitherto unknown grand scale and promoted an enhanced role for unions (Piketty 2014). Fast-forward to the beginning of the twenty-first century and the post-1970s era of neo-liberalism, during which the effectiveness of organized labour has been impaired, the social welfare function of the state much reduced, the power of capital and the free market expanded, and inequality increased markedly. It seems that Almeida Garrett's concern regarding the

extent of exploitation and oppression of the underlying 99 per cent has a contemporary resonance that would have surprised and perhaps dismayed nineteenth-century reformers and revolutionaries.

The twenty-first century started somewhat inauspiciously with a crash in the value of technology shares (the so-called bursting of the dot.com bubble), followed by recessions in various major economies, affecting initially European Union countries such as France and Germany, and subsequently the USA. Meanwhile in Japan, after a short recession in the late 1990s, deflation returned and continued to defy government attempts to remedy the situation. These sporadic and localized economic problems culminated in the most severe global economic crisis since the late 1920s. In 2008–9 there was a ‘three-fold crisis, with no end in sight: a *banking crisis*, a crisis of *public finances*, and a crisis of the “*real economy*”’ (Streeck 2014: 6, italics in the original). According to Streeck, these three dimensions of the current crisis are interrelated and mutually reinforcing, although the precise pattern of interactions varies from one country to another depending upon such factors as the policies adopted and the institutional framework. For example, a banking crisis makes it difficult for companies and consumers to obtain credit, which in turn reduces demand for goods and services and induces unemployment. Similarly, when a government favours fiscal rectitude over a Keynesian-style expansion of public expenditure, the consequent austerity and related social policies depress incomes of the middle and working classes, curtail economic growth, and weaken the employment protections for workers achieved over many years of struggle (Daguerre 2014; Heyes 2011). In other words, ultimately, the financial and fiscal dimensions of the crisis impact on the actual economy in terms of the nature and extent of employment and work – the focus of this Handbook.

The current global crisis therefore is not merely a monetary or a momentary phenomenon, but a sociologically significant process

that involves social, political, cultural and ideological causes and effects (Granter and Tischer 2014). More specifically, in terms of the world of work and employment, the recrudescence of the values and practices of free market capitalism has contributed to the emasculation of trade unions, mass unemployment, mass underemployment, mass income insecurity, mass dispossession, mass incarceration, and mass poverty, even in the wealthiest industrial capitalist nation states. In short, the collective responsibility of risk has been transferred to individuals rather than shared between the state, employers and employees, and class inequality has been exacerbated with the ‘gap between rich and poor at its highest level in most OECD countries in 30 years’ (Granter and Tischer 2014: 1).

The neo-liberal project, imposed from above and resisted from below, has also had major gender inequality consequences for individuals, households and nation states (Gottfried 2013). For example, from the earliest years of the public spending cuts by the first Thatcher government in the UK, women were affected more than men, since most public sector workers are women, women are the main consumers of collective social provision, and women are the major care providers in the family (Edgell and Duke 1991). Unsurprisingly, the global economy in general, and the changing pattern of employment and work in particular, are rarely out of the news, whether it is record-breaking youth unemployment in countries of the global North such as Greece and Spain, persistent deflation and economic stagnation in Japan, or severe economic recession and prolonged wage stagnation in the UK and Germany for example. To these we can add bankrupt banks (Lehman Brothers) and national economies (Iceland), economic expansion (the USA), economic contraction (Russia), rampant/rising inflation in the global South (e.g. Venezuela/Brazil), and life-threatening mass migration on a transcontinental scale – from Africa to Europe. It is a febrile morass of economic instability and uncertainty on a global scale.

Thus, capitalism is in crisis (the latest of many, we accept) and the contours of work and employment are changing dramatically, almost certainly to the benefit of a few at the cost of the many. This Handbook is intended to increase our sociological understanding of the causes of the major current trends in paid and unpaid work and employment, and their impact on individuals, groups, organizations and societies. The coverage is both comprehensive and comparative with respect to time and space, and each of the original contributions by leading specialists combines a critical and up-to-date review of the literature with some thoughts on the future directions of research. Considered as a whole, the Handbook represents a strong argument for the view that, contrary to the claim by Offe, work remains the ‘key sociological category’ (1985: 129).² In fact, the neo-liberalization of work and employment globally over the past 40 years, an issue that features prominently in many of the contributions to this volume, has arguably increased rather than diminished the sociological and ethical centrality of work and employment at all levels of society.

THE SOCIOLOGY OF WORK AND EMPLOYMENT: CONTOURS OF A DISCIPLINE

This Handbook, which readers will find both authoritative and timely, is divided into six core themes:

- 1 Historical Context and Social Divisions
- 2 The Experience of Work
- 3 Work and Organization
- 4 Non-standard Forms of Work and Employment
- 5 Work and Life Beyond Employment
- 6 Globalization and the Future of Work

The first part, **Historical Context and Social Divisions**, traces the emergence of sociology as an autonomous academic discipline with special reference to the impact of capitalist industrialization, which transformed societies in general, and work and

employment in particular. Indeed, for the majority of social scientists and sociologists the classification of different types of societies was and continues to be based on the predominant form of work prevailing at specific times and places, such as the familiar distinction between agrarian and industrial societies, and the more recent industrial and post-industrial dichotomy. The social divisions that accompanied the rise of industrial capitalism, notably those based on class, gender and race/ethnicity, persist to this day in the neo-liberal global era. The purpose of this first section of the Handbook is to consider how sociologists, since the classic contributions of Marx, Weber and Durkheim, have theorized and analysed the changing nature of work/employment and related social divisions. This opening part of the Handbook also addresses the strengths and weaknesses of this historically important sociological specialism and introduces the issue of intersectionality.

In the first chapter in this section (Chapter 2), Tim Strangleman discusses the development of the sociology of work from its pre-classical origins to the present day with special reference to the UK and the USA, and the classic contributions of Marx, Weber and Durkheim. Among the many issues covered in this chapter, the challenges and impact of Marxism and feminism on the sociology of work and employment are highlighted. He focuses on the historical context of sociological interests and emphasizes the continued need for theoretically informed empirical research via a secure disciplinary base, yet makes a plea for greater inter- and multi-disciplinary research.

In Chapter 3, Tracey Warren’s account of work and social theory advances the historical theme in her wide-ranging review and critique of the classical canon from the standpoint of the pervasive influence of Marx, Weber and Durkheim on the sociology of work and employment. Her analysis emphasizes the contested meaning of the concept of work and identifies some of the key concepts, such as alienation, that have informed social

theories of work. It also reveals the relative neglect of research on gender and elites that is being addressed at last by contemporary sociologists in this sub-discipline, but she suggests that more research is needed, especially on the post-economic-crisis role of dominant groups.

The historical dimension of the sociology of work and employment is developed by Barry Eidlin's chapter (Chapter 4) on the core concept of class and work. He discusses how sociologists have conceptualized and operationalized class in relation to work since the founding classics up to and including recent societal changes, notably post-industrialism. The continued relevance of class, objectively and subjectively, is examined, and the 'class is dead' thesis is evaluated critically. He suggests that in view of the widely documented increase in economic inequality, the issue of class and work is likely to be debated by sociologists and policy makers into the foreseeable future.

In Chapter 5 Harriet Bradley notes that in the immediate post-World-War-II period male workers were the main focus of attention, but this changed gradually to the point where paid and unpaid work by women became a major research interest. Although European and American studies of women and work are the main focus, there is also a discussion of the contemporary gendering of work and employment in a global context and the issue of intersectionality. This chapter concludes by noting that the implementation of neo-liberal policies represents a significant setback for gender equality that needs to be researched and challenged.

The final chapter (Chapter 6) in this opening section by Evelyn Nakano Glenn presents a wide-ranging examination of race and ethnicity in the sociology of work and employment and reminds us of the origins of racial divisions associated with 'unfree' labour, in both settler and franchise colonies. Glenn goes on to explain racial inequality and racial dynamics in the contemporary labour force by reviewing human capital, Marxist-inspired critical whiteness

and racial formation theories along with other approaches. She draws on a variegated array of historical and ethnographic studies, including studies of black and Latina housekeepers and lawyers, to uncover how processes of racialization shape labour experiences at work and racial identities. Paralleling the preceding chapter on gender and work, Glenn's discussion emphasizes that race always functions in interaction with other vectors of difference.

The second thematic section concerns **The Experience of Work**. The authors here not only reflect on what makes work enjoyable or toilsome, dignified or debased, but also on who has the power to define its nature and content. Substantively, we find that the balance has shifted even further in this regard towards capital, whether we define capital's agents as 'managers' or 'leaders'. The content of this work changes, and the chapters herein offer new conceptual frameworks, reflecting on established themes along the way.

Chapter 7 covers the perennial yet increasingly pressing and controversial issue of the quality of work. Arne Kalleberg reviews the main dimensions of job quality, discusses the theoretical explanations for cross-national differences, and analyses recent trends with special reference to the current debate about the polarization of good and bad jobs; a debate that is of great importance to employees, employers, academics and policy makers. This renewed focus on job quality moves analysis from a problem of individuals to one related more widely to the nature of work.

In Chapter 8 Philip Hodgkiss traces the history of the idea and the ideal of dignity in relation to the sociology of work and employment from the Enlightenment to the present day. His account shows that theory and empirical research on dignity developed slowly, but in the recent past it has featured more prominently and explicitly as the object of investigation, which has raised the question of how best to operationalize the concept of dignity in sociological research on work in industrial capitalist societies.

At issue in Miguel Martínez Lucio's chapter (Chapter 9) is the struggle waged

over work between the forces of capital and labour. Drawing on the classical social theories introduced earlier by Warren, Martínez Lucio points to the inseparability of changes in working life from the evolution of global capitalism since the 1800s. While history matters, so do national institutional frameworks; thus the chapter covers conflict over work across both temporal *and* spatial dimensions. The concept of dignity appears once again as Martínez Lucio outlines recent shifts towards a workplace politics that increasingly seems to hinge on the individual, as well as the more traditional issues of workplace solidarity.

In Chapter 10 Leo McCann takes aim at the systems of ideological framing that dominate the way we manage, and are managed, at work. Or rather, how we lead and are led, since there has, according to McCann, been a dramatic shift from management to leadership, over the past 40 years. But although leadership promises a more dynamic and inspirational, even visionary, mode of work organization, the chapter argues that this is a rhetorical, rather than an actual evolution of workplace culture. Drawing on diverse literature encompassing the Vietnam War and ‘funky business’, McCann’s chapter offers a critique of management fads and the gurus who promote them.

In the era of the ‘third spirit of capitalism’ (Boltanski and Chiapello 2005), the scope for misbehaviour at work could be seen to have declined in the face of performance management and scripted emotional labour. Not so, according to Stephen Ackroyd and Paul Thompson (Chapter 11). They map the debates around workplace misbehaviour from early industrialism, through Fordist control regimes, to the current context of financialized capitalism. The authors chart the turbulent fortunes of sociological engagements with a set of workplace behaviours that, they argue, must be conceptually differentiated from more commonplace understandings of ‘resistance’ at work.

Since the publication of Harry Braverman’s *Labour and Monopoly Capital* (1974) more than 40 years ago, labour process theory

has been both an inspiration for empirical research on working life, and a source of academic debate. Chris Smith has been extensively involved with both, and in Chapter 12 charts the development of labour process theory from Marx to the present day. Capitalism has undoubtedly evolved since the high point of the Fordist consensus – it is globalized, computerized, and attuned to cultural flows as never before. It remains, however, a system of political economy with conflict at its centre, and Smith provides a theoretically informed and empirically detailed illustration of labour process theory’s continued relevance.

In Chapter 13, Braverman’s work provides something of a touchstone once again. In this case it is the so-called deskilling thesis that features in Alan Felstead’s account of the skill debate. Whilst acknowledging the importance of labour process theory to the study of skills and work, Felstead goes beyond simply rehearsing arguments over whether work is becoming more or less skilled. Instead, he provides an account, which, by distinguishing between ‘job skills’ and ‘person skills’, helps students and scholars alike understand how the concept of skill has been operationalized in both empirical and analytical terms.

The third section focuses on **Work and Organization** as a changed and changing field, following the demise of Fordism, deindustrialization, and the rise of service work and neo-liberal globalization. Strikingly, all of the industrial enterprises iconic of Fordism no longer rank among the top-ten employers, having been replaced by Walmart and other service-based firms. Service jobs ‘span the occupational spectrum’ from low-wage routinized work to ‘expert service work’, which includes ‘knowledge work’.

The changing shape of organizations and the shifting demands they make of their employees are the central concerns of Charles Heckscher in Chapter 14. At issue here is the status of bureaucracy as the classical form of organization and management at work. The giant firms of the twentieth century drew on research by management scholars that spoke

of the need for hierarchy, narrow spans of control and stability of office. Since this time, a paradigm shift has taken place, and discussions now centre on alternative organizational forms such as market mechanisms, mutualism and networks. In his chapter, Heckscher seeks to distinguish between rhetoric and evidence in considering whether our transition from bureaucracies to networks is complete.

In Chapter 15 Mats Alvesson offers a critical review of the field of organizational culture and work. Along the way, he offers the concept of ‘functional stupidity’ to help us chart a middle course between corporate visions of fun-filled workplaces, and dystopic visions of organizations as glorified panopticons. Alvesson stresses the importance of retaining some sense of analytical distinction between the material and the cultural. And yet in the best traditions of Critical Theory, understanding these two realms as interconnected – even at a level of some indeterminacy – is crucial to the sociological study of workplace cultures.

Matt Vidal’s contribution (Chapter 16) provides a sweeping yet detailed historical account of the development of Fordism, from its origins in the US to its reluctant adoption in the UK and its flexible adaptation in Germany. His analysis shows that in the post-World-War-II period, Atlantic Fordism was consolidated via the Bretton Woods system until it broke down in the early 1970s, and he advances a case for comparative research in relation to his analytical framework. He concludes that the demise of Fordism signalled the end of the golden age of economic growth and stability fuelled by mass production and consumption, and the beginning of a post-Fordist era of neo-liberal globalization.

The focus on the Fordist paradigm is continued in Chapter 17 with Huw Beynon’s perceptive and perspicuous critical overview of the changes that have taken place in the global capitalist economy since the end of Fordism. His wide-ranging historical analysis covers both industrial and service sector work and employment and shows that from the standpoint of workers, the early optimism

regarding post-Fordist work regimes was misplaced. He argues convincingly that at the beginning of this century Fordist inspired deskilling and rationalization were being reinvented to the disadvantage of labour and the advantage of capital.

Classics such as Leidner’s *Fast Food, Fast Talk* (1993), C. Wright Mills’ pioneering study *White Collar* (1968 [1951]), and Hochschild’s (2003 [1983]) research on emotional labour, animate Wharton’s encyclopaedic chapter (Chapter 18) on interactive service work. There is a new emphasis on ‘body work’ in addition to emotion work/labour (Wolkowitz et al. 2013). Paid body work increases for several reasons, including the neo-liberal retreat of the welfare state, the rise of ‘pampering’ industries, the cultural acceptance of the commodification of ‘intimacy’ opening new spaces for capitalist intervention, and the socio-demographic shifts and cultural expectations of aging bodies representing increasing markets for goods and services. Households are becoming ‘enterprises’ employing interactive service workers, many of whom are immigrants.

In Chapter 19 Kiran Mirchandani delves into the global dispersion of service delivery, asking if the shift to service-related labour exacerbates inequalities and/or offers new opportunities for worker advocacy. This chapter is enlivened by diverse examples of the new ‘service proletariat’ in Chile, Argentina and Barbados, and by reference to her ethnographic field research, bringing together service workers in India from across the employment spectrum. She finds hierarchies produced and reproduced through everyday interactions between the interdependent service workers. What she aptly calls ‘vagabond global capitalism’ captures the hyper-circulation of capital in search of profits wherever the highest returns can be made. The resulting outsourcing and offshoring of these jobs creates a new international division of labour.

The fourth part focuses on trends of **Non-standard Forms of Work and Employment**, and explores them from a variety of viewpoints, few of which examine workplaces

alone. Precarity and precarious work are emblematic of late twentieth-century and early twenty-first century work: increasingly workers are being made to labour in situations where the workers themselves must manage the risks of their employment. States and businesses arrange and manage work and workplaces so that uncertainty, instability, vulnerability and insecurity have expanded and become an important feature of global production.

In Chapter 20 Vicki Smith casts a wide net to capture the literature on employment uncertainty and risk, providing a rich and penetrating view of industrial and economic restructuring. Risk now permeates the career tracks of the well-heeled, such as Wall Street bank employees, as well as the lower-skilled working population. Beck's notion of risk society gave a more positive spin to the self-enterprising individuals reinventing themselves as they prepared for volatile careers, but Smith tempers this view with critical reference to discourses that 'idealize flexible employment' and propagate 'positive thinking' in the face of structural dislocation and displacement.

In Chapter 21 Françoise Carré details the qualitative and quantitative aspects of destandardization, characterized by diversifying employment relations, changing work sites, decentralizing work, and irregular work schedules. Prior to the expansion of destandardized labour in the advanced economies, the most significant quantitative and qualitative form of it was female-dominated part-time work. Among other things, the implications of this are that standardized labour was gendered (see Gottfried 2000), and destandardization only became a major issue when it spread to male labour and altered the gender contract. Using the apt metaphor of 'canary in the coal mine', Carré evokes the last century's beacon of unseen dangers and relates it to the negative effects of destandardization on work's trajectory.

Destandardization and informalization are twin processes in the neo-liberal, global era. Martha Chen's chapter (Chapter 22) reviews

informal employment in its myriad guises. Much of today's informal labour recalls the 'dust mountain' workers in Dickens' *Our Mutual Friend*, which, for those of us in the global North, recalls a bygone era where child labour was widespread. Yet informal work, including child labour, persists in the global South – in China, India and the favelas of Brazil. Often, the processes of rapid urbanization and changing land tenure in the countryside contribute to a swelling pool of informal workers. Drawing on a wide range of examples, Chen argues persuasively for a legal and conceptual vocabulary more attuned to the realities of informalized work conditions and employment relations.

Kevin Hewison's chapter (Chapter 23) examines the activist and academic lineages of 'precarious work', before turning to a discussion of how precarious work is debated and conceptualized in the academic literature. Recent research indicates that advanced capitalist economies have seen both an expansion of precarious work and a decline in collective bargaining coverage and union density. By focusing on Asia, along with the usual cases from Western Europe and the US, Hewison adds a unique flavour to less well known material. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the debate on whether the rise of precarious work has resulted in the development of a new class identified as 'the precariat' (Standing 2011).

The final chapter (Chapter 24) in this section surveys the literature on unpaid domestic work. Despite the growing number of women in the paid workforce, higher rates of political participation and increasing educational attainment, women continue to perform the lion's share of unpaid domestic work. The gender division of domestic labour stubbornly resists fundamental redistribution between men and women. Janeen Baxter and Tsui-o Tai approach this sociological puzzle by delving deeply into the literature on the amount of time and the share of time spent on routine domestic tasks, both over the life-course and across countries. Their comparative strategy pays off; contextual factors are

key to understanding variation of the gender gap in housework.

The fifth thematic section, **Work and Life Beyond Employment**, concerns the inter-relationship between work and non-work broadly defined. Following the momentous changes wrought by industrial capitalism that impacted profoundly on the nature of work, the multidimensional issue of life outside employment became increasingly significant. Although work and non-work for the vast majority became separate physical and institutional spheres, the demands of wage labour tended to dominate everyday life throughout the life cycle. In other words, most people spend their early years preparing for entry into the labour market, the next 40 plus years in employment (albeit intermittently for many) that structures their daily, weekly, monthly, yearly routines, and, upon retirement, their remaining years recovering from work and enjoying (hopefully) the fruits of their labour. Consequently, the continued centrality of work in the twenty-first-century global era can be illustrated with reference to, among other things, contemporary debates about unemployment, the increased pervasiveness of voluntary work, the difficulty of balancing work and life, the importance of working time in terms of health and well-being, and the changing role of government intervention regarding all aspects of employment.

This part begins with Ken Roberts (Chapter 25), on the topic of unemployment. In his comprehensive overview he discusses how the meanings, measurement, causes, consequences and solutions to this socio-economic and political issue have changed historically. He distinguishes between different types of unemployment (for example, transitional, long-term, frictional, cyclical and structural) and the policy responses to them. Roberts concludes that since unemployment does not seem to be a major policy priority in the current neo-liberal era, it is likely to persist at a high level in the foreseeable future.

In the next chapter by Rebecca Taylor, her critical review of the relevant research on various forms of unpaid voluntary work

analyses how it has related to paid work historically and how people experience it. Unpaid voluntary work is arguably the most diverse yet under-researched type of work in sociology. This chapter makes a strong case for an increase in sociological research on voluntary work with reference to the restructuring of labour markets implemented in advanced industrial capitalist societies that are in the vanguard of neo-liberalism.

Work-life balance is an issue disrupting intellectual, cultural and political paradigms that separate work and employment from other social spheres. In Chapter 27 Abigail Gregory evaluates both existing policy and theoretical frameworks on work-life balance. Policy analysis reveals that the promulgation of various working-time regulations and parental leave initiatives at national, regional (EU) and international (ILO) levels has enshrined new rights around care responsibilities. These measures do not uproot the gender division of labour however, and the risk of poverty is high for single mothers in particular. Though the phrase has now entered the popular lexicon, 'work-life balance' remains elusive for many.

The time dimension of work and employment is discussed more generally in Michael Bittman's contribution (Chapter 28) on working time. He shows how the buying and selling of labour power in units of time was central to the development of industrial capitalism. In his review of the history of working time, contentious issues such as the length of the working day and the introduction of time-and-motion studies into the Fordist workplace are considered in considerable detail. Moving to the globalized neo-liberal present, Bittman's analysis suggests that working time remains a highly contested issue, one manifestation of which can be seen in the demands for flexible labour by employers and the preference for more family-friendly working-time schedules by employees.

The role of the state is a central concern for the study of work and life in capitalist society, and in Chapter 29 Karin Gottschall and Irene Dingeldey bring the analysis up to

date. Their compact history tracks work and social policy from its 'golden age' of expanding rights and welfare provision to its current neo-liberal form of narrowing governmental social support and protection. In many societies, institutional restructuring has privatized state functions and widened the scope of the market. Good jobs have been shifted from the public sector to more precarious work in the private sphere, thus deepening insecurity for large numbers of workers. Paid and unpaid care work and personal services, often performed by migrant women in insecure employment, fill the vacuum left by the retreat of welfare state services.

In the sixth and final section of the Handbook, the interconnected issues of **Globalization and the Future of Work** are considered. Over the past two centuries industrial production has relocated and has been transplanted from sites in one part of the world to sites in another. Global value chains now extend and intensify linkages between people and places in even the most remote areas. This has implications for workers both in the global South, and in what we might now call the *post*-industrial nations of the global North. Often these implications are less than positive, but the discussions in this section speak also to utopian, radical critiques, and to no-less utopian action and resistance in and around the 'global' workplace.

In Chapter 30, Paul Stewart and Brian Garvey's global value chain analysis of the ethanol sector in Brazil is used to exemplify their thesis that in order to understand sociologically what goes on inside a company, it is imperative in this era of globalization to look beyond, to the wider geographical and temporal context of production and worker subordination. The methodological, theoretical and political (in terms of the response of organized labour) implications of global value chains are all discussed.

As Winifred Poster and Nima Yolmo illustrate in Chapter 31, outsourcing enables the production and circulation of every imaginable commodity, ranging from macabre body parts to intimate labour to bits and bytes

crisscrossing the globe in nanoseconds. The 'contemporary face of globalized labour' and work involves service provision. Outsourcing can have horrific ramifications, for example the Rana Plaza disaster in Bangladesh, when firms seek to cut expenses and keep costs low by ignoring health and safety standards. More positively, Poster and Yolmo show how the same global processes and technologies used to exploit workers can mobilize sentiments and actions among labour and consumer advocates.

New economic cartographies have propelled (and sometimes compelled) mobilities as people cross borders on a global scale. In Chapter 32, Eleonore Kofman documents the complexity of contemporary labour migration in the neo-liberal global era, offers an impressive review of the most up-to-date scholarship on the topic, and amasses empirical information mapping new migratory flows, not only from poor countries to wealthier metropolises, but also movements from destinations within the South and returns from North to South. Labour migrations are highly asymmetrical: a transnational business elite finds lucrative work and perks; and a supply of low-wage, at times unfree, labour is available for male-typed jobs in traditional sectors such as agriculture and construction and for female-typed jobs in the burgeoning service sector that includes human trafficking, the sex trade and care work.

In Chapter 33, David Frayne traces something of a hidden intellectual current in the sociology of work: the notion of freeing ourselves from work altogether. Or perhaps two hidden currents, since, at the analytical level, Frayne highlights the rarely acknowledged role played by Critical Theorists such as Adorno, Horkheimer and Marcuse in developing radical critiques of work. Frayne shows how their work relates to that of later key theorists such as André Gorz, and to recognized changes in the world of work itself. In doing so he provides a lucid and up-to-date summary of the intellectual history of a concept at once utopian and yet, to many observers, profoundly realistic; the 'end of work'.

Jennifer Chun and Rina Agarwala (Chapter 34) present a kaleidoscopic global account of how informal, precarious workers outside of traditional labour movement structures have sought to establish their rights as workers and as citizens. In this chapter, the concept of intersectionality provides the theoretical underpinning for an account of how a vast array of ‘organizational repertoires’ and institutional forms have been deployed, and how attempts to organize some of the most exploited workers might continue into the future.

Increased inequality, increased precarity and increased informality are all trends reflected across many of the chapters in our Handbook and are all, according to Peter Evans and Chris Tilly, the result of strategic moves by capital, rather than ‘neutral’ technological advance. All is not lost, however, and in Chapter 35 they too examine counter-movements for strengthening the position of workers and improving their conditions of work. As part of this, Evans and Tilly (re)consider the role of the state in relation to strategies for labour such as those found in the ‘solidarity economy’. Touching also on the potentials of the new knowledge economy, Evans and Tilly offer us a distinctive and stimulating overview of work’s possible futures.

RETROSPECT AND PROSPECT IN THE SOCIOLOGY OF WORK AND EMPLOYMENT

Robert Dubin’s *Handbook of Work, Organization and Society*, provides us with a convenient point of comparison as we draw together some of the key themes which now animate the sociology of work. Published in 1976, it largely reflects the cultural politics of its time and today appears as a classic example of ‘malestream’ sociology. Only one chapter out of 23 has a female author. It tends to assume that all workers are male and that they work full-time in large, complex

organizations; and it includes very little discussion of women except with reference to their limited occupational opportunities. In other words, ‘work’ is equated with employment (of male workers on a full-time basis) and although there is a chapter on leisure, unemployment is only discussed on one page in a chapter on work and politics.

Today the sociology of work and employment, as our Handbook illustrates, possesses a rich multiplicity of viewpoints in terms of gender, ethnicity, nationality, age, institutional context, and so on. This holds both for the researchers engaged in driving the discipline forward, and their subjects – the two factors are interrelated, without a doubt. Work has always been universal, and the achievement of greater inclusivity in the field has been a triumph we are proud to reflect. Epistemological progress, then, is clear. Issues of inclusivity aside, however, it is Dubin’s volume that speaks to something of a golden age, and not our own.

Standing as it does on the cusp of the neo-liberal turn in political economy, policy and everyday life, it is striking how so many of the key concerns of Dubin’s contributors came to seem rather anachronistic: job enrichment, the shop floor, motivation, the new values of post-industrialism. Some of these – the shop floor for example – were effectively swept away as foci from both collective consciousness and academic research by the rapid de-industrialization of the West: for many of us a defining feature of living memory. As if to demonstrate the interrelationships between cultural, academic, political and economic spheres, is it not the case that issues of motivation have been largely resolved as a management problem by the advent of permanent mass unemployment in many societies? This is the post-industrial reality for many; rather less about ‘new values’ of ‘self-actualization’ in employment, rather more a constant battle to locate, achieve and keep it.

As Hegel’s dictum has it, ‘the owl of Minerva begins its flight only when the shadows of night are gathering’ (1991 [1821]: 23). By 1976, the challenges of high Fordism

were well rehearsed in the sociology of work, and yet from the viewpoint of the twenty-first century, they appear almost quaint. If the passage of 40 years or so provides dramatically new perspectives, change can also be understood as part of an ongoing historical process. Thus, many of today's best sociologists of work have a sense of historicity, of evolution – with capitalism as a determinant factor of the first order. In our Handbook, key themes – which, if not just out of their conceptual packaging, are at least recently installed in the store cupboard – are understood not just neologically, but as developing manifestations of currents and contradictions which have circulated within capitalism since the advent of industrial society – precarity, intersectionality, globalization, technology, emotional labour, to name a few. By some accounts, even reports of the death of Fordism have been greatly exaggerated, and capitalism exhibits an uncanny ability to change everything, but keep everything the same.

It is fortunate then that as scholars of work, employment and organization we have the classics on which to draw, classics whose power to offer conceptual 'keys' to unlock the dynamics of life and work under modernity remains undimmed. And we continue to draw on them, as evidenced by the chapters presented here. While Marx, Weber and Durkheim remain the touchstones, it is striking to see writers of the late twentieth century take their place in the canon. Braverman's influence is well established of course, and this influence now extends way beyond discussions of skill, technology, or the labour process specifically. Burawoy, one of Braverman's most perceptive interpreters, and Hochschild, with her theory of emotional labour, also join the ranks.

In opening and closing this introductory chapter, we have highlighted the tendency for history to repeat itself. It remains unclear which epochal period of work's evolution under capitalism represents tragedy, and which farce. Indeed, it remains unclear whether we can talk of an 'evolution' at

all. Scholarship, however, has evolved, and whilst concepts can be tracked historically, it is clear that for sociologists of work today, certain among them have particular, renewed significance. Globalization is now a dominant reality in the study of work and employment. This does not mean that all accounts must include references to multiple nations, regions, and diasporas, although with this Handbook, we find that many of our contributors are accustomed to working with 'the global' as an epistemological frame. It may not be that all workers are communicating across continents – or crossing them – all the time, but even for people employed in 'local' organizations, dimensions of hyperglobalism such as competition, offshoring and outsourcing are a permanent reality at some level.

Whether we understand technological advance as determining or determined by globalization, it is clear that it has fundamentally reshaped the world of work. Perhaps it always has; in today's sociology of work we continue to look at the relationship between technology and skill, for example, but increasingly we see it as a factor in new forms of supervision, the nature of managerial work, and the shape of work organizations themselves. As many of our authors relate, advances in digital, and crucially, networked ICT systems allow the globalization not only of industrial labour but of formerly 'white-collar' service and knowledge-management jobs.

As always, migration flows continue to be of great significance to scholars of work – perhaps greater than might have been predicted in 1976. Thus, in the era of globally mobile, hypercompetitive organizations, ever more diverse populations are drawn into the ambit of employment in ever more complex ways, and the theme of intersectionality has come to the fore as an analytical reflection of this. Having gone beyond looking at male 'breadwinners' to the exclusion of all others, sociologists of work have helped develop a concept which goes beyond debates about whether class, race, sexuality or gender are dominant. Intersectionality offers a conceptual lens for many employment contexts,

but it is particularly interesting to see how it relates to global labour flows, and the new politics of resistance.

In speaking of resistance, we first must speak of exploitation, domination and injustice. Contributors to this volume, in the best traditions of the sociology of work, provide an analytical account for the reader, not only of work as an academic construct, but also as a normative one. Technology advances, as do universalist declarations of rights, memoranda of understanding on child labour, and so on, and yet 'bad work' remains the reality for too many people, as we noted in the opening section of this introduction. We now, for example, refer to the precarity of labour at a global level. Whether or not work in the West has become more insecure has been the subject of some debate (Fevre 2007), but there is now widespread recognition, and evidence, reflected in this Handbook – that precarity is a defining feature for workers and managers, and indeed (from another perspective) capital, worldwide. Sociologists of employment now understand precarious work as both a key analytical motif, and, more importantly perhaps, a social reality for increasing numbers of people.

Of course, precarity plays out differently for different groups, and in different global contexts: work intensification, life-course disruption, poverty and psychological 'adjustment' in the global North, hyper-exploitation and a fight for survival in some parts of the global South. Yet amidst the 'shadows of night' which are the ontological backdrop for many under the neo-liberal work regime, there are shafts of light. It is heartening to be able to present so many accounts of new forms of worker solidarity – community activism, technologically facilitated protest and capacity building, even 'bringing the state back in' in some cases. The sociology of work has always looked to the future, but in many respects this future has been elusive. If the 'society of leisure', 'self-actualisation', 'worker self-management' and even permanent, fairly rewarded employment now take on the character of academic daydreams,

it is the task of the sociologist of work and employment to explain why. Further, it is necessary to define the state of the art as we know it now, so that future generations of scholars can make their own judgements about the contours of utopia, and work's place within it. It is in this spirit that we present the *Handbook of the Sociology of Work and Employment*.

NOTES

1. This epigraph appears in J. Saramago's *Raised from the Ground* (2013 [1980]), an autobiographical novel about landless peasants in twentieth-century Portugal and their struggles against poverty, repression and injustice.
2. For a concise and critical review of Offe's thesis see Granter (2009).

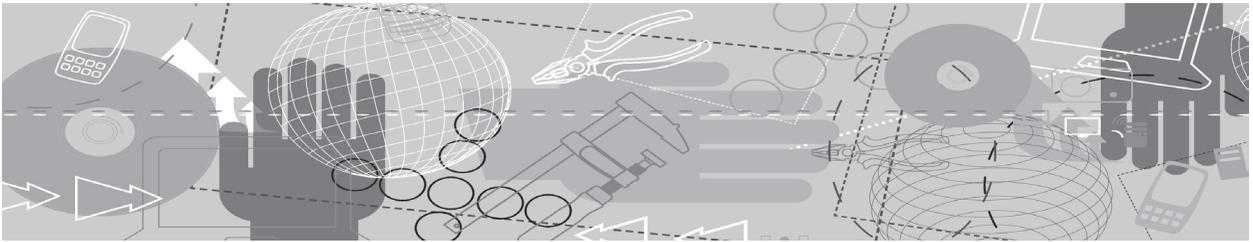
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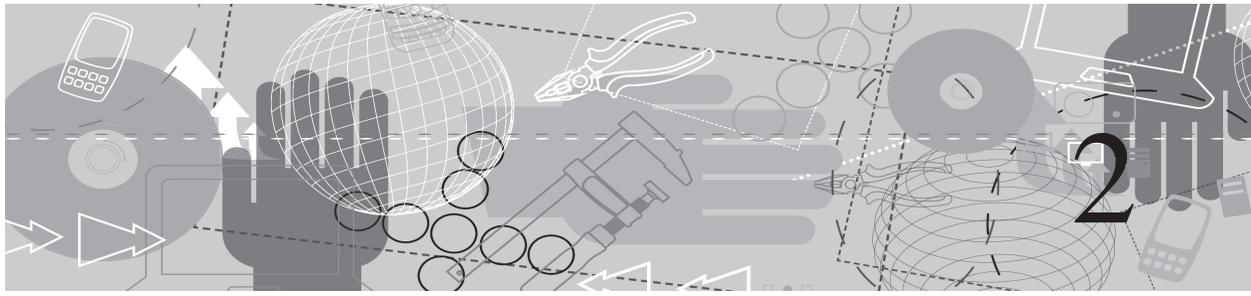
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PART I

Historical Context and Social Divisions





The Disciplinary Career of the Sociology of Work

Tim Strangleman

INTRODUCTION

‘Career’ was one of Raymond Williams’ (1976) Keywords in the classic book of the same name. He tracks the etymology of the phrase and how its meaning changes subtly over the years from ‘to career around violently’ and only in the nineteenth century becoming defined as upward steady progression in an orderly predictable way – the sense that we are perhaps more familiar with. When discussing the historical roots of the sociology of work we need to keep both senses of career in mind – a dramatic lurch here, more ordered progress there. No discipline can be divorced from its time and place, and the sociology of work is no different. What has interested writers and researchers has often been overtly or covertly, self-consciously or not, influenced by the world in which they live and the issues and events that surround them. In this chapter I want to explore the influences, pressures and events that have shaped the career of the sociology

of work from its pre-classical beginnings in the eighteenth century, the foundational texts of the classical period in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, through to its establishment as one of the core areas of sociological debate in the later twentieth century. This career is not a story of smooth upward trajectory but is often marked by division, fragmentation and crablike progress. What is distinct about the sociological engagement with work is the way it focuses on *the social*. By this I mean what is made possible through the social organisation of work and in turn how work defines and shapes the social.

THE CLASSICAL CAREER OF THE SOCIOLOGY OF WORK

It is possible to see the roots of work sociology in the eighteenth century and especially in the Scottish Enlightenment figures of

Adam Ferguson (1723–1816) in his *Essay on the History of Civil Society* (1979 [1767]) and, more famously, Adam Smith (1723–90) in his *Wealth of Nations* (1999 [1776]). Both offer a consideration of how the social is done in a society moving from an early mercantile capitalism through to a more recognisably capitalist economy. They and their colleagues recognised that with shifts in the economy and the changing divisions of labour, society was presented with a series of challenges and choices about who was to benefit and how the worst excesses of a market economy were to be ameliorated.

The Scottish Enlightenment was very influential on Marx, who is often seen as the founding father of work sociology and sociology more generally. Marx saw work as fundamental to society and in particular what it was to be human. Even in the earliest forms of labour humans had to cooperate with one another, and therefore work is an essentially social act. However, even at early stages of evolution humans started to specialise in the tasks they performed; they were engaged in a division of labour that was social while simultaneously creating social distinctions and divisions reflecting age, gender or other features. In Marx's writing we see a number of important contributions and questions for the sociology of work. Firstly, work was fundamentally a social activity. Identifying how work was organised socially and economically was crucial in understanding how societies operated and evolved. Marx was also concerned about how work, especially work under the capitalist system, profoundly shaped individuals and societies. Although highly productive, modern industry created what he called alienated workers who were estranged from their work, the products they made, and ultimately from themselves and fellow workers (see Marx 1976 [1867]).

The two other figures considered as the founding fathers of sociology are Durkheim and Weber, and both are important influences on the sociology of work. Durkheim today is less obviously an influence than perhaps he should be. His doctoral studies were on the

division of labour in society, examining how modern and traditional societies were distinct from each other (Durkheim 1964 [1893]; 1992). Like Marx, Durkheim recognised that there was a profound shift in society in such a transition and this was one that had important implications both for the individual and society more generally. Weber too was concerned with the development of modern societies and again his focus was on work specialisation and rationalisation (1964). Where Durkheim was optimistic, Weber saw modern division of labour as necessary but thought that it would ultimately result in alienation and disenchantment (Desmarez 2002).

Classical sociology had a general concern with the shift from traditional societies to industrial ones. There was a shared focus on the social at the macro level of society at large, as well as at the detailed level of the individual. Modern industry was viewed as both creative and destructive – creating new value and products while eroding human characteristics and relationships. Classical sociology was concerned with what modern work did to the individual and to the collective worker. In very different ways Marx, Durkheim and Weber saw modernity as a process of rationalisation, one that squeezed out humanity in its quest for efficiency – personal connection was replaced by the cash nexus. Although writing in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries the classical theorists laid down a series of challenging questions for the sociology of work, ones that we are still trying to answer today.

EARLY MANAGEMENT SCIENCE AND WORK SOCIOLOGY

The next set of developments in our story is the growth of management science from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The most important lasting influence was that of F.W. Taylor whose name became synonymous with 'Taylorism' – the attempt to rationalise, measure and design work effort

and practice (Kanigel 1997). Taylor was not a sociologist, nor an academic, but he attempted to put the study of work and how it was to be carried out on a scientific plain, above the disputes of one side of industry or another. He saw that most work procedures were less than fully efficient either because they were badly designed in the first place or because the workers themselves deliberately chose to work sub-optimally, engaging in what Taylor famously described as 'soldiering'. Taylor's discovery was 'sociological' in so far as it recognised the importance of social and cultural aspects of work processes in understanding how tasks got done. In particular he saw that individual workers embraced collective norms around what was acceptable performance, therefore restricting output. Taylor also recognised that workers were able to do this because they had mental *and* physical control over what Marx described as the labour process. Taylor's solution was to record, analyse and redesign work processes in minute detail. Taylor thought of his work as 'scientific' in so far as it sought to find the one best, and therefore most objective, way of carrying out a task. The point that critical social scientists later made was that the employment relationship is inherently contested, especially around questions of effort. It is extremely difficult to say what is a normal or fair amount of effort, and even more difficult to measure or police objectively (see Brown 1992). Thus scientific management reflected the ideas and interests of one side of labour, rather than being truly objective. The label of 'science' here plays an ideological role in justifying the position of management at the expense of other interested parties (Parker 2000; Rose 1988).

Before moving on to the more overtly academic study of work, it is worth mentioning that industrialist Henry Ford drew on these ideas and developed a sociological eye for both the design of work and of the culture of his workers. Indeed Ford's head of personnel John R. Lee famously set up his own Sociology Department in 1914 within his organisation which aimed to understand

and shape worker attitude and workplace culture. The Department and its publications set norms for workers, and inspected them both in the workplace and at home¹ (see Hooker 1997; Meyer 1980).

The first recognisable social science account of the workplace and the interaction that went on in it came with the rise of the Human Relations School and the so-called Hawthorne experiments. This was a study carried out by Elton Mayo and his colleagues – most notably Roethlisberger and Dickson – on the Hawthorne Works of the Western Electric Company in Chicago. Their research established that workers were potentially motivated by a wider set of factors than money. Other factors, such as the physical conditions, lighting, etc. were important in the search for productivity gains, but above all it was the social groups that workers formed that were the most important variable (Gillespie 1991). This opened up an intellectual space beyond economics to include psychology, anthropology and ultimately sociology in the analysis and discussion of work (Rose 1988).

For British industrial sociology the most important single influence which created the field was the stress placed on personnel matters during World War II and especially the recognition of the social factors of production. We could see this as a mixture of social policy, industrial relations and anthropology, with the attempt to understand the barriers to greater wartime production and efficiency. Supported by funding from the British Government as well as from American Conditional Aid money, early studies sought to promote 'industrial efficiency' as part of the post-war planning process (see Brown 1967; 1992).

POST-WAR INDUSTRIAL SOCIOLOGY

The sociological study of work really begins to take off in the period after 1945. This enterprise had a number of aspects to it

reflecting different disciplines as well as different methodological and epistemological starting points. In the UK the field of industrial relations was far more established at this time and, as Roberts (2003) sets out in his perceptive chapter on the relationship between sociology and industrial relations, there was considerable tension between the fields, with some in the latter camp suggesting an intellectual division of labour existed between the 'macro' perspectives of industrial relations compared to the 'micro' analysis of sociology. In the UK more generally, sociology was almost non-existent in the inter-war period and only slowly grew from the 1940s onward until the rapid expansion during the 1960s.

One aspect of industrial sociology was the use of the ethnographic technique of inquiry on both sides of the Atlantic. In the USA there were a number of studies of workplaces, most notably that of Donald Roy in his famous essay 'Banana Time' (1958). Roy's thick description of workplace culture took seriously norms and values and the way workers' behaviour could be understood within its own terms. The beauty of Roy's work was that while it focused on one small machine shop in Chicago, he made general points which were applicable to many different types of work – in this case workplace culture, rhythm and routines of work and the way boredom was endured (see also Chinoy 1955; Smigel 1964; for the UK see Beynon 1984 [1973]; Hollowell 1968; Tunstall 1962).

These types of study can be seen to have emerged from a wider sociological/anthropological, ethnographic and community studies tradition. Early post-war sociology often was inspired by anthropological research techniques and foci.² Often such accounts have questions of community and class as their focus, but would of necessity have to have some interest in the economic aspects of their subjects' life; Young and Wilmott's (1956) *Family and Kinship in East London* would be an obvious example.³ But then there were community studies which surveyed work more centrally; Dennis et al.'s *Coal is Our*

Life of 1956 is again an obvious example of a community study which is conceived of as a strong occupational settlement. In the UK it is possible to draw a line between these early post-war community studies through to the 1960s and 1970s, where there is a growing interest in occupational community and the questions of the types of identities which form around them. The point here is that there is an interchange and flow within sociology across questions of class, community and work. So in studying questions of class formation and identity researchers need to understand the workplace settings that give rise to particular world views and class dispositions.

This crossover is nowhere clearer than in the Affluent Worker studies of the late 1960s which emerged from research dating from the early 1960s, or indeed Lockwood's (1958) *The Blackcoated Worker*, a study of the relationship between social status and occupation. Goldthorpe et al. (1968) were attempting to test the notion of *embourgeoisement* – the idea that growing post-war affluence would witness the working-class developing middle-class tastes and orientations. They sought to test this hypothesis on a set of relatively affluent workers in the town of Luton in Bedfordshire to the north of London. Heavily influenced by Weber, the team created ideal typologies of working-class identity, with groups such as 'traditional proletarian', 'traditional deferential' and 'instrumental workers' against which they modelled their interviewees. Re-reading the Affluent Worker studies today one is struck by the way that this is a work of sociology which transcends the boundaries of class and work. Importantly employment was seen as perhaps the major influence on class formation. Many of the major sociological accounts of the 1960s and 1970s display this tendency of asking questions which span these interests (see for example Brown and Brannen 1970).

Another strand in post-war sociology of work can be seen in organisational sociology. With its roots in Weberian and later Parsonian understandings and questions, this

was a lively and important set of debates. Researchers here conceived of the firm as a social system, with the job of the social scientist being to understand both the *formal* and *informal* structures present and the way they function. This paradigm was further complicated by the role and influence of the ‘environment’ or social systems external to the firm. Systems thinking conceived of the enterprise as an organic whole with a multitude of distinct but interdependent parts. Brown (1992) wrote extensively about the various individuals and groups involved in this type of enterprise in the UK, most notably the Tavistock Institute of Human Relations beginning in the 1950s; the industrial sociologists working in the Department of Social Science at the University of Liverpool, which had its heyday in the 1950s and early 1960s; and the later Aston School, which spans the 1960s and early 1970s (see Beynon 2011; Brown 1992; Edwards 2013; Parker 2000).

At times there have been attempts to synthesise various theoretical and conceptual ideas around work. This can be seen in John Eldridge’s (1968) *Industrial Disputes*, which attempted to understand social meaning and interaction in an employment setting. To be sure work here is not incidental, but he is concerned with the detail of social forms observable in a particular setting. Thus shipyard demarcation disputes (arguments over which set of skilled workers should carry out particular tasks) is a vehicle for understanding how economic power structures are created, maintained, policed and transformed. Eldridge’s writing, like the best sociology, helps us not only understand the immediate focus of the study – an argument in a shipyard – but has far wider implications for understanding social interaction and the exercise and possession of power. Around the same time Alan Fox’s (1971) text *A Sociology of Work in Industry* made ample and creative use of sociological theory and research.

Later, with the expansion of universities in the UK, research took on a more independent and critical edge. Savage, writing about class and British sociology, wrote of the

‘remarkable wave of sociologically informed studies of work and employment that claimed to represent a bright new future for social scientific research’ (Savage 2000, 25). He suggested that the period 1955 to 1975 represented a ‘golden age of British occupational and industrial sociology’, with researchers fascinated by industrial modernisation and class cultures (Savage 2000, 25). On the other side of the Atlantic too we can see this elision of class and work in books such as Whyte’s (1956) *The Organization Man*, Riesman et al.’s (1954) *The Lonely Crowd: A Study of the Changing American Character* and C.W. Mills’ (1951) *White Collar*.

The sub-discipline expanded greatly during the 1960s alongside the wider expansion of sociology. Brown (1992, 8), citing a 1968 survey of British sociology between 1945 and 1966, showed that more than a fifth of all research projects during the period were in the field of industrial sociology and the sociology of work. This was a lively and vital area, with researchers tackling major issues of the day such as questions of affluence and work identity, youth transitions (Goodwin and O’Connor 2015) and occupational community (Dennis et al. 1956; Salaman 1974), as well as later studies into shop floor culture (Beynon 1984 [1973]; Nichols and Beynon 1977). It is important not to read into this diverse body of work a coherence that it does not, and did not, possess. There were major differences between the approaches taken by individual researchers; the point is that these were studies recognised outside the confines of a narrow sub-discipline. What also united them was a recognition of a more radical and critical agenda for the sociology of work. No longer were sociologists performing what Mills described as ‘Cow Sociology’, offering up the solutions for business. Both Weberian and Marxian traditions recognised conflict as central to industrial society. The question for sociologists was one of understanding how production was achieved rather than finding a solution to the problem of deviant workers acting irrationally (see Fox 1971; Hyman 1987).

THE CHALLENGES AND RESPONSE

As part of this more critical trajectory there was a resurgence of Marxist sociology in the field of employment, particularly around Braverman's (1974) *Labor and Monopoly Capitalism*, that later spawned the UK Labour Process conferences and multiple edited volumes.⁴ Braverman's book was a reconfiguration of Marx's ideas on the centrality of the labour process and the historical tendency towards the deskilling of labour. Unsurprisingly, Taylor was given a central place in this narrative as the intellectual handmaiden to monopoly capitalists. The critical edge that labour process theorists produced marked a distinctly oppositional stance when compared to some of the earlier traditions that we have seen. The logic of this position is anti-business in the sense that it views capitalism, capitalists and their managers as locked in a process which of necessity involves the degradation of work – the ability and space by which workers can exercise some form of control over what they do and how they do it. There has been a great deal of refinement and critique of Braverman's ideas down the years. Much of this has taken the form of empirical studies showing that deskilling is not necessarily the only concern of management (see Burawoy 1979; Edwards 1979; Friedmann 1977).

One of the features of the sociological discussion of work in the past was the regular reflection on the state of the discipline, especially during the 1980s, which witnessed both a broadening out and questioning as to what its focus should be. This critique was driven by a concern over not so much what counted as the sociology of work as what it did not reflect. In 1986 Salaman imagined what the sociology of work might look like if the discipline was starting afresh, arguing that the existing canon had the effect of 'limiting the issues which are regarded as constituting the proper subject matter of analysis' and that sociology of work stood 'too much in awe of existing debates, not able to see beyond the parameters of the current fashionable

approach, or problematic' (Salaman 1986, 13). Salaman's essential argument was that sociologists should focus on the *social relations* of work, or at least see these as fundamental to any *sociological* endeavour. Salaman's *Working* was an attack in particular on the narrowness of the labour process theorists inspired by Braverman which had resulted by the mid-1980s in a sociological imagination restricted by a limited set of questions and answers.

This criticism was echoed by others. Gallie (1988, xii) wrote of 'the need for a far more comprehensive definition of the field of enquiry'. This was necessitated by shifts in the economy as well as theoretical developments in the study of work:

In the past, under the label of industrial sociology, it was concerned primarily with the experiences of manual workers in manufacturing industry; indeed, typically, it was restricted to the study of male manual workers. (Gallie 1988, xii)

Gallie's notion of what constituted the neglected areas of the field included non-manual workers, service employment, women's labour and unemployment. This point was echoed by Pahl (1988) in the introduction to his *On Work* and was actualised in his classic *Divisions of Labour*, based on extensive fieldwork on the Isle of Sheppey in Kent (Pahl 1984).

While these writers were working and writing in a British setting there have been other interventions elsewhere in the world. Epstein (1990) attacked the paucity and narrowness of the US sociology of work, arguing that this was due to three related trends within the academy – the growth of survey research on work attitudes; the increased influence of Marxist theory (specifically the post-Bravermanian shift); and finally the rise of a new structuralism. The growth of survey research in this area had the effect of reducing findings to the level of individual psychology, and skewed research towards positing the kinds of questions amenable to survey questionnaires. Her second point, about the theoretical shift also concerned the ways in

which workplaces were studied. Here issues such as the impact of technology and alienation were addressed while limiting accounts of workplace behaviour. As she puts it:

Labor process theorists have emphasized the role of class power and economic exploitation – valid concerns, to be sure – but in ways that have often yielded wooden models of the wage-labor relation, divorced from the actual experience of work in people's everyday lives. Remarkably few of the major concerns that workers bring to their jobs – security, conviviality, tradition, and opportunity, to say nothing of pay – are given much room in the models of labor process theorists. (Epstein 1990, 89–90)

Finally, Epstein argued that most recently a new structuralism within the sociology of work has compounded the tendency to focus at the macro level of the firm or the economy. Here questions about variations in income inequality and labour market structures come to the fore while patterns of culture and the community at work are neglected (Epstein 1990, 90). This set of features had led to a neglect of workers' attitudes and cultural values, and the link between these and wider cultures. The result was a loss of the richness of earlier US research on occupational cultures and communities such as that of Roy (1958), Cottrell (1951), Hughes (1958), Gouldner (1955) and Chinoy (1955).

Feminist interventions drew attention to two particular problems within the extant sociology of work, namely the almost exclusive focus on paid work and the strong bias towards (white) male industrial work. Ann Oakley's (1984 [1974]) *The Sociology of Housework* effectively demanded that housework be considered 'work' – despite falling outside of the formal employment relationship – and that it played an important role both in (many) women's identities and in the life of the economy more broadly (a point embraced by Marxist feminists such as Kuhn and Wolpe (1978; see Gottfried 2006)). Feminists also came to critique the way that the sociology of work had privileged male industrial workers as the norm, excluding work done by women whether inside

or outside of the employment relationship. Glucksmann/Cavendish's *Women on the Line* (Glucksmann 2009 [1982]) has become a paradigmatic example of how gender is central to understanding work and vice versa (see also Pollert 1981; Westwood 1985). Glucksmann's study continued the tradition whereby studies of work make a broader contribution to the development of sociological thinking, not least in its attention to intersections of class, gender and race. Indeed, this was one of the first studies to redress not only the gendered foundations of industrial sociology but the racialised norm which underpinned post-war sociologies of work excluding and/or othering ethnic minorities (Virdee 2014).

CHANGING DYNAMICS OF WORK

It is important to contextualise changing academic interests and fashions historically. The upswing in more radical accounts of work, most notably Marxian ones, fed off increasing tensions in industrial relations in the western economies, a function of increasing inflation and eroding standards of living. The early 1970s marked the end of what has become known as the long post-war boom, an unprecedented era of rise in living conditions for working people across all industrial nations (see Cowie 2010; Piketty 2014). During the 1970s unemployment started to rise to levels not seen since before World War II. Connected to both these features of the economy was the advent of what was being labelled de-industrialisation (Bluestone and Harrison 1982). All of these features would have, and continue to have, a profound effect on the ways sociologists study work (see Strangleman and Rhodes 2014). One way to conceive of the events of this era is to think of them individually and collectively undermining an unproblematic attention and focus on the blue collar working-class male industrial worker, who had been the core subject of interest within work sociology, or

more usually *industrial* sociology. Indeed the label *work* sociology becomes more popular during the 1980s, reflecting a broader set of interests and foci.

One of the problems with this trend was that neither 'industrial' nor 'work' sociologists were particularly well equipped to think about the *absence* of work and what that meant. If you consider textbooks in the sub-discipline until quite recently they often fail to devote much space to unemployment.⁵ Both the issues of unemployment and de-industrialisation fall between the stools of work and social policy, although there is no necessity for this. An excellent example where such a consideration was made was in the work of Pahl, and in particular his classic *Divisions of Labour*, which was important for the link made between work *and* unemployment – the workplace, nature of work and the domestic division of labour. Its focus on the public and private spheres of work was also matched by its pioneering attention to the question of de-industrialisation.

With the shift away from Fordist work, new objects of interest began to emerge and one of these was a focus on flexibility and the flexible firm. The idea that an era of flexibility was a paradigm shift was hotly contested by researchers. The basic idea was that in a response to the breaking down of the Fordist/welfare state which had been a feature of the long boom, firms and whole sectors sought to reinvent the way they managed labour. Flexibility could be thought of as operating at the level of the firm, in a local or regional labour market or, with the rise of the issue of globalisation, at the level of the world economy, and had a number of dimensions. These included functional flexibility of staff, numerical flexibility in terms of the numbers and how they were employed; and temporal flexibility, eroded notions of fixed periods of work – day/week/month, etc. The need for flexibility was predicated on increased competition, especially from the Far East, as well as a demand for more differentiated products – goods and services. Rather than long runs on similar products, what was now

supposedly needed were flexible, fast changing lines which would quickly adapt to the market (see Amin 1994; Harvey 1989).

Sociologists challenged these claims in a number of ways, in terms of both theoretical interventions and empirical studies into the so-called new workplaces. Often this research would focus on traditional workplaces which had formed the bedrock of older studies such as chemical plants or especially car plants (Garrahan and Stewart 1992; Graham 1995; Nichols and Beynon 1977). In her detailed ethnography of a US automobile plant owned by a Japanese firm Graham recounted the experience of recruitment and production techniques in a supposedly 'new workplace'. Her study revealed far more by way of continuities than change, with speed-up and job intensification rather than job enrichment, a feature of the labour encountered. Another shift in studying the effects of globalisation was to seek to understand its impact on different work situations, and compare and contrast these. Burawoy (2000) and his colleagues did this to great effect in their *Global Ethnography*, which reports on a wide variety of settings rendered part of the global economy and increasingly subject to neo-liberalism. *Global Ethnography* has important parallels with Bourdieu et al.'s (1999) *Weight of the World*, where the team elicit powerful accounts of workers' struggles to survive in contemporary workplaces. There is an interesting, reflective quality to many of the discussions here, especially where there is intergenerational dialogue over work and the labour movement.

While the first wave of interest in the issue of flexibility petered out during the late 1980s (Pollert 1988), many of the issues it raised have resurfaced with the passage of time. At the heart of many of these debates about the contemporary nature of work is the issue of globalisation and its implications for work. This presents a challenge for individual scholars and even relatively large teams. In short, how do we do justice to global shifts and developments from within the boundaries of the nation state when working ourselves

with limited resources? One danger in this 'new' situation is that empirical investigation becomes vulnerable to sweeping generalisations about employment. In the mid-1990s there began a notable upswing in tracts on work where it was claimed we were in the midst of a great transformation in employment, leading some to suggest that we were actually witnessing the 'end of work' (Rifkin 1995). Rifkin argued that work was under attack on two fronts – the greater use of technology abolishing jobs and also global pressures which meant nation states could do little to protect their own workers. While Rifkin was a journalist, many sociologists and social theorists seemed to give weight to his apocalyptic account, such as Beck (2000), Gorz (1999) and Bauman (1998) (see Strangleman 2007). Each of these theorists in different ways speaks of the erosion of work as a problem not simply in monetary terms, but more interestingly because it erodes social links between individuals, families and wider communal groups. Therefore, what occurs in and to work has profound implications for what happens more generally in society.

While many of the 'end of work' commentators use economic life as a space to talk about wider social change Richard Sennett could be seen to focus more on work itself. Most of his books over the last decade and a half or so have considered what he calls the 'New Capitalism', essentially an accelerated version of the old. Beginning with *Corrosion of Character* in 1998, Sennett argues that contemporary work has been systematically stripped of its capacity to create rounded human beings. However problematic the old capitalism was, it allowed space for people to grow across a life cycle, to mature and develop character. In *Corrosion of Character* he argues that contemporary economic life positively discourages workers from putting down roots in an organisation, that what is prized is a varied career trajectory across a number of companies, rather than being stuck in one. The result is that individual workers become highly focused on their own career, spend little time building links at work and

outside their companies in their communities. Sennett later developed this thesis, most notably in *The Craftsman* (2008).

An even more pessimistic account of contemporary work can be found in Standing's (2011) *Precariat*, where he suggests that contemporary capitalism creates a growing body of workers who enjoy a fugitive relationship to the labour market. This 'Precariat' includes the unskilled, those without qualifications, the young and the old. What they have in common is an inability to access 'good' work or more skilled employment. While controversial, Standing's ideas have sparked important discussions about the nature of employment policy and links between work and the wider social structures. Like Sennett, Standing is effectively talking about the fragmentation of economic life into discrete parts of individual labour. This prospect has the danger of undermining many of the unacknowledged social aspects of work – informal training and socialisation – and, therefore, threatens a sustainable working life. Recently Weil (2014) has talked about the 'fissuring of work', the various ways in which work has become fragmented and disjointed, and the profoundly damaging problems this process entails for work and wider society (see also Crawford 2009; Lane 2011).

One of the features of much of the sociological writing on employment over the last decade or so is its focus on questions of identity and meaning. In many ways sociology of work was late to this theme, as there was a marked resistance to the so-called cultural turn of the 1980s often associated with post-modern social thought (see Chaney 1994). One of the key drivers of this late attention has been the collapse of traditional industries and the rise of new forms of work. Questions of identity were in many ways unexplored when work itself seemed more stable and predictable. When economic life is fundamentally altered, or lost altogether, then people, often men, who did that work are forced to confront what are often uncomfortable questions about themselves, their

relations with others and the role and meaning of work in their lives.

It is noteworthy that much of the writing about de-industrialisation has been done by non-sociologists – historians, geographers and anthropologists – and in many cases these offer richly sociological accounts of the former work performed and its role in individual and community construction (see Cowie and Heathcott 2003; High 2003; Walley 2013). However, there are also many sociologists working in this field, offering up a wide range of insights and analysis. Ruth Milkman's (1997) *Farewell to the Factory* is a study of autoworkers made redundant after downsizing and their life after leaving the plant. Through her interviews Milkman unpacks the mixed feelings laid-off workers have regarding their former employment. In many cases the loss of a highly routinised if well-paid job offered new possibilities and second chances for people to explore different areas of employment. This positive view is probably a minority one as other studies uncover the physical and mental damage job loss involves, with its associated challenge to forms of masculinity and femininity as well as the intergenerational issues it raises. One of the best examples here can be found in Walkerdine and Jimenez (2012) which recounts the long-term consequences of job loss and plant closure in the steel industry in South Wales. The authors argue that the impact of job loss is felt not simply by those made redundant in the first place but also the subsequent generations. They offer an example where sons of former steel workers are effectively hounded out of new types of work in the service sector because it is deemed by the community as 'women's work' rather than that of 'real' men. Developing a psychosocial account of economic life, Walkerdine and Jimenez argue that de-industrialised communities are in a kind of mourning for past economic activity and the type of community it once created and supported, and that there has been a collective failure to come to terms with that loss and trauma. More recently still, Mah (2012) has talked about 'industrial

ruination', a phrase which captures the continuing process of decline. In many cases then the study of de-industrialisation reveals important assumptions, identities and meanings about work itself.

STUDYING THE 'NEW' WORKPLACE

This shift towards a focus on identity, meaning, affect and subjective understandings of work can be seen in many sociological studies of work. One of the ground-breaking moves here was Hochschild's (1983) *The Managed Heart*, which focused on what the author called emotional labour. With the decline of manufacturing employment Hochschild argued that service work would take on a new prominence and this presented new challenges for those studying it. What was original about her work was its theorisation of customer-facing workers in the service sector and how they had to manage their own emotions and those of the people they served. This type of emotional labour was something that management also increasingly sought to script and control in the interests, as they saw it, of guaranteeing consistent experiences of service.

Hochschild's ideas have stimulated a great deal of further research into the service sector as well as opening up other avenues of ideas regarding different types of work and a wider attempt to understand the complex ways in which people engage with economic life. This is a disparate set of literature and, again, not always carried out by those who would recognise themselves formally as sociologists of work. So, for example, Michele Lamont (2000) carried out a comparative study into ethnic differences in the masculinity of workers, revealing shared norms and values around pride and identification with work. Randy Hodson (2001) addresses the issue of dignity at work and issue around respect and disrespect. Each in their different ways tries to grasp the complexity of meanings, identities and values around work.

DOING WORK (SOCIOLOGY?)

One of the major issues confronting the sociology of work over the last decade or more has been over where and by whom it is practised. In particular this period has seen the rise of business and management schools which have enjoyed significant expansion on the back of lucrative MBA programmes as well as undergraduate demand for what is seen as a more vocational education. The result in part is that much of the work on work is increasingly conducted outside sociology, and is therefore not central to mainstream sociology. This may be partly a matter of 'choice' or intellectual fashion on the part of those within sociology departments. But as sociologists we should put this into a wider intellectual and political context. In 1981 Deem expressed concern that the tendency for work researchers to relocate away from Sociology Departments to Business and Management Schools might have profound effects on the sociology of work:

The objectives of those teaching sociology are bound to have been affected by the historical specificities of the particular periods in which they found themselves teaching. (Deem 1981, 240)

It is important to see sociology itself as a historically located product (see Watson 2009), whereby there is not an abstract thing, 'the sociology of work', but rather a contextually produced body of knowledge. Deem (and others) were concerned that this might align the sociology work (as done in business schools) with business interests. In retrospect, whilst we might see the growth of HRM and mainstream management in this way, we can see the rise of Labour Process Theory as the flip side of the coin: a radical alternative interpretation of the 1970s' crisis of capitalism. Similarly we might see the later emergence of Critical Management Studies as a response to the expansion of managerialism and the increasing currency of management training in business schools. But, in either case the question that needs to be asked is what knowledge is produced

under these circumstances and what type of sociologists of work are produced in such circumstances? As Ackroyd et al. (2005, 2) say '[i]f texts are products of times, they are not simply mirrors of them'. In the context of business schools, what comes to stand for the sociology of work is a mixture of Human Resource Management, Labour Process Theory and Critical Management Studies. However, while Ackroyd et al. (2005) point out that many sociologists in business schools are producing work of relevance to the sociology of work, they are concerned that this may be 'a generational and institutional peculiarity' (Ackroyd et al. 2005, 7). The danger here is that the sociological imagination where it exists in business schools is almost bound to be diluted through generational shifts and organisational structural development, and recognition and reward strategies – the Research Assessment Exercise (RAE)/Research Excellence Framework (REF) will tend to reward work going on within the area of management, rather than sociology. If we look to the business schools to produce the next generations of sociologists of work then we are unlikely to get a set of people interested in, and with a commitment to, a wider sociology. What then for the sociology of work?

Who then is left to teach the sociology of work in sociology departments? Without doubt there has been an erosion of work as a topic of study. Ackroyd et al. (2005) lament the 'dramatic and deleterious effect' of the cultural turn within sociology and suggest that:

Few university departments have any expertise in the area, the bookshelves are full of studies of culture and consumption rather than production and work, and the British Sociological Association has not had work and employment as a theme for its annual conference since 1984. (Ackroyd et al. 2005, 7)

While this view of the field is a caricature, it does call our attention to a decentering of the focus on economic life within the discipline, and also perhaps reflects the fact that those

working within the sub-discipline speak less to the mainstream of sociology. Ackroyd and his colleagues' point may say more about a gulf opening up between sociologists of work in sociology departments and those working in business school environments where the one is largely disengaged from the other. There is also a danger that those working in the field have less to say to sociologists in general.

The combined effect of this is a decline in sociology of work courses in British sociology departments, coupled with, as Watson (2009) diagnoses, the dominance of Organisational Behaviour and HRM in Business Schools and the near absence of organisational sociology from sociology departments. As Parker notes:

... just as sociologists forget about organizations, so do those in management departments define them increasingly narrowly. (Parker 2000, 141)

To be more positive about the future for a moment I think it is possible to see shifts and changes within the sub-discipline. There is a resurgence of interest in economic life among younger sociologists who are looking at new areas of work or traditional occupations using novel approaches. It would be wrong to suggest that work sociology is dead, it may be that it is simply being practised by a group unrecognised by some of the more senior figures in business schools. It is also true to say that many people working in business schools consider themselves as sociologists and will contribute to the field more fully in the future.

A NEW SOCIOLOGY OF WORK?

In 2005 an edited collection was published with the bold title of *A New Sociology of Work?* (Pettinger et al. 2006). The volume was a set of papers which were notable precisely because they did not feature many of the standard issues of focus on the usual workplaces or types of workers that industrial/work sociology traditionally had. Instead, attention was paid to the border

between paid and unpaid work, between the formal and informal sectors. The introductory conceptualising section made much of the argument that interesting writing and research was going on around the rim of the sub-discipline rather than being central to it. Miriam Glucksmann, one of the editors of the volume, contributed a chapter which built on her previous writing on the Total Social Organisation of Labour (TSOL). Essentially this is a theoretical and empirical stance which argues that in order to fully understand 'a' form of work we need to understand the way it is embedded in a whole series of economic, political and of course social patterns and networks. TSOL suggests a need to focus on flows and connections to fully comprehend how goods and services are conceived of, produced, consumed and disposed.

This type of analysis presents quite radical challenges for the sociology of work, quite apart from the practical issues involved. However, this challenge is a positive one in that it recognises the breadth of what needs to be studied in any sociological attempt to understand work. To stand back for a moment and think about the implications for the study of work in the business school, we need to recognise that, quite understandably, the main focus of research undertaken in such arenas will be on paid work in formal employment settings and institutions. Even if scholars were to take seriously the implications of TSOL it is unlikely that they would feel it necessary to push this theory to its logical conclusion.

But what else can we think of as new within the sociology of work? Here there are a number of issues which need to feature in the future shape of the field. First is the need for greater inter- and multidisciplinary dialogue and exchange. It is clear that no one discipline can hope to enjoy a monopoly over such a diverse subject as work. However, there is a real need to create bridges between a number of allied disciplines. The most notable ones are anthropology, history and geography, although this is by no means an exhaustive list. For many years now anthropologists

have turned their attention to what sociologists would consider their core competency. Dudley (1994) in her book on the automotive industry describes herself as an ‘industrial anthropologist’. More recently, Karen Ho’s (2009) book, *Liquidated: An Ethnography of Wall Street*, examines questions of class, education and gender in an elite workspace while Carrie Lane (2011), also an anthropologist, looks at precarity among software engineers in the USA. In geography there has been an important upswing in interest in labour geography over the last dozen years or so, while in history work has regularly been the focus of attention (Herod et al. 2007; Ward 2007).

There are a number of innovative areas in and around the study of work which demand interdisciplinary dialogue. These would include visual methods and approaches to work as well as the body and work. Visual approaches to the study of work represent an exciting development both for contemporary understandings of economic life as well as historical understanding made possible through archival study and restudy (see Strangleman 2013).⁶ Likewise, work sociology has been enriched theoretically and empirically by the new focus on the body and the various ways in which it is implicated in work – work on the body and the embodied experience of work (see Wolkowitz 2006).

CONCLUSION

I began this chapter by examining the classical roots of the sociology of work and stressed that at its core the sub-discipline always attempts to understand work within and through the social. We are always interested in the form and nature of social relations in and around work. We want to know about the nature of the social structures that enable and constrain work practices and cultures in their different forms. Sociologists have always sought to understand the nature of work in modernity and how this differs from traditional societies. Sociology of

work, at its best looks at work at the micro *and* macro level. It recognises the importance of what goes on at the shop floor level in micro interactions, while simultaneously contextualising this detail within wider social structures and divisions. Often times sociologists draw on comparative approaches, but I think they should always seek to embed their knowledge in historical contexts. This historical perspective is important if we are to distinguish between claims of complete and total change in the nature of work on the one hand and those who stress continuity and stasis on the other. Vital also is the need to combine theoretical understandings of work with empirical observation or other accounts of work as it is practised. While it is more necessary than ever to seek interdisciplinary linkages in our work we also have to ensure that we do so from a secure disciplinary base. In other words, the sociological understanding of work and the questions it raises still matter enormously.

NOTES

- 1 <http://www.thehenryford.org/research/english-school.aspx>
- 2 See Martin Parker’s (2000) excellent essay tracing organisational sociology in the US and UK for the influence of the Chicago School on work focus sociology.
- 3 One could trace this tradition back to Charles Booth’s poverty survey of the 1880s and 1890s (see Topalov 1993).
- 4 For a fuller account of this vein of writing see other chapters in the volume.
- 5 In their 1959 *New Foundations for Industrial Sociology* Vincent and Mayers do mention unemployment a number of times in different contexts but the topic does not merit a chapter in its own right – Mass Leisure and Abundance, however, does. Similarly, some two decades later in another US textbook, Miller and Form (1980) reference unemployment but the topic does not feature as a standalone topic.
- 6 This is not to say that sociologists of work have not used visual approaches in the past, see for example Hedges and Beynon’s (1982) *Born to Work*. It is interesting that this ground-breaking work is so rarely cited, nor has it been followed up by more work of this type (see Strangleman 2013).

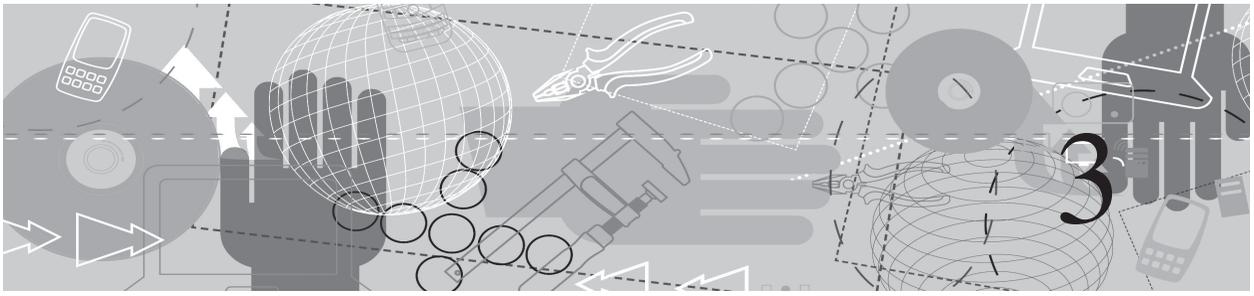
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Work and Social Theory

Tracey Warren

INTRODUCTION

In over two centuries of sociological thinking, theorists have differed markedly in their approaches to, and their understandings of the role that work plays in society and in people's everyday lives. As John Budd (2011) discusses, the role of work has been understood in remarkably different ways. Work is seen by some writers as a curse, by others as freedom. It has been viewed alternately as a commodity and as a route to citizenship; as a disutility and as the basis of both personal fulfilment and identity formation. Work can be understood as a social relation, as caring for others, and a service. Even more fundamentally still, 'work' is understood in considerably different ways by social theorists. 'Work' for sociology often refers to labour market outcomes; social behaviour in the workplace; and practices and arrangements that occur inside organisations (Korczynski et al. 2006). In Lynne Pettinger et al.'s (2006) reflections on the meaning of the concept of

work, they argue instead that sociology must explore the interconnectedness between work in all its different spheres: the public and private, paid and unpaid, divisions of labour within and across these domains; as well as legal and illegal markets. The meaning of 'work' has changed over time and varies across space and place, while the organisation and experience of work is not fixed, determined, unchanging or uniform.

Given the complexity in our topic under study, it should not come as a surprise that there is no single uniform social theory of work and employment that we can summarise neatly in this chapter. There are instead major theories that can be seen to be competing, collaborating and reinforcing, as Peter Cappelli (2007) states. The theories of work and employment that we draw upon include a long-established, though highly debated, classical canon that is associated with the birth of sociology, as well as major theories that developed throughout the twentieth century, stimulated by radical change, alongside

continuities, in worlds of work. Different theories have waxed and waned in the influence that they exert on the sociology of work and employment. At certain time periods some theories have dominated our sub-discipline, losing their popularity over time, perhaps regaining it later.

THE FOUNDING THEORISTS

The discipline of sociology emerged in response to a rapidly changing world, as theorists reacted to and tried to understand major developments in Europe in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. This period of so-called modernity was launched by ‘great transformations’, according to Karl Polanyi (2001 [1944]), namely the multiple interlinked developments of industrialisation, mechanisation, a more specialised division of labour, proletarianisation and urbanisation. A key site for these changes was the world of work. The three theorists who were living at this time of transformation and who have most informed the sociological analysis of work are Karl Marx, Emile Durkheim and Max Weber. These so-called founding fathers were united in a fascination with the causes of radical societal changes and the ramifications of these changes both for the structure of society and for the everyday lives of ordinary people. None of these men were ‘sociologists of work and employment’ as such. Instead, all offered much larger academic projects that contribute to the sociology of work. Marx, Durkheim and Weber differed in just how much of their writing was explicitly concerned with work and employment; nevertheless, paid work was crucial to the theories of all three (Offe 1985). Lastly, the three founders held contrasting views as to whether the changes they were studying signalled societal progress or a step backwards. In the next section, we summarise the main contributions that these three theorists have made to social theorising around work and employment. We pinpoint three main ideas from

each, and their later influence on the discipline.

KARL MARX (GERMANY, 1818–1883)

The Centrality of Work

For Marx, work is fundamental to our humanity: it sets humans apart from other animals. His belief in the centrality of work forms the bedrock of his contributions to social theorising around work and employment. Though labour was central to humanity for Marx, his specific focus (in Volume 1 of *Capital*) was on ‘labour power’. Under the new capitalist mode of production, workers and capitalists entered into an employment contract. In this contract, for a wage, workers do not exchange their labour, as such, but their labour power or their ability to work. According to Bob Jessop (2008), the ‘commodification of labour power’ was the distinguishing feature of capitalism for Marx.

The Labour Process

Because the profit motive was pivotal, Marx argued, the bourgeoisie sought out strategies to increase the productivity of their employees and so increase profits. Workplaces were thus managed more and more carefully in order to make efficiency gains and to monitor the work closely. Via the specialisation and simplification of tasks, work could be carried out more rapidly, learning times were reduced, and a less skilled and more readily replaceable workforce could be developed.

Marx’s analysis of changes to the ‘labour process’ under capitalism came to dominate the sociology of work in the 1970s. Fundamental to the intense interest in labour process theory (LPT) was Harry Braverman’s (1974) *Labor and Monopoly Capital*, with its central features being, as Thompson and Smith (2009: 915) put it, the dynamics of control, consent and resistance at the point

of production. LPT ‘virtually redefined’ the British industrial sociology that dominated in the 1970s (Gallie 2011; Ingham 1996: 562). A range of criticisms have been levelled at it (Attewell 1987; Burawoy 1979; Edgell 2012; Friedman 1977; Littler and Salaman 1982) but LPT remains very influential, now extended beyond studies of production work, as Chapter 12 shows.

Alienation

Marx’s reflections on the labour process under capitalism led him to develop one of the most influential concepts in the sociology of work and employment: alienation. Since it was creative and purposeful work that made workers fully human, the degrading conditions of work that Marx was witnessing were dehumanising the workers.

Alienation reappears later in the work of many sociologists, but perhaps most innovatively in theories of emotional labour. Arlie Russell Hochschild’s (1983) *The Managed Heart: Commercialization of Human Feeling* identified a number of forms of emotional labour occurring in the workplace. She and many others since (see for example Bolton, 2005) have shown that emotional labour is a formal requirement in many jobs, particularly in the service sector, and that there has been an expansion in managerial attempts to prescribe, supervise and measure its performance. Hochschild was interested in the ways in which service workers, from air flight attendants to debt collectors, had to manage their own emotions and those of their customers or clients. For Hochschild, having to perform emotional labour is exhausting and, because their feelings are being commodified, workers experienced heightened levels of alienation. Emotional labour theorists have gone on to query the extent to which workers are powerless and necessarily degraded in their performance of emotional labour, as Hochschild proposed. For example Sharon Bolton (2005) and Marek Korczynski (2003) have argued that workers can find

their emotional labour enjoyable, meaningful and fulfilling.

Hochschild also drew on the work of symbolic interactionist Irving Goffman here. In his *Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (1969 [1959]), Goffman developed a ‘dramaturgical’ analysis of everyday social interactions that used an analogy of actors in a theatre: who sometimes work front- and other times back-stage. Goffman considered the way that individuals in ‘ordinary work situations’ perform and present themselves to others, and how the worker ‘guides and controls the impression’ others form of her/him (1969 [1959]: Preface). Hochschild was influenced, in particular, by Goffman’s discussion of acting and of the diversity in workers’ beliefs in their own performances. He had pinpointed two extremes: being cynical about the performance and being ‘taken in’ by one’s own act (Goffman 1969 [1959]: 11). So Hochschild asked similarly whether workers were engaged in ‘surface’ or ‘deep’ acting when they performed their emotional labour.

EMILE DURKHEIM (FRANCE, 1858–1917)

The Division of Labour

Durkheim was motivated by an interest in the transition of society. Work was key to his wider analysis of societal change and the ramifications of this change for social cohesion and social order. In ‘The Division of Labour in Society’ (1893), Durkheim argued that the societal division of labour is fundamental to social order. The division of labour was simple in traditional societies, marked by similarity in the labour that people were engaged in. As societies become increasingly complex, a more specialised division of labour is required. According to Durkheim, this diversity in specialised roles necessitates a new form of social order, and so ‘mechanical solidarity’ based on similarity is replaced

by ‘organic solidarity’ based on heterogeneity coupled with interdependence.

Anomie

Durkheim was aware that the society he was living in was far from harmonious and collaborative and he discussed more problematic forms of the division of labour. The anomic division of labour (from the Greek *anomia*, when standards of conduct are weak in a society) can occur because of too rapid social change: there are no taken-for-granted rules and workers’ activity is unregulated. Durkheim argued that this anomie could be ‘cured’ (Lukes 1973) by improving socialisation and regulating society more clearly, including support provided by democratically formed occupational or professional groups (Ritzer 1992).

Durkheim’s theoretical work was influential in the 1960s (Eldridge 1971; Johnson 1972; see McDonald 1995) but there are fewer contemporary work sociologists who draw directly on his work than they do on Marx. Durkheim’s writing was a direct influence on Goffman, in particular regarding the importance of rituals for maintaining order in everyday life. As we saw, Goffman examined everyday face-to-face interactions between people, asserting that they both reflect the moral order of a society and create and maintain it. In his 1952 analysis of ‘adapting to failure’, Goffman considers how an individual copes with perceived failure, including in the workplace. These ideas, and his dramaturgical analysis, influenced Hochschild’s theory of emotional labour, discussed earlier.

Positivism

Sociology is the scientific study of society, according to Durkheim. Influenced by the positivism espoused by August Comte, Durkheim (1982 [1895]) was a strong advocate of adapting the dominant methodological approaches of the natural sciences for the sociological study of society. He argued that

society was a ‘thing’ to be studied; ‘social facts’ could be identified and analysed; and societal laws developed. Durkheim’s (2002 [1897]) ‘secondary’ analysis of existing data on suicide is a well-known example of this methodological approach.

A large number of statistics and data-sets are routinely drawn upon and analysed critically by work sociologists. These range from the statistics on work and employment that are released regularly by governments (including the Office for National Statistics in the UK and the Bureau for Labour Statistics in the USA) as well as data provided by such international organisations as the International Labour Organization and the OECD. As is clear throughout this handbook, many innovative sociological studies of work and employment have drawn upon data that were collected via large-scale social surveys. In the UK, numerous data-sets are available for secondary analysis, housed at the ‘UK Data Archive’. Similar archives exist in many countries; for example the ‘Consortium of European Social Science Data Archives’ holds data from 13 countries across Europe.

MAX WEBER (GERMANY, 1864–1920)

Religion and the Economy

In his 1904 *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* Weber compared belief systems across the world. He concluded that Protestantism was core to the emergence of capitalism in the West. Weber did not argue that religious beliefs caused capitalism, rather he proposed that there was an ‘elective affinity’ between the tenets of ascetic Protestantism and the conditions needed for the development of a capitalist system. What was particularly decisive was the ‘Protestant work ethic’: the belief that a religious life should be guided by a strong ethos of hard work, self-control and self-denial.

Weber’s analysis of the importance of work in signalling that a person was leading

a 'good life' has shaped a whole sociology of work that is dedicated to exploring why we undertake paid work and what we gain from our jobs. An important debate has been whether workers enter employment purely for the money (gaining 'extrinsic' rewards only) or whether 'intrinsic' rewards are also important, such as the satisfaction gained from doing a job well and developing skills. Moreover, work, for sociology, can be more than what we 'do'. It can also be about who we 'are' or who we aspire to be in our lives. We will return to the topic of work identity. If a society has a strong work ethic then there can be serious consequences for those who do not 'work'. Sociologists remain very interested in the personal (and wider) ramifications of living in a society with a strong work ethic for those who do not have a job (see Chapter 25).

Rationality

According to Weber (1922), capitalism was a system in which rational conduct prevailed: a rational pursuit of profit via the calculation of the most effective means to meet a specified end (Beetham 1985). Weber argued that as societies developed, people's actions became less shaped by religion and more rationalised. He considered that bureaucracies were the most rational form of organisational working, offering the best potential for the most efficient and fair workplaces. At the same time, he feared that a bureaucracy could deprive work of its meaning. Creativity could be stifled within an 'iron cage' with a 'casing as hard as steel'. As he put it, workers could become 'specialists without spirit'. How might these problems be counteracted? Weber's solutions lay in the role of independent and charismatic leaders who would provide the spirit, within a pluralist democratic system.

Drawing directly on Weber's theory of rationalisation, George Ritzer's (1998) *McDonaldization* thesis includes a well-known analysis of how the fast-food chain

applies the 1880s ideas of F.W. Taylor (Taylorism) to food production. Taylor's methods involved the meticulous planning and precise calculations of all the steps that are necessary in the process to make, for example, a car or, for Ritzer, a cheeseburger and fries. Ritzer argued that the steps have been planned rationally: they are logical, output is measured carefully, and productivity and profit are monitored closely. He identified the key dimensions of the process as: efficiency; calculability; predictably; control; and the replacement of humans with technology. Like Weber, Ritzer also critiqued the dehumanising workplace, identifying such negative consequences as deskilled 'Mc-workers' and customers whose interactions with the workers are fleeting.

Social Closure

Weber added the concepts of 'status' and 'party' to Marx's class. He thought that stratification was too complex, multidimensional and cross-cutting for a purely material class-based explanation. Status (social esteem, prestige and honour) and 'party' (groups that come together to acquire power and advance their cause) also shape life chances. In his concept of 'social closure', Weber analysed the mechanisms that are developed by such groups to restrict access to resources and opportunities to their members (Parkin 1982). 'Exclusionary closure' occurs when a 'positively privileged' group is able to create a group who are classed as outsiders/ineligible. These 'negatively privileged' groups are not totally powerless, however. They can engage in collective attempts to win a greater share of resources via a process of 'usurpation' in response to their exclusion. This theory of social closure was to shape a central question in the sociology of the professions: how do certain white-collar occupations, but not others, achieve professional status? Central to 'professionalisation' is exerting control over entry to the profession (including limiting the number of entrants,

commonly by the use of credentials (Parkin 1982)). These debates on closure were largely class-based, but in 1992 Anne Witz explored gender and professionalisation. Focusing on the medical profession, she discussed the ‘demarcationary closure’ within the broad medical field that works to differentiate the gendered occupations of doctors from nurses, paramedics and so on. Witz also considers the practices of ‘usurpation’ that have been employed by the excluded groups: their battles for recognition and inclusion, and the alternative strategies that have been taken up when their inclusion is resisted successfully by the dominant group.

Though he was certainly not a Weberian, we can see that Pierre Bourdieu’s (1984) ideas on class reflect some of the above, and certainly the rejection of a purely economic class analysis. Bourdieu’s addition of cultural, social and symbolic capitals to economic capital, and his attention to status, legitimacy, honour and disrespect, has been inspirational within the study of class structures, cultures and processes of reproduction. Bourdieu’s influence on the study of work and employment has been less dramatic, as Gail Hebson (2009) discusses, but her work and research by Will Atkinson (2010, 2013) both draw closely on Bourdieu to assert strong class dynamics in working lives, materially and emotionally.

A CRITIQUE OF THE CLASSICAL CANON I: GENDER AND WORK

These three founders of sociology have had a profound impact on our discipline and many of their ideas still shape how it understands work and employment. Yet their writings have been debated heavily over time, and have fallen in and out of favour. Perhaps the most sustained, dominant critique of the classical canon regards its male-domination – in the neglect of gender in the founders’ theories and their sexism when they did discuss women (Kandal 1988; Marshall and Witz

2004; Schwendinger and Schwendinger 1971; Sydie 1987). Women were writing on issues pertinent to social theory and work before and in the same time period as Marx, Weber and Durkheim, but their voices have been remarkably absent from much sociological teaching (Thomas and Kukulian 2004). This chapter can only cite a few examples, pointing here to key women’s writings specifically around work and employment.

- Harriet Martineau (England, 1802–1876) has been described as one of the first founding mothers of sociology (Hoecker-Drysdale 1992). She wrote about slavery, capital and labour. She explored the degradation of women in society, and wrote about the work conditions of female employees, particularly working-class women. She noted the extremely different life worlds of domestic servants and their employers.
- Charlotte Perkins Gilman (USA, 1860–1935) wrote about gender and work, amongst other topics, in her critique of the ‘androcentric society’. Gilman argued that women’s confinement to the home and the amount of time they were expected to spend on domestic work and caring restricted their opportunities for developments beyond the private sphere (Lengermann and Niebrugge 1998). She supported removing tasks such as caring for children and cooking from the daily duties of every woman, and advocated instead their performance outside the home by specialist workers. Lengermann and Niebrugge (2001) note how Gilman employed an analysis of women’s production of food within the home, including its unpaid nature and the social isolation of the work, to reflect on power imbalances in society.
- Marianne Schnitger Weber (Germany, 1870–1954) researched women’s positions in society, including their work within the home and diversity amongst women in their working lives. Rather than argue that women should enter into paid employment, as Gilman did, Weber pointed to the harsh conditions experienced by the working class under capitalism, and to the double burden of work facing female employees.
- Olive Schreiner (South Africa, 1855–1920) was a sociologist who studied inequalities of sex and labour, as well as ‘race’. Her collection of writings on women and labour, for example (Stanley and Dampier 2012), analyse women’s work as

servants and domestic workers; the sexualisation of black women's labour; and the impact that a heavy burden of domestic work has on women's capacity for intellectual thought.

The study of gender inequalities was an absence in an early sociology that was class-dominated. Class was so powerful that the early theorists who did explore gender inequalities often used a class framework to do so, just adding women in and stirring, as Sandra Harding (1991) put it. What was needed instead, according to writers like Dorothy Smith, was a transformation of sociological thinking. Smith (1988) argued that sociology can and should be done differently. She made the case for our discipline to fundamentally 'see the everyday as problematic'. In this way, sociology would also emerge from the analysis of women's everyday lives.

There is no one theory that we can apply neatly to understanding gender, work and employment. There are theories that have been labelled 'feminist' that look directly at gender inequalities, but not all sociologists who explore gender inequalities would self-define as feminists. Further, there is no one single 'feminist theory' (Gottfried 2006). Rather than attempt to provide an oversimplified version of 'this is what x versus y feminist theory tells us about work', this section instead pinpoints three important ideas from feminist social theory, broadly defined, that have impacted the way that we understand work and employment: debates over continuity and change in gender inequalities; intersectionality; and domestic work.

Gender Inequalities: Continuity and Change

Feminist theorists argued that sex (female/male) derives from biology but gender (feminine/masculine) is socially constructed and, as such, it can vary and change (Butler 2006 [1990]; Delphy 1993; Oakley 1972). Gender is performed and done. It is not something that we 'are'. These ideas were boosted by

Candace West and Don Zimmerman's (1987) influential 'doing gender' thesis. They drew closely upon ethnomethodology, a theory that analyses how people make sense of their lives in everyday micro interactions. The importance of 'doing gender' for the sociology of work and employment is that it stresses that work is a main site in which people are gendered everyday: gender is 'enforced, performed and recreated' in the work tasks we do, as Weeks argued (2011: 9; see also Harding 2013). 'Doing gender' is highly influential, but ideas around 'undoing gender' (Butler 2004) contribute more clearly to the sociological interest in identifying the conditions for potential change in the gendering of work (Deutsch 2007; Risman 2009). The 'undoing gender' perspective features, for example, in Oriell Sullivan's (2004) call for a theoretical framework to address what the conditions might be for the accomplishment of change in the gendering of unpaid domestic work.

Ideas of gender, change and continuity also feature in more macro analyses of gender inequalities in work. In 1984, Sylvia Walby drew on theories of patriarchy to develop a model that could be applied to understand societal gender inequalities, including in work and employment. She was influenced by Heidi Hartmann (1979) who argued that patriarchy, a system in which men controlled the work of women and children in their family, had both shaped capitalism and was itself changed with the advent of capitalism. In response to criticisms of the concept of patriarchy (Gottfried 1998; Pollert 1996), including that it was a-historical and neglected variation across time, Walby elaborated her theory to better include diversity across place and over time: 'differentiated patriarchies' (Walby 1997). Many different versions of patriarchy have been elaborated including public and private, capitalist, welfare state, feudal and reorganised patriarchies.

Patriarchy(ies) remains key to much feminist theorising, including of work and employment, but alternative theories of gender inequalities have emerged. Theories of

‘gender systems’, ‘gender orders’ and ‘gender regimes’ have been particularly important for the study of change in gender, work and employment. Developed by Swedish historian Yvonne Hirdmann (1988), and in sociology by Raewyn Connell (1995), such theories aim to better capture commonality and diversity in systems of gender inequality. Hirdmann’s analysis has been influential because it expressly considered the potential for change in gender systems by analysing how a society like Sweden could develop so rapidly from a society with a ‘housewife contract’ in the 1960s to an ‘equal status contract’ by the 1980s.

The work of Connell is also valuable for debates over gender, work and (potential) change. Because gender is socially constructed, gender arrangements can change, and so, for Connell, gender may have an end. What is interesting is why and how, despite this, gender persists. Connell refers to gender regimes to answer this question. These refer to the state of play in gender relations within an institution as shaped by three sets of relations: production, power and emotions. A gender order is the relationship between different gender regimes and refers to ‘the current state of play in the macro-politics of gender’ (Connell, 1987: 20; see its applicability in Acker 1994; Connell 2006). Like Hirdmann, Connell has influenced theoretical attempts to depict and explain variation and commonality in the gendering of work cross-nationally such as in the ‘carer/breadwinner models’ of Jane Lewis (1992) and the ‘gender arrangements’ of Birgit Pfau-Effinger (2004).

Connell also developed the highly influential idea of ‘hegemonic masculinity’ to explore what practices create and maintain the institutionalisation of men’s dominance over women. Innovatively, Connell (1987) argued here that there are gender inequalities amongst men and amongst women, not just between women and men. Further, rather than gender being reduced to singular versions of ‘femininity’ versus ‘masculinity’, there are multiples of both. Connell, and

other writers influenced by this writing, have dedicated most attention to plural ‘masculinities’. ‘Subordinate masculinities’ have been identified that are distinct from and inferior to the hegemonic version. Connell drew upon Antonio Gramsci’s theory of hegemony that analysed how the dominant class ensures, or tries to ensure, that its own ideologies (or ways of seeing the world) are accepted by the subordinate class. Connell argued that hegemonic masculinity ‘embodied the currently most honored way of being a man’, and that hegemony was achieved largely through ‘culture, institutions, and persuasion’ (Connell and Messerschmidt 2005: 832). We can see the influence of these ideas on the sociology of work and employment in Joan Acker’s (2004) analysis of the various forms of hegemonic masculinity at play in global organisations, including the ‘hegemonic hyper masculinity’ of global players like Rupert Murdoch (and see Goodwin’s (2002) study of men’s working lives in unemployment-hit Dublin and Sang et al.’s (2014) study of masculinities within the creative industries). Finally, because hegemonic masculinity is socially constructed, it may change: it is ‘perhaps possible that a more humane, less oppressive, means of being a man might become hegemonic, as part of a process leading toward an abolition of gender hierarchies’ (Connell and Messerschmidt 2005: 833).

Multiple Social Divisions: Intersectionality

Social theories have faced the challenge of taking into account diversity amongst women as a group, and amongst men, which results from the interplay of multiple ‘social divisions’. Social divisions include but are not restricted to class, gender, ethnicity, sexuality, disability, religion and nation. Intersectionality is a term attributed to Kimberlé Crenshaw (1988), a US professor of law. It reflects the argument being made at that time by black academics and activists that feminist theory ‘theoretically erased’

black women. It is now well accepted that understanding inequalities in the working lives of women and men necessitates moving beyond analysing only gender and on to considering how social divisions intersect (Gottfried 2008; Yuval-Davis 2006). Intersections of multiple divisions are seen very clearly in the analysis of the globalised division of work, such as global care chains (Ehrenreich and Hochschild 2002) and the global production (and consumption) of products from mobile phones, chocolate, fish, clothes and bananas through to the sex trade (Edwards and Wajcman 2007). Reflecting this development of intersectionality, West (with Sarah Fenstermaker 1995: 30) elaborated the 'doing gender' thesis to also include 'doing race' and 'doing class'. Work is a way of 'doing' other divisions like class and 'race' too. In 'Doing Difference', they aimed to show how these three social divisions, and their intersections, are all 'ongoing accomplishments'.

Domestic Work

An important contribution from feminist theories has been to critique the very sites and subjects of sociology, as Kathi Weeks puts it (2011). In their focus on restricted units of analysis, early sociologists neglected a major form of work from their theorising: unwaged work in the home. The early attempts to fill this gap and to theorise 'housework' drew heavily on Marxian ideas. Marxist feminists were innovative in using Marxist theories of waged labour in the public sphere to explore unwaged work within the private sphere (the home), but they had to make the case that this type of work was 'socially necessary' labour, essential to capitalism (see Dalla Costa and James 1972; Gardiner 1975). In the 1970s, UK feminist Ann Oakley (1974) criticised mainstream sociology for ignoring domestic work and dismissing it merely as a 'natural' part of women's sex roles.

Unwaged work in the home has gone on to shape a growing number of social theories

around the gender division of domestic labour and the extent to which gender inequalities might be narrowing (see Warren 2011). This question is highly debated. Hochschild (1989) proposed that the 'gender revolution stalled' when it came to the work that is carried out within the home, but others have argued that we are seeing a gradual change towards more gender equality, albeit in a slow process (Gershuny et al. 1994; Sullivan 2004). Sociologists have also used intersectionality to question who is paid to 'do the dirty work' in the homes of others (Anderson 2000) and who does the domestic and caring work for whom in global care chains (Ehrenreich and Hochschild 2002).

A CRITIQUE OF THE CLASSICAL CANON II

Women and gender inequalities in work are not the only glaring absences from the classical sociological canon. In the USA, African-American W.E.B. Du Bois (1868–1963), had a wide-ranging academic and literary output that covered religion, family and culture, as well as work and employment (Zamir 2008). On work, he explored the role of black men in the workplace, and his PhD thesis examined the African slave trade (Rabaka 2010). Though he was employed as an academic sociologist, Du Bois also spent much of his life engaged in political activism, including helping to establish the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) in the US.

There are a number of other influential theorists who were contemporaries of the three founders and who have also impacted the central themes of sociology. Vilfredo Pareto (Italy, 1848–1923), for example, provided an influential analysis of the power, prestige and wealth of different types of elite groups (Pareto 2008 [1901]). Thorstein Veblen's (USA, 1857–1929) 1899 discussion of the 'leisure class' is another influential addition to the sociology of

the privileged minority: an elite class who associate paid work with weakness, inferiority and unworthiness. In recent decades, however, the intense privilege at the top of the class structure or, more specifically for our interests in the sociology of work, the very top of the occupational hierarchy, has received far less attention from sociologists than the experiences of those in lower level occupations (Scott 2008). Indeed, some theorists argued that sociology should be the study of the ‘under’ and not the ‘over’ dog (see the discussion in Gouldner 1973). We return to the purpose of sociology to end this chapter.

Mike Savage and Karel Williams (2008: 2) suggested that contemporary sociology in general suffers from a ‘glaring invisibility of elites’. Nevertheless, questions about the ‘ownership and control’ of industry, as John Scott (1986) put it, are surely central to the sociological analysis of work and employment (see also Scott 2008). Recent decades marked by neo-liberalism, financialisation, the rise of the super-rich and the causes of, and fallout from a global economic crisis have reinvigorated sociological interest in the privileged. Vilfredo Pareto’s account of the processes by which ruling elites lose their legitimacy appears especially prescient for economic (and political) sociology (Daguerre 2014; Engelen et al. 2012). The rise of the working rich is also of interest to the sociology of work. Thomas Piketty’s (2014) economic analysis of the history of wealth, income and inequality is highly influential here. It explores the growth of a super-wealthy ‘managerial elite’ after the 1970s, a group able to set their own wages (see the special symposium of the *British Journal of Sociology* 2014 that is dedicated to Piketty). Savage and Williams (2008: 10) also point to changes over time in what the working rich actually do for their superior remuneration packages: with an expansion in the number of very highly paid workers whose role is not to manage ‘men [sic] and things’, as the highly paid have tended to do, but to service the flow of money.

POST-DEVELOPMENTS: THREE KEY IDEAS

The final influential group of theories that this chapter discusses are often grouped under a ‘post-’ badge. Post-modernist theories are underpinned by the idea that there have been such large societal transformations since the birth of sociology that the founding theories can no longer be meaningfully applied to help us understand contemporary society. Savage (2009: 219) identifies a range of ‘epochal’ theories that are based on the ‘claim that we now live in a new kind of society which departs in fundamental ways from previous modes of social ordering’. He lists post-industrial (Bell 1973) and disorganised capitalism (Lash and Urry 1987), post-Fordism (Amin 1990), individualisation (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim 2001; Giddens, 1990), reflexive/late modernity (Beck, 1992), risk society (Beck 1992), globalisation (Albrow 1986), neo-liberalism (Rose 1990), network society (Castells 1996), and cosmopolitanism (Beck 2000). Thinking about work specifically, we could add in Gorz’s (1982) death of the working class; Bluestone and Harrison’s (1982) deindustrialisation (and Milkman 1997 too); Offe’s (1985) disorganised capitalism; Gershuny’s (1978) self-service society; Rifkin (1995) on the end of work; Beck’s (2000) Brazilianisation of work; and Aronowitz and Cutler (1998) on post-work.

In contrast to epochal theories, many contemporary theoretical ideas have been founded upon a rejection of the search for large holistic theories of social change, or ‘meta-narratives’ (Lyotard 1984). This rejection is associated with post-structuralism, a philosophical movement that originated in France and that has been credited with bringing about a ‘cultural turn’ in social theory (Lash and Urry 1994). Post-structuralism promoted theories that espoused a plurality of contested meanings of key concepts and a focus on the construction of the self. Despite the importance of post-structural ideas for the social sciences, the sociology of work

and employment was rather slow to engage with them (Casey 1995). Nevertheless, we cite three important developments in the field since the 1960s and 70s.

The 'End of Work' and of Work Identity

The above 'epochal' social theories were reacting to what were perceived as radical changes in the organisation and experience of work and employment. These changes included the decline of manufacturing jobs in developed economies and the growth of service sector employment; technological change; the speed-up of work flows; increased global competition and the global mobility of capital, goods and workers; more flexibility in the workplace; and the erosion in job conditions. A number of theorists even predicted the 'end of work'. As Edward Granter (2009b) explains it, because of developments in technology and in how society can organise itself, there has been a large fall in the amount of work that a society needs. This situation was interpreted as a positive development by some writers because it created the potential for societal progress (see such commentators as Jeremy Rifkin 1995 and André Gorz 1999, and the sociologist Ulrich Beck). The critical theorist Herbert Marcuse, for example, was inspired by Marx's theories on the importance of work for humanity. If what it is to be human is bound up with work, as Granter discusses, then for Marcuse technology can be used to eliminate degrading work that alienates workers.

Not all social theorists have interpreted these changes as positive developments for workers. Societies have been analysed as increasingly characterised by risky and precarious forms of work and so a major area of debate here concerns the ramifications of such (alleged) radical changes for identity formation, with men the main focus. In 1958, Everett Hughes asserted that work, for a man: 'is one of the more important parts

of his social identity, of his self; indeed of his fate in the one life he has to live' (1984 [1958]: 338–9). For many theorists since, work has lost its role as a source of identity formation. Richard Sennett (1998) and Robert Putnam (2000) both proposed that major transformations in the world of work have created an individualised outlook on work and life. Anthony Giddens (1991) argued that workers had greater opportunities for self-realisation and for creating their sense of self in an 'identity project', whilst Beck contended that 'the idea that social identity and status depend only upon a person's occupation and career must be taken apart and abandoned, so that social esteem and security are really uncoupled from paid employment' (Beck 2000: 57). Zygmunt Bauman (1998) was also critical of work as a means to identity formation. Work has been replaced by consumption, he argued, and those who are economically excluded from consuming ('flawed consumers') are accordingly deprived of identity.

The so-called end of work theorists, and the related debates over work and identity, are usefully summarised and critiqued elsewhere (Granter 2009a; Strangleman 2005) and covered in detail in Chapter 2. For our focus on work and social theory in this chapter, it is important to note that proposals concerning an end of work have critical ramifications for sociology as a discipline and for our specific sub-discipline that studies work. Claus Offe (1985) argued that work was crucial to the birth of sociology and core to the theories of its founders. Indeed, work, for Offe, represented 'the key sociological category' in social theory (pp. 129–50). The importance of work for the discipline of sociology has been heavily debated in the past decades. Writers such as Juan Jose Castillo (1999), Susan Halford and Tim Strangleman (2009), Strangleman (2005) and John Scott (2005) have noted, and questioned, whether and why the study of work has gone from the 'centre to the margin' of the discipline. We return to this development to end the chapter.

Surveillance and Discipline

One key theorist who has been located under the ‘post-’ label, though he rejected it himself, was Michel Foucault. His ideas on power, surveillance and discipline have had a huge influence on the sociology of work and employment, in particular via his consideration of Jeremy Bentham’s panopticon in *Discipline and Punish* (1975). Gibson Burrell (2007: 166) proposed that this is the single book ‘that has affected our understanding in social science approaches to management more than any other’. In it, Foucault discussed Bentham’s aim to design an institution where an observer could see all the ‘inmates’ but the observer could not be seen. The panopticon is most well known as a design for prisons, with guards and prisoners in the roles of observer and observed, but it can be applied to workplaces, schools, and so on. In the panopticon:

visible: the inmate will constantly have before his [sic] eyes the tall outline of the central tower from which he is spied upon. Unverifiable: the inmate must never know whether he is being looked at at any one moment, but he must be sure that he may always be so. (Bentham cited in Foucault 1975: 201)

Foucault argued that an outcome of living under this threat of constant surveillance is that the need for behaving well becomes internalised: prisoners become self-disciplining. Foucault’s theory has influenced a wealth of case studies on work organisation and management practices, on the labour process, and on the experiences of those working under surveillance. The ‘electronic panopticon’ experienced by call centre workers is an important example here (Bain and Taylor 2000).

Embodied and Aesthetic Labour

Foucault’s analysis of power and self-discipline has also shaped the study of the body at work. He discussed the ‘docile body’: a body ‘that may be subjected, used, transformed, and improved’, using the

example of how a soldier’s body is created. The body is not new to theories of work. As Carol Wolkowitz argues (2006), all workers are embodied in some way. The body appears in labour process theories: bodily movements were fundamental to Taylorism since one reason for the fragmentation of tasks was to make them easier for bodies to perform. Taylor’s scientific management techniques had even specified up to 600 bodily movements per working day (Bahnisch 2000: 62). Workplace ethnographies have long noted the exhausting impact on the body of having to work at speed, controlled by an assembly line (Cavendish 1982). The body appeared in Goffman’s dramaturgical analysis when he argued that ‘face work’ and ‘body work’ are important in human interaction and that the body works to construct and reproduce the social world (Shilling 1993). Bourdieu’s (1984) concept of embodiment also considered how class is lived through appearance and the body.

The body is present across social theories of work but the study of embodied labour was given a boost with post-structural theoretical developments. The gendered body has been an important theoretical advance. Acker (1990) offered a gendered analysis of the masculine work organisation. Here she argued that the preferred organisational worker is assumed to be disembodied but the reality is that men’s bodies pervade occupational cultures. Nirmal Puwar (2004) added in ethnicity to her analysis of the preferred corporate body. Embodied labour has become central to studies of sex workers and to others whose job includes them doing work on the bodies of others: in hair and beauty work; as care workers; in the medical and health services; as well as shop assistants and undertakers (Wolkowitz et al. 2013).

Embodied labour has been elaborated further to take into account theories of ‘aesthetic labour’: ‘the employment of workers with desired corporeal dispositions’ (Warhurst and Nickson 2007: 107; and see Warhurst and Nickson 2009). As Pettinger (2004) has also argued, bodies are important to many service

workers' daily jobs, but so too are style and voice. One study by Chris Warhurst and Dennis Nickson (2007) identified job adverts which explicitly specified that recruits must be 'well spoken', 'of smart appearance', 'well presented' and 'good looking'. Class was central to the first theories of aesthetic labour, but class, gender, age, ethnicity and other social divisions come together in terms of assessing the 'attractiveness' that is explicitly required by many jobs in the service sector.

CONCLUSIONS

Work was core to the birth of sociology and to its founding theorists. In over two centuries of sociological thinking, the academic study of work has had to grapple with major societal changes as well as continuities in working lives. This chapter has pointed readers to some of the important theoretical ideas that have been applied to worlds of work.

Work is a vital subject area for sociology. Yet the prominence of the topic of work within the discipline has varied over time, waning after the 'golden age' of industrial sociology. Writers such as Scott, and Halford and Strangleman, have traced the developments in the centrality of the study of work within sociology that raise concerns for sociological theorising on work (see Chapter 2). On the discipline in general, Scott (2005: 7.2) proclaimed that sociology needs to unify itself, with sociologists coming together around their commitment to the 'study of society'. Specifically on the sociology of work, Halford and Strangleman (2009: 822) call for a more 'self-consciously confident' sociology of work to take us forward. This multi-chapter state-of-the-art handbook meets those calls by informing, refreshing and re-invigorating our knowledge on the sociology of work and employment.

The chapter began by noting that the meaning of 'work' is contested. The varieties of work that social theorists address

are far wider now than they were two centuries ago. There thus remain significant gaps in knowledge that sociologists are working to fill. Halford et al. (2013) identified here what they call 'newly visible' forms of work: longstanding forms of work that have been under-researched as well as emerging work types, such as sex work, body work, informal work and creative work. These developments in the field offer new and exciting avenues for theorists of work and employment. Yet the theoretical questions that featured in the work of the founding theorists still remain core to our discipline. After a period of sustained and intense economic crisis around the globe, we can certainly see their resonance in contemporary society. The crisis has also placed questions of elites, their composition and their work cultures more firmly back on the table for the contemporary sociologist of work.

This chapter also began by stating that social theorists have differed markedly in their approaches to work. It ends by reflecting on the role of social theory itself. A longstanding question is, put simply, whether the role of social theory is purely to theorise and so better understand the world of work, or whether there is an onus on sociology to also improve workers' lives. Marx thought that the point of theory was not just to understand the world but to change it for the better. Feminist theories of work are also patently rooted in a social movement that is committed to identifying and understanding gender inequalities so that progress towards gender equality can be achieved. Du Bois used his sociology as a means to campaign to improve the lives of black people in the USA. C. Wright Mills' (1959) *The Sociological Imagination* argued that the role of sociology should be to create an informed and radical public that will challenge the powerful and play a part in transforming society for the better. Bourdieu (1990) and Gramsci (1971) asked similar questions about the roles of 'intellectuals' and their engagement with wider publics.

Michael Burawoy (2005) returned us to the key question: for whom and for what do we

pursue sociology? His view is that the sociologist should be partisan and represent the public against market tyranny and state despotism. In addition, a 'public sociology' must engage publics with its theories and findings. The chapters in this handbook showcase just how well the sociology of work and employment is grappling with these fundamental challenges for the discipline in the twenty-first century.

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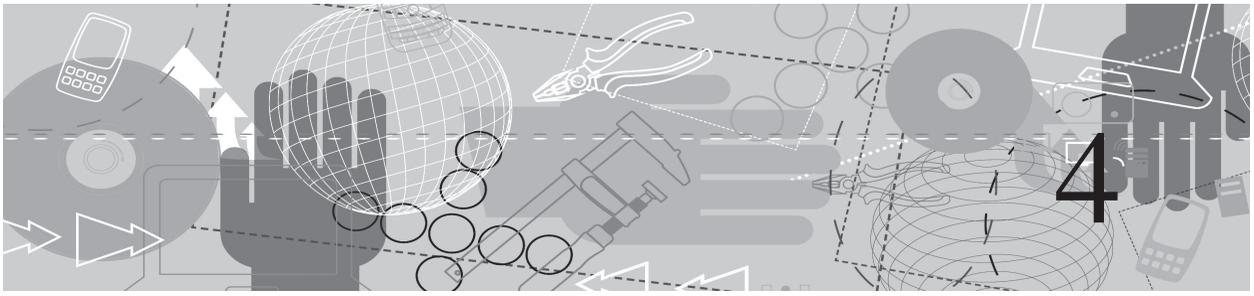
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Class and Work

Barry Eidlin

INTRODUCTION

Why does class matter for the study of work? At first glance, the question might seem obvious, because class and work are often seen as deeply intertwined. This was certainly the case for the founders of sociology, although changes in the structure of work and conceptions of the work world have decoupled, or at least complicated, the relation between class and work in recent decades. To understand how and why class and work have traditionally been closely related, and how and why that relationship has become more fraught, it is important first to clarify: (1) how and why class matters for sociological analysis; and (2) the different ways that sociologists conceive of class.

At a basic level, class (or ‘social class’) refers to a set of social divisions and relations based on economic criteria. Scholars differ in how they define and delineate these social divisions, as well as the normative commitments they bring to their analysis.

Some seek to understand why divisions exist and how they persist over time, while others seek not only to understand those divisions, but to reduce or eliminate them. However, their shared interest in studying class derives from a shared concern with understanding the structure of social inequalities (Crompton 2008; Dworkin 2007).

Nonetheless, beneath that shared concern with social inequalities lies tremendous variation in how scholars conceive of class as a general category of analysis, and classes themselves as specific units of analysis. These different conceptions of class reflect different understandings of the role of class in social organization, and by extension, the relationship between class and work.

Gradational vs. Categorical Conceptions of Class

The first major distinction among different approaches to class involves those that take a

gradational approach, and those that take a *categorical* approach. Some also take a hybrid approach, blending aspects of gradational and categorical approaches.

Gradational Approaches

Gradational approaches situate individuals along a continuous spectrum denoting one's level of 'socio-economic status', usually defined by a combination of income and education level. With gradational approaches, there is no clear dividing line between classes, nor is there any clear group identity that connects people similarly situated within the spectrum. Individuals are simply placed higher or lower on the spectrum.

Gradational approaches are commonly used in quantitative studies of stratification and inequality, which use large-N datasets to measure the effect of 'socio-economic status' on a variety of social outcomes, including marriage, life expectancy, fertility, criminal propensity, and more. Economists also divide the income distribution into units such as quintiles or deciles to measure how income is distributed, and how the distribution has changed over time. Gradational approaches also underlie many 'common-sense' understandings of class, whereby individuals situate themselves on different rungs on an income ladder.

Gradational approaches to class are useful for such studies because they provide a clear and easily quantifiable measure of class. While divisions between different class levels are arbitrary, this is not of great concern for such approaches, as there are no particular attributes ascribed to one group or another. In gradational approaches to class, divisions along the income spectrum only serve as 'placeholders' to help make sense of the data. For example, one might ask how wide the gap is between the top and bottom quintiles of the income distribution at one point in time compared to another. While the decision to divide the income spectrum into quintiles, deciles, or centiles might affect the interpretation of the data, it does not have any implications for the theory of class that underlies

gradational concepts of class. Regardless of where the lines are drawn, the conception of class remains that of an individual position along a spectrum defined by levels of income and education.

Despite the murkiness of dividing lines in gradational approaches to class, scholars recognize that, at a certain point, quantitative differences in income and educational attainment do translate into qualitative differences in terms of career paths and lifestyles. Gradational approaches can shade into the categorical approaches to class described below, but the lack of clear criteria for determining class divisions often leads to vague language which distinguishes between a vast 'middle class' sandwiched between smaller groups referred to as 'the poor' and 'the rich' or the 'lower' and 'upper' classes.

Categorical Approaches

Categorical approaches to class, as the name implies, group individuals into different class categories, depending on specified attributes. Scholars differ as to which attributes they find most salient for creating class categories, how many categories exist, and how those categories relate to each other. What they have in common are the ideas that (1) societies are divided into classes, and (2) membership in a given class shapes individuals' life experiences, perceptions of the world, and material well-being.

Class categories have both objective and subjective dimensions. The 'objective' dimension of class refers to the structural, socio-economic factors that place an individual in one class or another, independent of that individual's awareness of being in that class. The 'subjective' dimension of class refers to the degree to which an individual recognizes the existence of class divisions, and identifies as a member of a particular class. Scholars often refer to the objective and subjective dimensions of class as 'class position' and 'class identity'.

Unlike gradational approaches to class, categorical approaches place much more

analytical weight on how class categories are defined and delineated from each other. For example, if we limit our definition of ‘working class’ to include only manual ‘blue-collar’ workers, then that class will appear much less prominent than if we use a more expansive definition based on how much control someone has over their working conditions, or whether someone’s primary means of subsistence comes from selling their own capacity to work as opposed to purchasing other people’s capacity to work. That broader definition could include not only blue-collar workers, but many ‘white-collar’ office workers and ‘pink-collar’ service workers as well. While the distinction on the surface seems to be merely about the size and composition of a given class category, different conceptions of who is or is not part of the ‘working class’ category can have implications for understanding how socially prominent or relevant that class is, and how members of that class act socially, culturally, and politically.

CLASS AND WORK: CLASSICAL UNDERSTANDINGS

The three acknowledged ‘founders’ of sociology all saw close links between class and work. This section examines those classical approaches. In the following sections, we will examine how thinking about the relation between class and work developed over time.

Marx

Marx attached the greatest importance to the relationship between class and work. He saw social relations as emerging out of the organization of production. Once societies were organizationally and technologically advanced enough to produce a surplus, the question arose as to how to reliably produce and distribute that surplus. This in turn led to conflicts over the production and distribution of the surplus. According to Marx, the

fundamental social divisions at any given time and place were the result of social struggles around the organization and distribution of production. He distinguished between three historical ‘modes of production’: ancient, feudal, and capitalist, and predicted the emergence of a fourth: communism (Marx 1964, 1976 [1867]).

Each historical mode of production was characterized by a fundamental social conflict between an exploited class, which produced the surplus, and an exploiting class, which appropriated and distributed it. In ancient society, it was the conflict between master and slave. In feudal society, it was the conflict between lord and serf. And in capitalist society, it was the conflict between the ‘bourgeoisie’, those who claimed ownership over what he called the ‘means of production’, – the combination of raw materials, tools, and machines used to create goods for sale, and the ‘proletariat’, those with no means to secure a livelihood other than by selling their capacity to labor – their ‘labor power’ – to those who owned the means of production. In each case, conflict between classes restructured society and led to the emergence of new classes and social relations (Marx and Engels 1969 [1848]).

Given the central role of classes in his theory of how social change happens, Marx was concerned with the process that led to the formation of new classes as social actors. Key to this was his understanding of how the organization of economic production created social groups that were both inextricably linked and inherently antagonistic: exploiters and exploited. He saw that this created a set of social relations and common experiences among groups of individuals that created classes in an objective sense, what he called class ‘in itself’. But he also recognized that the mere existence of classes in this objective sense did not guarantee that classes in a subjective sense – what he called class ‘for itself’ – would follow. It was not a given that individuals in similar class positions would recognize themselves as being part of the same class. Although Marx recognized that subjective class identity did not flow

automatically from objective class position, he did not specify the conditions under which class ‘for itself’ could emerge out of class ‘in itself’. This ‘problem of class formation’ sparked extensive debate among Marxists, which continues to this day (Eidlin 2014; Marx 1973 [1847]).

Without delving into the complexities of Marx’s approach, the central point for now is that it saw classes as fundamentally relational, and more specifically derived from relations forged at work. Those relations are crucial in Marxian approaches, as the conflicts they engender between exploiter and exploited forge a core dynamic that drives social change over time.

Weber

Unlike Marx, Weber did not attach as much theoretical or analytical importance to the production process. Rather, Weber’s schematic work on class was part of a broader project of classifying and understanding the different sources of social authority and hierarchy, particularly as they related to shaping individual ‘life chances’. Within Weber’s taxonomy of social hierarchies, class positions structured inequality within markets; status positions structured inequality within societies; and party positions structured inequality within political orders. Positions within each hierarchy were determined by access to different types of resources: economic for class, social honor for status, and rank for party (Weber 1978b).

While not as central as for Marx, Weber still saw work and the workplace as important for determining class locations and hierarchies. This was because work could shape individuals’ ability to access economic resources, and many individuals’ level of social honor was attached to whether they worked, and/or what kind of work they did. In other words, work was intimately related to class and status levels (Weber 1978a, p. 302).

Although Weber conceived of class and status relations as ones of power and

domination, he differed from Marx in that he did not connect these relations to a broader theory of history. Social change and development for Weber was not the result of conflicts between dominant and dominated classes. Nonetheless, defining and understanding the conditions leading to the emergence of class and status hierarchies remained an important aspect of understanding both past and contemporary societies.

Durkheim

While Durkheim is not traditionally thought of as a sociologist of work, his published dissertation was about the division of labor in society (Durkheim 1984 [1893]). In his famous discussion of the shift from mechanical to organic solidarity, Durkheim was deeply aware of the role that work groups have played in ensuring social cohesion in increasingly complex societies. In a long preface to the book’s second edition, he developed more fully his discussion of professional or work-based ‘corporate’ groups. He saw these as key ‘secondary groups’, mediating between the state and individuals, ‘close enough to the individual to attract him [sic] strongly to their activities and, in so doing, to absorb him [sic] into the mainstream of social life’ (p. liv).

In contrast to Marx and Weber, who saw classes in conflictual and hierarchical relation to each other, Durkheim saw occupational groups working together to organize social life as a whole. Moreover, their organizational identity emerged not from relations of competition or conflict with other groups, but from common traits and experiences they shared with each other (pp. xlii–xliii).

CLASS AND WORK IN THE POSTWAR PERIOD

As sociology developed after World War II, scholars shared a common understanding of

class that was fundamentally related to positions and relations forged in the workplace. This was most apparent in the work of industrial sociologists. Writing in the midst of the postwar economic expansion and a perceived 'settlement' between labor and management, these scholars posited a class structure that mapped on to the industrial economy of the time: a working class holding manual 'blue-collar' jobs organized into trade unions, a middle class holding non-manual 'white-collar' jobs organized into professional associations, and an upper class of top managers/executives organized into employer associations.

Unlike classical approaches, industrial sociology viewed class primarily in positional, not relational terms. Classes constituted positions into which individuals were placed, generally according to occupational, educational, and income criteria. Thanks to technical advances in survey research, scholars were able to develop quantitative studies that classified individuals according to increasingly elaborate models of what they called 'social stratification' (Blau and Duncan 1967; Davis and Moore 1945; Harvey 1975). More broadly, industrial sociology tied its theory of stratification to a 'logic of industrialism', whereby increasing technological and economic development would lead to narrowing socio-economic differences over time. While difference and conflict would continue to exist, they would be carefully managed by an 'omnipresent state' under a system of 'industrial pluralism' (Goldthorpe 1960; Goldthorpe and Lockwood 1963; Kerr et al. 1960; Moore 1965).

Industrial sociology marked a sharp departure from classical approaches to class, while still retaining aspects of all three. From Marx, it took the idea that industrial production created conflict between workers and employers. But against Marx's predictions of increasing class conflict, it held that industrial pluralism would contain and regulate the class antagonisms of previous eras (Dahrendorf 1959; Kerr et al. 1960; Lipset 1963). Like Weber, industrial sociologists

focused on the central importance of bureaucracy as a source of organization in modern society. But whereas Weber famously worried that modern bureaucracy would trap individuals in an 'iron cage' of rationalized efficiency (Weber 2005 [1905]), industrial sociologists took a more sanguine view of bureaucracy. While acknowledging its homogenizing effects, they saw bureaucracy as essential to managing social conflict and building modern 'industrial societies'. In focusing on bureaucracy as a source of social cohesion, they echoed Durkheim's approach to class and the division of labor. But in keeping with their Weberian influence, industrial sociologists had a more vertical, corporatist understanding of social solidarity, as opposed to Durkheim's more horizontal, associational conception.

But even as industrial sociologists focused on the workplace, their predictions of greater socio-economic convergence began to weaken the link between class and work. Some analysts shifted their gaze from the workplace to the marketplace, arguing that postwar prosperity was replacing traditional work-based class divisions, with individual differences based on consumption and lifestyle choices (Bell 1960; Nisbet 1959; Riesman et al. 1950). Others shifted from the workplace to analyzing the effects of bureaucratization more broadly. They worried that industrial homogenization, while weakening class divisions, risked creating a more alienated, atomized 'mass society', increasingly disconnected from bureaucratic elites, be they in business, labor, politics, or the military (Marcuse 2002 [1964]; Mills 1959). Even those who challenged such dire assessments of modern society contended that tendencies towards social 'massification' and alienation posed significant challenges to pluralist democracy (Kornhauser 1959). In either case, it was bureaucratization and the masses, not the workplace and classes, that was the central analytical focus.

However, the strongest sign of the weakening link between class and work in this period was the growth of stratification studies, which

assumed a central position within sociology. Given its preoccupation with positioning individuals along a continuum ranked by income and social status, work certainly mattered for stratification studies, since individuals' occupations were (and remain) a primary determinant of income and status. But it mattered in a fundamentally different way than it did in classical approaches to class. Instead of being a source of social relations and group identities that shaped the broader society, work was viewed as a source of individual attributes – money and prestige – which then affected individuals' position on a stratification continuum. In such approaches, what happened in the workplace itself mattered little. What mattered was how income and status, derived from individuals' occupations, shaped behavior *outside* the workplace, i.e. consumption and lifestyle choices.

Such a fluid conception of class distinctions, combined with a postwar economy characterized by growing wage compression across occupations, allowed stratification scholars to develop the idea of a broadly 'middle-class' modern society. In keeping with industrial sociology's convergence theory, social distinctions were becoming increasingly fine-grained – more matters of degree than of kind. Bosses, white-collar workers and blue-collar workers might still exist, but they lived in similar neighborhoods and had access to similar amenities, distinguished largely by the social significance attached to particular brand names (Riesman et al. 1950; Whyte 1956). Stratification studies offered a set of conceptual and technical tools well suited to describing this postwar world.

CLASS AND WORK: DRIFTING APART OR PULLING TOGETHER?

By the 1970s, postwar industrial society was undergoing fundamental shifts. The predictable economic growth of the postwar decades was stalling, while inflation was

accelerating. Blue-collar manufacturing jobs were disappearing, replaced by technology and an expanding supply of service sector jobs. Labor unions, though still powerful, were declining, while 'new social movements' based on individual identities and lifestyles were emerging.

Surveying these changes, some analysts contended that they signaled a shift towards a 'post-industrial' society. They built on the idea, already present in industrial-era convergence theory, that changing work relations, technological advances, and increasing individualization were reducing the political and social significance of class divisions. But post-industrial theorists took this idea a step further, arguing that these socio-economic changes were fundamentally restructuring economic production, political power, and social conflicts. In post-industrial society, scientific and technical knowledge was becoming ever more important, as were sophisticated forms of management. Economic production was increasingly intertwined with political processes. With postwar affluence guaranteeing a basic level of economic security, conflicts were becoming less about economic exploitation and more about 'post-materialist' concerns such as social alienation and exclusion from decision-making structures. In this new world, not only was the link between class and work growing increasingly tenuous, but the entire concept of class was changing (Bell 1976; Inglehart 1981, 1997; Inglehart and Rabier 1986; Touraine 1971).

The shifting nature of social conflict in the 1970s led some Marxist-influenced scholars to explore the political implications of this changing conception of class. They began questioning the core Marxist idea that the working class was the central agent of social change and, by extension, the idea that the workplace was a central location of social struggle. Although unions had engaged in militant actions throughout much of the late 1960s and 1970s, labor found itself increasingly on the defensive (Hobsbawm 1978). Some argued that postwar prosperity had

transformed union members into a privileged stratum, cut off from a growing mass of unemployed or precariously-employed workers, and far less interested in pushing for social change than in protecting their own advantages. Meanwhile, they saw in the decline of blue-collar manufacturing employment a decline in the social and political 'weight' of the working class. According to this analysis, the class structure of the new emerging economy was such that the working class could no longer constitute a numerical majority (Gordon et al. 1982; Gorz 1982; Poulantzas 2000 [1978]).

Working-class decline raised the strategic question of what might serve as a new central agent of social change. For those who came to be identified as 'post-Marxist', the answer lay beyond class and the workplace. They argued for broader conceptions of 'the people' or 'progressive blocs' as key social actors. In so doing, they challenged the idea that subjective political identities were grounded in objective class positions, i.e. relations forged in the workplace. Instead, they argued that political identities were more fluid and voluntary (Cutler et al. 1977; Laclau 1977; Laclau and Mouffe 2001[1985]).

Pulling Together: Class Analysis, Labor Process Theory, and Feminism

Although post-industrial and post-Marxist theories challenged existing notions of class and the continuing relevance of the workplace as a source of social and political identities, other scholars called for rethinking, not rejecting, the relation between class and work. Some developed new forms of class analysis that sought to capture the new and evolving class structures and relations of the post-industrial period. Others rediscovered the workplace and analyzed the very organization of work – what they called the 'labor process' – as a fundamental site of social struggle and class formation. Additionally, feminist scholars called for a wholesale

redefinition of class and work. On the one hand, they argued for a reconceptualization of class in the workplace that accounted for women's expanding role in the paid workforce, particularly among the growing ranks of so-called pink-collar jobs. On the other hand, they advocated a broader conception of work that linked paid employment in the workplace with unpaid 'reproductive labor' in the home.

Rethinking Class

Amidst post-Marxist challenges to the possibility of the working class as a collective actor, some within Marxism argued for rethinking, not rejecting class. Responding to the claim that new forms of work and the decline of industrial production had eroded traditional understandings of class and class divisions, Ralph Miliband (1985) countered that 'the recomposition of the working class is not in the least synonymous with its disappearance as a class' (p. 9). More broadly, Ellen Meiksins Wood (1998 [1986]) charged that the post-Marxist critique constituted a 'retreat from class' that obscured rather than clarified the complex relations between changing economic structures and political forces. Despite its many shortcomings, she argued, 'no one can seriously maintain that any other social movement has ever challenged the power of capital as has the working class' (p. 185).

Class Analysis

Other scholars responded to the social and economic upheaval of the 1970s by developing systematic re-examinations of the relation between class and work. These new approaches to class analysis have commonly been divided into Marxian and Weberian variants, with the class analysis of Pierre Bourdieu occupying a space related to, but apart from both. Marxian approaches have generally built on the work of Erik Olin

Wright (1978, 1985, 1989, 1997), while Weberian approaches are generally derived from the work of John Goldthorpe and his colleagues (Erikson and Goldthorpe 1992; Goldthorpe 1987, 2000a; Goldthorpe et al. 1968). Central to each approach was an effort to understand the distribution of power within a given society, with the goal of understanding how that distribution affects the lives of individuals living within that society. To this end, these scholars proposed schemas that could identify, classify, and place different classes in relation to each other. Like postwar stratification theory, each approach to class analysis used extensive survey data to develop and refine their class schemas. But unlike postwar stratification theory, which placed individuals along a continuum determined by income and social status, these schemas were explicitly relational in character. Class divisions were not quantitative rankings, but rather reflected relations between classes occupying different positions within the schema. And those positions and relations were directly related to relations in the workplace.

At a basic level, each schema specified more powerful and less powerful classes, with a variety of 'middle classes' in between them. But this general similarity belied considerable differences as to the criteria each used for determining the boundaries and relations between classes, as well as the analytic goals of each approach. Wright's neo-Marxian class schemas focused on understanding relationships of exploitation, with the underlying normative goal of eliminating exploitative relationships and promoting greater human welfare. In keeping with Marx, the exploiters were those who claimed ownership of the means of production, while the exploited were those who were propertyless and had to sell their labor power to make a living. This dynamic structured the relationship between the two fundamental classes, capitalists and workers. But in a series of evolving schemas, Wright refined his model of class structure to take additional factors into account: relations of authority in the workplace (dominators and

dominated), differential possession of skills or expertise, and differences in firm size (by number of employees). Based on these four axes of difference, Wright elaborated what was at its most complex a 12-category typology of class locations (Wright 1997, pp. 17–29).

The schema most often identified with Weberian class analysis is that developed by John Goldthorpe and colleagues (Erikson and Goldthorpe 1992; Erikson et al. 1979; Goldthorpe 1987).¹ Goldthorpe's work on class analysis began in the 1960s, at a time when convergence theory was at its peak. In conjunction with David Lockwood, he developed the Affluent Worker survey, which sought to examine the degree to which increasing income among workers actually reduced class divisions. Against the conventional wisdom of the time, their findings showed that class divisions persisted, irrespective of income (Goldthorpe et al. 1967). Key to this finding was their conception of class not just as a function of income and consumption patterns, but of a combination of 'work situation' (one's level of autonomy and discretion on the job), 'market situation' (access to material benefits) and 'status situation' (one's level of social prestige) (Goldthorpe et al. 1968).²

Goldthorpe continued to develop his work-based conception of class positions in his subsequent research, which sought to understand levels of class mobility in advanced industrial societies. Starting from a 36-category scale of occupations he developed with Keith Hope (Goldthorpe and Hope 1974), Goldthorpe and his collaborators elaborated a sevenfold schema of class relations. The schema situated different occupations according to their work, market, and status situations, such that similar occupations could occupy different class positions depending on the context in which the occupation was performed (employed vs. self-employed, for example). At its most simplified, Goldthorpe's class schema distinguished between an upper-level 'service class' and a lower-level 'working class', with an 'intermediate class' occupying the middle. Within these broad classifications

they specified further subdivisions: two each for the service and working classes, and three for the intermediate class (Goldthorpe 1987, pp. 40–43).

Whereas the goal of Wright's Marxian class schemas was to map relationships of exploitation, the goal of Goldthorpe's Weberian class schemas was to map individuals' 'life chances' based on their position within the schema. Here 'life chances' referred to the likelihood that an individual might move up in the class schema to a position with greater workplace authority and autonomy, more material benefits, and greater social prestige. As with Wright, Goldthorpe revised his class schema over several decades of research. Most notably, he eventually discarded his Hope-Goldthorpe occupational scale as the basis of the schema in favor of a focus on 'employment relations' (Goldthorpe 2000a, ch. 10). But whatever the revisions, Goldthorpe steadfastly insisted on a conception of class that derived not from income levels or consumption habits, but from relationships in the workplace.

Although most class analysis scholarship in recent decades has followed the Marxian or Weberian variants, an important subset has been the approach pioneered by the French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu (1984, 1985). Like Marxian and Weberian approaches to class analysis, Bourdieu's approach was fundamentally relational, in that he saw classes only existing in relation to each other. But, unlike the other two, Bourdieu's approach was not categorical. The Bourdieusian class schema was not comprised of boxes representing different class positions. Rather, it was a *spatial* schema, with actors clustered in different areas of what he called 'social space' based on their occupations. That three-dimensional space was in turn structured by continuous axes measuring access to different types of capital: economic, cultural, social, symbolic, and more. One axis positioned individuals according to the *volume* of total capital they possessed. Another positioned individuals according to the *composition* of the capital they possessed, i.e. more

economic or cultural. The third positioned individuals according to the *trajectory* of the capital they possessed, or how likely it was that the amount of capital they possessed would change over time – what other scholars might denote as class mobility. Using a statistical technique known as Multiple Correspondence Analysis (MCA), Bourdieu situated survey respondents within the three-dimensional field determined by the volume, composition, and trajectory of capital they possessed. The goal of the resulting graphs was to map relations of domination within a given social space.

Bourdieu's class analysis occupied a middle ground between stratification theory and the Marxian and Weberian approaches to class analysis. Although it shared with the latter a relational approach to class, as with the former, Bourdieu largely focused on class relations as they were structured in the social world outside the workplace. Like stratification scholars, he used occupations not to plot relations of authority or exploitation at work, but rather to create rankings of social prestige and income levels. Class differences for Bourdieu were reflected not in the world of production, but rather in individual consumption patterns and cultural habits.

Unruly Categories: Drawing Class Boundaries

A central problem for all approaches to class analysis was that of drawing class boundaries. The problem had both technical and theoretical components. At a technical level, the question was that of how to 'operationalize' class: given a theoretical class schema, how to assign individuals to different class categories? But that technical question was necessarily related to the broader theoretical question of how different classes related to each other, and what alliances or oppositions were more or less likely.

The problem of operationalization had three central components: first, whether to conceptualize class based on social relations

or occupational categories; second, whether to use individuals or families/households as the appropriate unit of analysis; and third, whether to include only economically active individuals or all adults (Duke and Edgell 1987). Each of these components posed a set of thorny questions: is class an individual characteristic or a social relation? How do we classify households where the adults' jobs place them in different class categories, for example if the wife is a self-employed doctor and the husband a salaried nurse? How do we classify those who have no direct relation to work, such as the unemployed and retired? The answers to these questions derive from one's theoretical conception of the relation between class and work, as well as the requirements of the research question at hand. Different operationalizations would pertain depending on whether the primary research goal was understanding occupational hierarchies, the organization of production, consumption patterns, social mobility over time, or the relation between class and political power.

For all approaches to class analysis, one of the central operationalization problems involved determining how many classes existed, and their relations to each other. While each approach was fairly clear about the top and bottom of the class schemas they promoted, they all struggled with how to define and categorize the 'middle classes', those who were not clearly part of the working class or service class/bourgeoisie.

This problem was largely technical for Weberian and Bourdieusian approaches, consisting of determining how parsimonious or complex the class schema should be, or deciding what types of capital to measure in constructing the dimensions of social space. But the problem was acute for Marxian approaches, as defining the middle classes involved strategic as well as analytical considerations. How one characterized middle-class groups had implications for the size of the working class, and which parts of the middle classes might have a material interest in allying with it.

Debates about the content and characteristics of the middle classes were nothing new among Marxists, dating back as they did to nineteenth-century arguments about the class nature of the *petit bourgeoisie* and peasantry (Burriss 1986; Kautsky 1988 [1899]; Marx 1996 [1852]). However, the same postwar socio-economic shifts that led post-industrial and post-Marxist theorists to challenge the continued relevance of class led to renewed debates among Marxists about where the 'new' middle classes fit in the fundamental class struggle between bourgeoisie and proletariat (Abercrombie and Urry 1983; Burriss 1986; Gouldner 1978a, 1978b; Przeworski 1985).

The most sustained effort to grapple with the problem of the middle classes within Marxist theory was Wright's theory of 'contradictory class locations' (Wright 1985, 1989, 1997). He defined these locations as jobs that 'combine the inherently antagonistic interests of capital and labor' (Wright 1997, p. 20). Conceptually, he situated different contradictory class locations in relation to the four axes of difference he postulated (relation to the means of production, relation to authority, relation to scarce skills, and number of firm employees). Theoretically and strategically, this schema allowed Wright to identify groups whose interests could potentially align with working-class interests, but did not necessarily do so. This in turn structured the realm of possibilities for alliances between the working class and those in contradictory class locations.

Regardless of their specific theoretical and strategic considerations, these different debates on how to classify the 'middle classes' all shared a central concern with understanding how relations and identities emerging out of the workplace affected broader social and political processes. In this they argued against claims that class and the workplace were declining in significance.

Labor Process Theory

While class analysis was certainly concerned with relations of domination and exploitation

at work, it did little to explore how those relations actually expressed themselves in the workplace. That was the task of what came to be known as labor process theory. Although this tradition traced its roots to Marx's careful dissection of the workday in *Capital, Vol. 1*, it was truly launched by the publication of Harry Braverman's *Labor and Monopoly Capital: The Degradation of Work in the Twentieth Century* (1998 [1974]). In a direct challenge to industrial sociology's contention that the modernization of workplace relations was mitigating class conflict and dissolving class hierarchies, Braverman's work showed the opposite. His detailed analysis of the changing organization of work and technological advances illustrated how the central dynamic driving these changes was not so much improving efficiency and mitigating class conflict as it was increasing management's control over the labor process. As Braverman explained, this was done through the separation of conception and execution of work tasks, with management consistently seeking to appropriate workers' tacit knowledge of how their work gets done. The result was a drive towards deskilling and routinization of tasks, combined with a struggle between labor and management over control of the labor process. Moreover, Braverman saw this logic permeating ever deeper into capitalist society, deskilling the conception of work tasks through the expansion of clerical jobs, and subjecting more aspects of everyday life to market logic through the expansion of the service industry.

Braverman's work sparked spirited debates in subsequent decades over the relationship between technology, workplace organization and labor-management conflict. These debates are elaborated in greater detail elsewhere in this volume. The important point about debates over the continuing relevance of class is that labor process theorists viewed the very trends that convergence theorists and post-industrialists saw as reducing class divisions in precisely the opposite way. For them, technological development, the reorganization of work, and the expansion of service- and

knowledge-sector work represented efforts to broaden and strengthen capitalist class power. While these changes altered the character and content of different classes, and reshaped the contours of class conflict, they did not eliminate conflict, nor did they make class less relevant. Furthermore, labor process theorists as a whole called for a renewed focus on the workplace, which remained for them the primary location of class formation and class conflict.

Feminist Theory

Labor process theorists were not the only ones re-conceptualizing class and work and the link between them in the 1970s. A new generation of feminist scholars showed how incorporating an analysis of gender roles into the division of labor fundamentally restructured understandings of class and work, both inside and outside the workplace. Whereas post-industrial and post-Marxist theorists saw the decline of blue-collar factory work and the rise of service-sector employment as a sign of working-class decline, feminist scholars saw it as a sign of working-class reconfiguration. They argued that much of the growth in service-sector employment was among what they called 'feminized' or 'pink-collar' jobs (Howe 1977; Kanter 1977; Levison 1974). These were female-dominated service sector jobs such as restaurant servers, nurses, teachers, clerical staff, personal care and grooming providers, flight attendants, and the expanding ranks of public sector office workers. These scholars contended that conventional understandings of class overlooked the ways that gender and patriarchy affected the dynamics of domination and exploitation in the workplace (Comer 1978; Murgatroyd 1982; Walby 1986). Although pink-collar workers shared certain commonalities with their blue-collar (mostly) brethren, feminist scholars pointed out how the class experiences of blue- and pink-collar workers alike were profoundly shaped by gender roles. For example, the tasks, expectations and demeanor involved in secretarial

work were shaped not only by their hierarchical relation to the managers these workers served, but also by ideas about women's femininity, and their 'naturally' helpful dispositions (Kanter 1977). Meanwhile, a key part of what enabled employers to attract and extract more work effort out of male workers was workplace cultures that appealed to 'macho' tropes of masculinity. Not only did this encourage workers to work harder, but it also left them less likely to refuse unsafe work, and thus more vulnerable to workplace injuries (Collinson 1992; Game and Pringle 1983; Knights and Willmott 1986; Paap 2006; Willis 1977). In these accounts, class, gender, and work remained closely interrelated.

Meanwhile, another strand of feminist scholarship sought to rethink the link between class and work by rethinking the very notion of what counts as 'work'. Most existing studies of class and work, whatever their perspective, focused almost exclusively not just on men's work, but on paid work. Building on a largely Marxist intellectual tradition, these scholars highlighted the central role of unpaid 'reproductive labor' in making possible the broader world of paid labor and capitalist production. Not only did this focus on reproductive labor challenge common understandings of work, but these scholars' research also showed how the character and quantity of reproductive labor varied tremendously depending on women's class position (Brenner and Ramas 1984; Laslett and Brenner 1989; Luxton 1980; Milkman 1980).

Taken as a whole, the feminist analysis of the workplace showed that modern socio-economic changes were not reducing the significance of class and class divisions. Rather, they were reconfiguring them.

CLASS AND WORK TODAY: DEATH OR REBIRTH?

The socio-economic trends that post-industrialists identified in the 1970s accelerated in the ensuing decades, crystallizing into

what came to be known as 'neoliberalism' or 'market fundamentalism'. Politically, the shift was characterized by decreased state spending on social welfare programs in favor of private, market-based distribution mechanisms, along with increased deregulation of industry and finance (Centeno and Cohen 2012; Davies 2014). The shift also involved changes in the structure and nature of work and the workplace, from what one analyst termed an 'age of security' in the postwar period to an 'age of flexibility' in recent decades (Kalleberg 2011). Decreasing job security, stagnating wages, and dwindling access to employer benefits such as pensions and health insurance meant a shift towards more individual absorption of risk. Meanwhile, the increasing prevalence of 'fissured' workplaces, temporary work, and independent contracting employment relationships, all combined with a decline in union membership across the advanced industrialized countries, seemed to erode possibilities for workplace solidarities and the formation of collective class identities (Hatton 2011; Visser 2006; Weil 2014; Western 1997).

The emergence and consolidation of neoliberalism raised once again the question of the continued relevance of class, both as an analytical concept for understanding social and political divisions, and as a possible base for social or political identities. Furthermore, changes in the nature of work and the expansion of markets into ever more aspects of human life raised the question of where and how, if at all, class would continue to divide or unite. Could the workplace still serve as a base for class identity, or had it become irrelevant – replaced by individual lifestyle and consumption patterns?

Some scholars dismissed the continued relevance of class entirely, announcing the 'death of class'. According to these accounts, processes of individualization that characterize modern society had 'deprive[d] class distinctions of their social meaning' (Beck 1992, p. 100). For Beck and others, the very structures of modern work and society had created such individualized personal situations that it

no longer made sense to speak of 'classes' in the traditional sense of the term. Jan Pakulski and Malcolm Waters (1996) echoed Beck's position in declaring that the 'class mechanism' – the translation from shared experience, to group identity, to the articulation and pursuit of common political interests – had been 'radically dissolved' (p. 668). Given the lack of a social base, these theorists argued that class as a social category was no longer relevant.

Others, while agreeing that class had receded in social importance, were reluctant to pronounce it dead. Anthony Giddens (1990) maintained that class remained relevant within the realm of capitalist economic relations. However, he subsumed this realm within a fourfold conception of modernity, characterized not only by capitalism but also by industrialism, coordinated administrative power, and military power, with no realm reducible to another. In Giddens' conception, class was reduced from a primary social organizing principle to one within a broader array of possible principles. Likewise, the workplace receded in importance as a site of social organization and identity formation.

Similarly, Michael Hechter (2004) agreed that class had receded in social and political importance. He offered an institutional explanation for this change, arguing that the decline in class politics resulted from increasing state centralization – what he called 'direct rule' – which was a consequence of the redistributive social policies and institutions that class-based movements won in the postwar period. Consistent with convergence theory, Hechter argued that direct rule's ability to provide social benefits muted class-based political demands. At the same time, state encroachment into previously autonomous social realms, such as religion, the family, and education, created more political conflict over cultural issues, creating a shift in politics 'from class to culture'. But even though Hechter argued that class had become less relevant, he differed from advocates of the 'death of class' thesis in that he left open the possibility that cutbacks in redistributive

policies could pave the way for a revival of class politics.

Other scholars countered that class remained very much alive. They questioned the degree to which state policies had undermined the social importance of class divisions (Hout et al. 1993). At a basic level, they pointed to studies showing that people's class situation, as measured in a variety of ways, continued to shape earnings, wealth, health, and educational outcomes (Scott 2002). Additionally, they criticized 'death of class' thesis advocates for their overly narrow conception of class, which echoed industrial sociologists in equating 'working class' and 'manual worker'. Adjusting data to include more service workers in the working class showed that class remained a relevant analytical tool for understanding social and political outcomes, such as voting patterns (Manza et al. 1995). Furthermore, as Walter Korpi and Joakim Palme (2003) showed, in spite of shifts in the class and occupational structure, actors' position in the labor market still powerfully shaped not only their economic position but also their 'prestige, status, and opportunities for self-actualization' (p. 443). For these scholars, not only did class remain an analytically useful category, but it remained tightly linked to work-based social relations.

Meanwhile, after retreating from class in the 1980s and 1990s, some feminists called for reintegrating class as the new millennium approached (Gottfried 1998). This new feminist scholarship sought not only to expand notions of what counts as work and who is a worker, but to show how the very categories used to delineate class positions, far from being neutral 'empty spaces', in fact made assumptions about the gender and racial identities of their occupants. Most often, the default identity was white and male. While existing class analysis models such as those of Wright and Goldthorpe were not blind to gender and race, critics countered that the analytical separation of class ignored the fact that the occupational structure and social division of labor are profoundly gendered

and racialized (Crompton 2001). By this they meant that it is impossible to understand class divisions without understanding how assumptions about gender and race shape how employment relations are constructed, who gets placed in certain jobs, how that work is valued, and more (Acker 2006). Instead, they called for an analytical approach that took into account the 'intersectionality' of race, gender, and class as identities and systems of oppression (Cho et al. 2013; Levit 2002; McCall 2005).

Notwithstanding these defenses of the continued analytical relevance of class, there is substantial evidence that class as a subjective identity has declined. At an individual level, survey data collected in the 1970s and 1980s from Wright's 'Comparative Project on Class Structure and Consciousness' (Wright 1990, 1997) showed that levels of class consciousness, meaning respondents' self-reported understanding of belonging to a specific social class, was low across the industrialized world, save for Sweden. Other research has linked these individual findings to declines in class-based organization (Devine 1997).

More broadly, organizational expressions of class identity are much less pervasive today than they were 50 years ago, when convergence theory was in its prime, and scholars first raised the idea of the decline of class. Labor unions' membership rolls have declined across the industrialized world, and with it their organizational strength (Visser 2006; Western 1995). Meanwhile, most of the socialist and labor parties that served as political representatives of the working class for much for the twentieth century have muted or jettisoned their claims to represent working-class interests. Instead, they have replaced class appeals with appeals to vaguer 'progressive' political identities (Callaghan 2000; Lemke and Marks 1992; Przeworski and Sprague 1986). Furthermore, some argue that new forms of work organization have fundamentally altered how workers and managers are linked to organizational positions within and among firms. The rise of more temporary, contingent forms of work, combined with the

erosion of traditional 'career ladders', makes individuals see their work-life trajectories as tied more to individual decisions rather than to organizational structures (Boltanski and Chiapello 2005; Kalleberg 2011).

These trends seem to indicate that class as a subjective identity is in fact dead or dying. But some evidence points to the contrary. Kluegel et al.'s (1995) survey data showed that individuals have a sense of their social position and that this position influences how they perceive levels of socio-economic inequality: wealthier, high-status people were more likely to see a large, undifferentiated 'middle class', whereas poorer, low-status people were more likely to see a larger group of poor people and a smaller middle class, suggesting greater social differentiation. Moreover, their respondents, particularly poorer respondents, were willing to attribute their economic situation to 'social' factors such as lack of equal opportunity or the failure of the economic system. However, they also saw differences in wealth and poverty as a result of individual characteristics such as ability and motivation. These findings are consistent with a theory of 'split consciousness' (Mann 1973), whereby workers hold ambivalent or contradictory understandings of social divisions, and call upon individual or social understandings depending on the context.

That context is shaped by the organizational environment in which individuals operate. Given that those organizations most likely to promote class-based identities, namely labor unions and left parties, have either declined or muted their class characters in recent decades, it is unsurprising that individuals' reliance on class identities has faded as well. The question is whether the decline of class-based organization reflects the declining relevance of class in contemporary society, or if it is in fact the cause of that declining relevance. Put differently, is class being displaced, or is it being pushed out?

Advocates of the 'death of class' thesis argue in favor of displacement. They contend that the postwar growth of welfare states created a world of 'institutionalized

individualization', where individual citizens make claims on, and contributions to, states, instead of organized groups. This, they argue, has actually dissolved 'the culture of classes' (Beck 2007, p. 682). Echoing Hechter, they argue that the very conditions created by the collective struggles of class-based political movements in the past century ended up severing the link between economic position and group identity. As a result, new political identities based around cultural values (family, environment, etc.) have supplanted old class identities.

Others counter that class has been pushed out as a result of deliberate and successful attacks on the organizations that create and sustain class identities, the aforementioned left parties and unions. According to such accounts, recent decades have seen not so much the 'death' of class as its *defeat*. Class identities remain relevant, but they are in retreat. Sustained attacks on unions and strike defeats have created a 'crisis of representation', which has reduced opportunities for those identities to develop (Richards 2001). Simultaneously, legacies of defeat have created a stigmatized understanding of class, which is no longer viewed as a collective source of strength, but rather as a personalized source of shame (Sennett and Cobb 1972; Skeggs 1997). This in turn has created more space for 'neoliberal' individualization, the very process that advocates the 'death of class' thesis seen as driving class's declining relevance (Barker et al. 2013, pp.1–37; Duggan 2003; Harvey 2007; Smith 2000).

This critique of the 'death of class' thesis also extends to discussions of workplace reorganization. As labor process theorists have long observed, work organization is not a value-neutral process governed solely by efficiency considerations; it is in itself a struggle for power (Braverman 1998 [1974]; Parker and Slaughter 1994). As such, the increasing prevalence of more diffuse work-sites and more individualized work situations appears less as a process of adapting work to a more individualized society, and more as a successful effort on the part of employers to

suppress class identities and limit opportunities for collective action. Moreover, some scholars point out that notwithstanding technological advances, today's more individualized work organization is nothing new. Absent protections in the form of state regulations and unionization, wage labor tends to be flexible, precarious, and more individualized. Thus, it is argued that modern work arrangements share key similarities with much older work arrangements: the individualized contingency of the shape-up, piece rates, and home work that characterized the work world of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, before unions and workplace regulations had gained a foothold in industrialized countries (Quinlan 2012; Moody 2014, pp. 3–18). Just as conflict between workers and employers in this earlier period both reorganized the workplace and created the classes and class divisions that characterized industrial society, this argument suggests that future struggles around work could lead to new forms of work reorganization and new processes of class formation.

But even to the extent that workplace changes have in fact resulted in greater individualization, some research suggests that there is no inherent reason that this would undermine class identities (Savage 2000, pp. 121–147). On the contrary, it shows that individualization and class identities can co-exist, and are not necessarily counterposed. For example, individuals might express distinct class identities through individualized ideas of dignity, self-respect, personal autonomy, and more. The question, once again, is that of how class and individual identities are organized. While unions can and do organize workers collectively around individualized ideas, new managerial cultures have sought to claim them as their own (Boltanski and Chiapello 2005; Savage 2000). This effort at appropriation has been successful so far, but research suggests that this is not an inevitable consequence of changing values in post-industrial society. Rather, it is the outcome of ongoing social and political struggles.

In sum, the question of whether class is dead or alive remains contentious. Scholars'

assessment of the question depends in part on how they define class categories, particularly whether they see the decline of blue-collar jobs as a sign of working-class decline or recomposition. It also depends on how they conceptualize the relation between individualization and the decline in class-based organization: are class-based forms of organization declining as a result of increasing individualization and work fragmentation? Or is increasing individualization and work fragmentation a symptom of the defeat of class-based organizations? On both counts, if the answer is the former, class is indeed dead. If the latter, then reports of class's demise may be greatly exaggerated.

CONCLUSION: THE FUTURES OF CLASS AND WORK

What then is the future of research on class and work? Clearly individuals will continue to be divided based on occupation-related income levels and education, and many scholars of social stratification will continue to use these easily quantifiable markers to pursue further studies of inequality and social mobility. In this sense studies of class and work will continue. But what is the future of class as a theoretically and analytically relevant category, based on relations forged in the workplace? The answer to this question depends on how one characterizes the relation between the present and the past. Simply put, is the world we live in today fundamentally different from the world that existed prior to the 1970s, or is it a new chapter in the same story? If the former, then class and work may in fact be outdated categories from a bygone age, and their continued use will confuse far more than they enlighten. If the latter, then they may retain relevance, although the question remains as to how to reformulate conceptions of class and work to fit contemporary social and employment relations.

Those who see a radical break between the past and the present have jettisoned

class as a category, instead pursuing the idea that individualization, not class hierarchy or conflict, is the central dynamic shaping modern society. While not dismissing the persistence of social inequality, they contend that increasing globalization has rendered class divisions at a national level largely irrelevant, and that inequalities are no longer shaped by workplace relations, but by a mix of cultural, social, economic, and bureaucratic factors (Bauman 2012, 2013; Beck 1992, 2007; Pakulski 2005). For them, the key questions for future research will center around describing and understanding these new axes of differentiation and inequality.

While not emphasizing the social importance of individualization, other scholars have also observed a radical break between past and present that calls for a fundamental rethinking, if not outright rejection, of existing class categories. According to them, globalization, neoliberalism, and technological innovation have redrawn class boundaries within and across national borders. Divisions are no longer between owners and workers, or even different strata of workers. Rather, they are between those still within the system of stable employment and state-provided benefits, and those outside of it. Those who are excluded form a growing global 'precarariat', unable to secure a stable existence, and constantly in danger of being deemed a 'surplus population' (Rifkin 1995; Standing 2011; Wacquant 2009). With traditional work relationships in disarray and states increasingly incapable of providing for their citizens, the key questions for these scholars have less to do with strategies for shoring up employment and state social welfare policies, and more to do with developing analyses, policies, and regulatory frameworks at a more global scale.

Against these first two groups, other scholars see more continuity between past and present. Although technologies, economies and identities may have changed, they argue, these types of changes are nothing new within capitalist societies. On the

contrary, change is a constant under capitalism. Moreover, they point out that many of the challenges regarding workplace disorganization and class fragmentation that some see as distinct features of contemporary capitalism are in fact features of quite long standing. In terms of workplace relations, scholars going back to Marx have shown that wage labor has generally been quite precarious and contingent, without strong unions and state regulations. Save for the decades of the postwar period, precarity has been the norm for much of the world's population (Berberoglu 2010; Moody 2014, pp. 3–46; Quinlan 2012). As for class fragmentation and the emergence of multiple identities that compete with class, they contend that the development of class identities has never been a straightforward process. As Bert Klandermans (2001) observes, 'class as such never did unite ... there are always additional identifiers involved that explain spells of unity' (p. 326). Economic class relations have always been woven into a web of overlapping and competing identities (Barker and Dale 1998; Calhoun 1993). For this group, the key questions for future research involve examining how changing work relations are restructuring class relations, as well as identifying and explaining the conditions under which class identities do or do not achieve social and political salience.

Amidst broad popular and academic concern over the effects of globalization and growing inequality on contemporary states and societies, debates surrounding class and work are unlikely to recede anytime soon. And regardless of the sharp disagreements among different camps, each has laid out sets of questions that will drive future research. But this future research is unlikely to resolve any debates. Rather, it will likely proceed on separate fronts, each group using different conceptions of class to explore different aspects of the causes and consequences of social inequality. Given the centrality of class as a sociological concept, and its multi-dimensional character, there is room for this plurality of perspectives.

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NOTES

- 1 Goldthorpe himself has expressed reticence about describing his class schema as Weberian (Goldthorpe 2000b).
- 2 This conception of class derived from Lockwood's famous study of white-collar clerks (Lockwood 1958).

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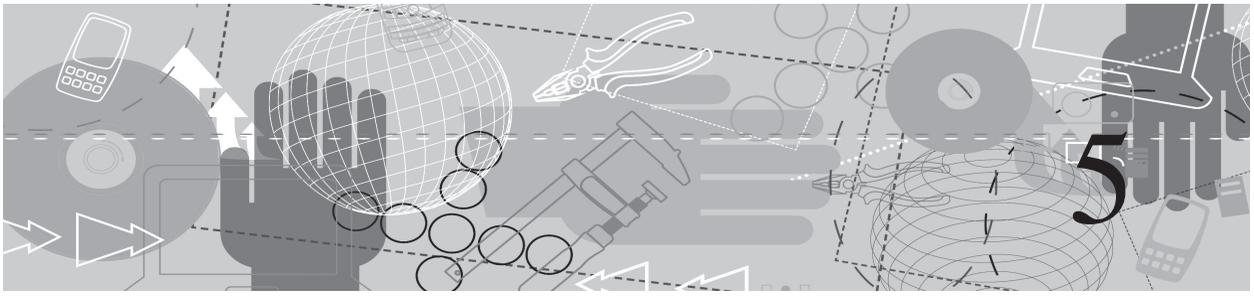
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Gender and Work

Harriet Bradley

In post-war sociology, work became a major concern, building on the classic accounts of capitalism and industrialization offered by Marx, Weber and Durkheim. In particular, a rich tradition of case studies of particular workplaces grew up. Excellent and influential texts such as Goldthorpe and Lockwood's *Affluent Worker* studies (Goldthorpe et al. 1968), Robert Blauner's *Alienation and Freedom* (1964), Eli Chinoy's *Automobile Workers and the American Dream* (1955) or Huw Beynon's *Working for Ford* (1973) were largely, and in some cases completely, concerned with male workers. Indeed as this list shows, factory work, and in particular car assembly, had become paradigmatic of work relations. The work of women was largely, in Sheila Rowbotham's (1977) memorable phrase, hidden from history!

Now, of course, looking back from the vantage point of the twenty-first century, it is widely accepted that the typical worker in the deindustrialized nations of the Global North is more likely to be a women working in retail

or a call centre than a male factory worker. In between then and now, however, gender made its big entry into the curriculum. There had been previously a few pioneering studies which focused on women's labour, and which would prove an inspiration to researchers in the 1970s. Some examples are the historical studies by Clark (1910, reprinted 1982) and Pinchbeck (1930, reprinted 1981) that looked at the labour of women before and during industrialization in Britain; the exploration of women's 'double burden' of work inside and outside the home by Myrdal and Klein (1956) and Nye and Hoffman (1963); and studies of housework by Gavron (1966) and Lopata (1971). However, the real surge of interest in gender and work occurred in the 1980s, as a result of the influence of second-wave feminism in the academy in America, Britain, Europe and Australia. Exploration of the many ways in which 'work', no longer limited to 'employment' but extended to include domestic and reproductive work, is

gendered has produced a rich and extensive corpus of theory and research.

This body of work is the subject of this chapter. It starts by looking at the original rediscovery of 'women's work' by 1980s feminists, then considers the consolidation of studies of gendered work in the next two decades, speculates on the directions of study taken during sociology's 'postmodern moment', and continues by looking at the contemporary scene and the position of women and men within the globalizing economy. For reasons of space, this chapter draws mainly on studies of women in Europe and America, with statistical data taken chiefly from the UK. However, to conclude there is a brief section on gendered work in a more global context. Throughout the chapter it is urged that we need to consider both paid and unpaid work if we want to understand gender differences and divisions. The other major theme is the importance of context in shaping both gender relations and also the sociological study of them. In particular, specific political and economic conjunctures produce changes in gender relations and in the interests of those who study them.

INVISIBLE NO LONGER: THE EXCAVATION OF WOMEN'S WORK

This is clearly illustrated in the burst of interest in researching women's work in Britain in the late 1970s and early 1980s. Post-war expansion of higher education, and 1960s affluence and youth rebellion had produced a batch of young radical female scholars and research funding was easier to come by, relative to now. There were a number of key influences informing the exciting case studies of women employees that emerged in these years. As well as the background of second-wave feminism, there was a strong input from Marxism which was the dominant radical perspective in sociology at that time. In addition, the highly influential work of Braverman (1974) had stimulated an interest in close

study of particular 'labour processes' as illustrated by the institution of the International Labour Process Conference. Finally, there were a number of powerful and engrossing case studies and ethnographies of male factory workers (for example, Beynon 1973; Burawoy 1982; Dore 1973; Edwards 1979; Goldthorpe et al. 1968; Haraszti 1978; Kamata 1982; Linhart 1981; Nichols and Beynon 1979), which served as templates for women scholars wishing to explore women's work.

The case studies by researchers such as Glucksmann (writing as Cavendish, 1982), Pollert (1981) and Westwood (1984) opened up the world of women's employment, showing both the negative and positive aspects. Women factory workers were ill-paid compared to men and were confined to the lower levels of the organizational hierarchies. Their work was socially defined as less skilled, although it might be described as expert; when Sally Westwood tried to work as a machinist to carry out ethnographic research in a hosiery factory, she simply could not achieve the necessary speed and dexterity. The work was often tightly controlled, either intrinsically by demanding piecework systems or externally by close supervision: Westwood observed how the women were tied to their machines, while the male knitters were able to move around the factory floor. Milkman (1985) offered a rather more positive view of women factory workers, observing their important role in labour movement struggles in America's major cities.

Of course women's work does not just take place in factories. Studies of clerical work and the professions began to open up understanding of the role of women in these areas (Crompton and Jones 1984). Spencer and Podmore (1987) showed how women in professions dominated by men were faced with a 'double bind': if they appeared feminine in their behaviour and appearance they were judged to be out of place 'in a man's world', but if they adopted a masculine style at work they were deemed to have spoiled their identities as women. Pringle's work on secretaries (1989) revealed that the women

justified their own subjection to men by negative views about their own sex as being bitchy and stated their preference for having a male boss. 'Pink-collar' work was seen as acceptable for women, requiring them to provide low-level service for men in managerial roles and adding a decorative element to office life.

Despite the restrictions they faced, however, the women factory workers studied by Westwood had developed rich and supportive shop-floor cultures and valued their jobs for the companionship and conviviality they offered. Indeed, a theme that runs throughout studies of women workers is that of escape from home and domesticity into a world of friendship and gossip. A common motivation women offer for returning to work after a spell at home is 'wanting to make something of myself': not to be just a wife and mother. The later revealing study by Hochschild (1997), *The Time Bind*, argued this point strongly; the women she studied complained that their work in the home was invisible and undervalued and it was only in the workplace that they could feel a sense of self-worth, achievement and recognition. So while men tended to talk of escaping from work, to the home, the bar or the sports ground, women experienced an escape into work.

This perception was buoyed up by the discussion of housework (Friedan, 1963; Oakley, 1974). Oakley argued that both the invisibility and immeasurability of domestic work led to its low-status and lack of value; women she studied felt trapped and isolated in the home. There was limited social support for women struggling with a heavy burden of childcare and housework (as is still the case today). If the husband was a high-earner the cage of domestic drudgery might be gilded, but it was still a cage. Friedan referred to the full-time housewives who unaccountably appeared bored and disappointed despite their comfortable lifestyles as suffering from 'the disease without a name'. Because husbands went out to work, they were seen to have the right to leisure after work, but, as Deem (1986) found in her study of leisure and gender in Milton Keynes, since domestic

work never seems to end, married women had virtually no real leisure time.

Men, of course, like Hochschild's respondents, find self-worth and identity at work, as was demonstrated in Cockburn's (1983, 1985, 1991) studies of the gendering of work. In particular, her study of printing workers (1983) revealed how the change of the printing process, from hot metal technology to computerized page setting, left the men feeling 'emasculated' with the loss of skills and their inability to fix their computers when they broke down. Under industrial capitalism, pride in being the 'male breadwinner' became a recompense for long, gruelling hours of work; and despite the prevalence of dual-earning households in the second half of the twentieth century, masculinity is still very bound up with breadwinning. Suicide rates among unemployed men are high.

In terms of theory, many of these 1980s studies employed some form of Marxist analysis alongside their feminism. Hartmann's (1981) well-known account of the 'unhappy marriage' of feminism and Marxism was one of many attempts to theorize the inter-relationship of capitalism and patriarchal domination; she argued that taking over concepts from Marxist analysis and trying to apply them to relations between the sexes meant that inevitably class was seen as more significant than gender, which tended to slide into the background. However, writers like Cavendish (1982) and Pollert (1981) explored carefully how class and gender came together to structure working-class women's lives. Capitalism and patriarchy were seen to combine to construct women as a cheap form of labour; profits for the owners were increased and men were able to maintain their dominance in the family because of their superior earnings. This partly explains men's resistance to allowing women to enter 'their jobs'. Whatever women do tends to be devalued just because it is done by women. Depressingly, the tobacco workers studied by Pollert seemed to accept that men 'deserved' to earn more. It would take decades of feminist

campaigning to change this attitude in any way at all.

Long before Crenshaw (1989) coined the term 'intersectionality', these studies were exploring the interrelation of class, gender, age and ethnicity in the factory workers' experience. Pollert (1981) noted the age division among the workers in the tobacco factory. Young women viewed their jobs as just a temporary stage before getting married and having children, and their earnings as giving them access to a world of romance and consumer pleasures. The older women, who knew that a return to the factory to support household needs was the likely future for them, appeared, nonetheless, to allow the young to retain this illusion of freedom. The influential work of Glenn (1992) showed how in the United States class and gender intersected with race, especially in the context of the past history of slavery, to construct a view of African American women, along with other women of colour, as a suitable source of caring labour, an association that continues today (see Chapter 24). Another study of the interplay of ethnicity, class and gender in a specific context was Phizacklea's *Unpacking the Fashion Industry* (1990), a study of the garment industry in the Midlands of Britain. Restricted in their employment options by racism, male immigrants turned to self-employment. Little capital was needed to set up a small workshop to turn out cheap clothing. The men typically employed family members and relatives on low wages to operate machines; women had no option but to take these jobs, because they had come to the UK as dependants on their male relatives and often had limited language skills.

Minority ethnic women are characteristically pushed the lowest position in occupational hierarchies, working in private-sector care homes, as office cleaners or hotel maids. Two decades later Bridget Anderson's (2000) revealing study of domestic servants in the capital cities of France, Germany, Greece, Italy and Spain showed how migration rules and restrictions still continue to shape

immigrant women's lives, trapping them as virtual slaves to exploitative employers.

GENDERED WORK: SEXUAL DIVISIONS OF LABOUR

These early case studies laid the ground for the study of gender and work for the next three decades. Since then a massive body of work, firmly grounded in empirical research but backed up by theoretical analysis, has accumulated, studying the processes of gendering. The work has been supported, at least during the 1980s and 1990s by what I termed a 'climate of equality' (Bradley 1998) symbolized and legitimized by the passing of various key pieces of legislation under the auspices of the European Union, following on from the passing of equalities legislation in the United States. Readers critical of the EU during the moment of euroscepticism that emerged as a result of the euro crisis in the 2000s should be aware of the crucial role of the EU in compelling member states to fall in line with its equality and diversity policies. Neoliberal capitalist employers freed from the constraints of the EU would be quick to shed equality machinery which they regard as blocks to profit accumulation and the free market.

The key concepts to emerge from this epoch of study were the gender (and racial) segregation of work, the sex-typing of jobs, and the broader notion of gendering. Joan Acker (1990) provided a classic analysis of how the labour market, workplace and jobs were gendered. She argued that gendering was involved in the division of labour, including the construction of hierarchies, in which men took the top jobs, and the 'sex-typing' of jobs, typified as women's work or men's work. Gendering also was manifest in the symbols and imagery within organizations, alongside patterns and rituals of interaction. A particularly significant aspect of gendering lay in the way male and female bodies were differently valued in the workplace. Men were

‘at home’ in the workplace, women were intruders, often pushed into separate departments – ‘women’s spaces’ like the typing pool or the beauty salon. In all these ways men and women, masculinities and femininities are marked out as different.

Gendering, therefore, must be seen as an active and continuous process by which jobs as they are developed are associated with either women or men; this hardens out into the prevailing structure of the sexual division of labour. Through these processes masculine and feminine identities are affirmed and consolidated at work. As we spend so much of our time at work, workplaces are important sites of identity formation, though of course not the only ones. But they do have a strong effect on our adult selves. As Westwood (1984) stated, girls enter the factory and come out as women.

The world of paid work into which young women of all classes enter is one marked by gender segregation, whether of a naked and obvious sort or something more subtle. It is orthodox to see it as having two dimensions (Hakim 1981). Horizontal segregation is the clustering of women and men into separate occupational categories (women are nurses and secretaries, men are bricklayers and drivers of heavy goods vehicles): as these job examples, plucked at random, show it is usually easier for men to insert themselves into jobs seen as ‘women’s work’ than for women to move into male specialisms.

Table 5.1 shows the concentration of women and men in the UK in broad occupational categories in 2013. Although there are national variations in the precise jobs which are seen as ‘men’s’ and ‘women’s’ work, roughly similar patterns would be displayed in most countries of the Global North.

The table shows the dominance of men in skilled trades (90%) and factory work (89%) while women are the clear majority in three sectors: caring and leisure services, retail and customer services, and secretarial and administrative jobs. The former two of these are notoriously poorly paid, with limited promotion chances. Gottfried (2013) provides

Table 5.1 Percentage share of employment of women and men by occupational categories in 2013

	Percentage	
	Men	Women
Managers and Senior Officials	66.9	33.1
Professional Occupations	50.3	49.7
Associate Professional and Technical Occupations	57.4	42.6
Administrative and Secretarial Occupations	23.4	76.6
Skilled Trades Occupations	90.0	10.0
Caring, Leisure and Other Service Occupations	18.0	82.0
Sales and Customer Service Occupations	37.3	62.7
Process, Plant and Machine Operatives	88.6	11.4
Elementary Occupations	54.3	45.7

Source: Labour Force Survey.

figures for the US which show the concentration of women in a variety of caring occupations in 2010: 91% of registered nurses, 88% of home health aides, 89% of maids and cleaners, 95% of childcare workers, and 86% of home care aides. Women also make up over 80% of teachers and teacher assistants, secretaries, receptionists, bookkeepers and clerks.

Although the proportions of women and men in the professional groupings are shown as roughly equal in Table 5.1, we know that men tend to dominate in the better-paid professions. Moreover, if we move to more precise job categories, segregation becomes more marked.

As the table shows, male-dominated sectors show higher degrees of segregation. This is partly because, as noted earlier, men themselves often jealously protect these areas from female entrants through exclusionary practices (Walby 1990; Witz 1992). Kanter’s classic study of the corporate world (1977) showed how male bonding, what she termed ‘homosociality’, was disrupted by female presences. Male surveyors in Addison’s study of universities (2014) told her how they had to tone down their banter and stop swearing when women joined their unit. Women who take on ‘men’s work’ may often find

themselves the victims of harassment and bullying (Bradley, 1998). Male preference for working with their own sex is also a factor in the vertical dimension of gender segregation, the clustering of women in the lower posts in occupational pyramids and male domination of the top posts. Thus, for example, Eagly and Carli reported in 2007 that in the largest 50 corporations in the EU women made up only 4% of CEOs and 11% of top executives.

As was argued in *Men's Work, Women's Work* (Bradley 1989), while the structure of gender segregation shifts, accompanying both technological and sectoral developments and broader processes of socio-economic and cultural change, what remains constant is that there is such a structure. Maria Charles (2003) has explored this in comparative perspective, revealing its worldwide persistence. In her work with Karen Bradley she studies the link of labour market segregation with educational choice of disciplines in 44 countries at various levels of development, noting the dominance of men in STEM subjects (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) in all countries. Charles and Bradley note that the degree of segregation in these subjects is higher in the more developed countries. They explain these findings in terms of the greater stress put on individual freedom and self-expression within Western values, which inform career choice; this is backed by the strength of enduring cultural beliefs which they describe as 'gender essentialist ideology' (2009: 924). It may be that in other countries economic imperatives and concern for family well-being may lead women into technical arenas. For example, in Malaysia many women choose to study engineering. However, there are structural as well as cultural factors at play: thus in Malaysia women end up within the engineering industry in administrative not technical or on-site roles, because travel and work on site are not seen as compatible with women's ascribed cultural roles and responsibility for the home (Rokis 2004).

Horizontal gender segregation tends to be most marked in the lower-levels of the social

class structure, especially in manual and craft skills. All-male and all-female specialties are less evident in the service sector, where women's employment is anyway prevalent. Women and men tend to work together in schools, offices and hospitals, though vertical segregation is still evident. Crompton and Sanderson (1990), however, developed the idea of 'gendered niches' to account for the more subtle forms of segregation in the professions. Witz (1992), in her rich account of the development of the professions, used a Weberian analysis of different forms of 'social closure'; over time outright exclusionary tactics gave way to job segregation as men secured the most prized specialisms for themselves. For example, in medicine men tend to be surgeons and hospital consultants, while women tend to be GPs and paediatricians. In the legal professions women go for family law, men for corporate law and criminal law. Female students and recruits in these areas still quickly become aware of subtle processes of channelling as they come into contact with professionals, many of whom use tactics such as sexual harassment, sexist jokes and patronizing statements to undermine their self-confidence and sense of competency.

Nonetheless, apart from the manual trades which are still highly segregated, the boundaries between men's and women's work can be seen to have gradually eroded over the decades since the 1980s, as part of the general worldwide increase in the proportion of women entering paid employment. This trend has been described as the 'feminization of (paid) work' (unaccompanied by quite such an influx of men into unpaid work!). Bradley et al. (2000) distinguished three aspects to feminization: the proportional increase of women in the labour force; the growth in post-industrial societies of service jobs seen as more suitable for women, and the transformation of work tasks with greater demand for 'soft skills' and customer-facing activities, which women were considered to possess to a greater degree than men. In addition, the current global trend of informalization of

labour, with both men and women increasingly forced into insecure labour, is making the conditions of work for men closer to those historically experienced by women.

Labour force statistics for the UK illustrate these trends. Over the past decades there has been a rise in the percentage of women aged 16 to 64 who are in employment and a fall in the percentage of men. In June 2013 67% of women aged 16 to 64 were in work, an increase from 53% in 1971. For men the percentage fell to 76% in 2013 from 92% in 1971.

However, it is important to note that nearly half these women worked part-time hours (42% as opposed to only 12% of men (ONS, 2013)). This is a worldwide trend.

Might feminization be slowly bringing an end to segregation and the sex-typing of jobs? Segregation is notoriously difficult to measure over time, given that the nature of occupations and jobs continuously evolves. By and large studies suggest that there has been a degree of desegregation over the past decades but that it is mainly due to the decline of 'traditional' male jobs. A study of segregation in Denmark by Emerek revealed that in both 1997 and 2003 less than 25% of both women and men worked in 'mixed' jobs (where women make up 40–60% of employees), and 30% of each sex held male or female-dominated jobs (where 80% of the jobs were held respectively by men and by women) (Emerek 2006). When one digs down into job specificity and content, the degree of segregation will characteristically increase. A good example is Bergman's analysis of a seemingly 'integrated' organization: a Swedish university. While in terms of formal position in the hierarchy nearly half of women and three-quarters of men worked in mixed occupations, at the level of jobs the figures shrunk to around a third for each sex and at department level only a quarter were working in integrated areas (Bergman 2006). We may conclude from this that gender segregation, although less stark than in the past or in many countries of the Global South, is quite persistent and that, by and large, men and

women tend to do different things in their workplaces.

One way that the tasks performed by the sexes differ is that women are more often involved in jobs characterized by what Arlie Hochschild (1983) termed 'emotional labour' in her classic study of air hostesses. This refers to the requirements of many customer-facing and caring jobs. As well as performing practical tasks for customers and clients, the worker is expected to make them feel comfortable and offer appropriate emotional support and reassurance. To do this employees have to learn to handle and restrain their own emotions, in effect putting on a false self. In her analysis of this 'emotion work' which the employee must learn to carry out Hochschild distinguished between surface acting and 'deep' acting, when the assumed behaviour becomes a permanent aspect of one's self.

Emotional labour is often closely associated with 'body work', which has been studied notably by Wolkowitz (2006; Wolkowitz et al. 2013). The work of beauticians, therapists, masseurs, nurses, sports coaches and others often involves close and intimate contact with the bodies of clients and customers. Such work is often performed by women, as this is deemed to guard against inappropriate sexual meanings being imputed to the performance of the body task. Wolkowitz argues that such work is on the increase in contemporary capitalism, partly because of the importance of branding and also because of the cultural value increasingly put on beauty and 'fitness' by ordinary men and women. It is instructive that in common parlance among young people 'fit' means both healthy and good-looking. Gimlin (2007) notes that although the various forms of body work are on the increase, they can carry stigma because of the associations with sexuality (the connection of massage with 'massage parlours' and prostitution is an obvious link) and with the waste products of the body. Thus people who perform such maintenance work on other people are often low-paid and female.

Here we see how age and class intersect with gender, because, for example, those who

perform beauty therapy for celebrities are well rewarded, while the most stigmatized form of body work is probably the care of the elderly. Indeed, domiciliary carers and cleaners, for example, are seen as being at the bottom of the occupational hierarchy because of the jobs' image of 'dirty work', and because the skills involved are seen as 'natural' to women and thus as holding less social value than those forms of skill acquired through training, such as technical (and largely male) skills. Shildrick et al. (2012), in their study of employment in Teesside, report the manager of a café telling them 'all the staff are women, obviously ... they are better at cleaning and cooking' (2012: 72). Yet as work by Hebson (2013), Hayes (2013) and others has shown, many of the women who look after old people love their work and take pride in performing it well, often going the extra mile to help out their clients, despite the terrible pay. Nishikawa and Tanaka (2009), looking at care workers in Japan, posit the idea that care workers are, in effect, knowledge workers, drawing on a range of tacit and learned skills. This is a prime example of the continued devaluation of a job, just because it is performed by women.

SEX AND IDENTITY AT WORK: POSTMODERN EXPLORATIONS?

The rise in body work along with increased consumerism have had important impacts on employers' usage of labour. Increasingly recruitment, particularly of young women and men, is based not just on skills and qualifications but on appearance and sexuality (Adkins 1996). This is particularly the case in the hospitality and leisure industry, in which, as noted above, women predominate. The waitresses in the American restaurant chain, Hooters, exemplify this trend, being required to wear skimpy revealing costumes and flirt with the male customers. To avoid charges under equality legislation, the young women are obliged to sign a disclaimer in

their contract that they accept these conditions as part of their work. Similarly studies of female airline attendants by Hochschild and others reported that they were carefully scrutinized over their appearance, make-up and hairstyles, and even monitored for weight. Thus, labour becomes aestheticized and sexualized (Witz et al. 2003). This suggests an interesting shift in the nature of gendered work in recent decades.

Indeed, here was a curious homology between the development of western economies in the late twentieth century and developments in the study of gender and work. Theorists of capitalism such as Ray and Sayer (1999) and Du Gay (1996) argued that there was a degree to which culture had become more embedded in the economy: cultural and creative industries were becoming more dominant and corporations were more concerned with brand and image. The mass markets were becoming more individualized and concerned with style and differentiation. At the same time sociology took a 'cultural turn' under the influence of post-modern and post-structural thinking. This led to new interests in the study of work; attention turned from material factors to an interest in work cultures, identities of masculinity and femininity, embodiment, and sexuality. The studies discussed above were symptomatic of this shift.

A key text in the study of class and identity was Beverley Skeggs' *Formations of Class and Gender* (1997). Using concepts drawn from Bourdieu, Skeggs showed how young working-class women training as care workers distinguished themselves from 'the poor' or, as she put it, 'disidentified' from their working-classness by affirming their respectability in their dress and behaviour. A recent study by Addison (2014) also uses a Bourdieusian framework to explore how people learn to 'play the game' if they are to thrive in the workplace; in her study of workers in universities she again observed how people sought to conform to norms of respectability in dress, language and demeanour in order to avoid seeming like 'a fish out

of water'. Others have studied the range of subjectivities and identities available to women.

Another important study dealing with some of these themes was McDowell's research into women working in the city. McDowell pointed out that female bodies presented themselves as the 'other', intruding into a male world. These bodies were seen as 'leaky' and dangerous, bringing sexual temptation into the workplace; women menstruate, women are emotional and shed tears. Thus the women in her study had to tread a fine line in choosing what to wear for work each day: there was no standard uniform of suit and tie as there was for men. Wearing trousers was seen as aping masculinity and discouraged, but on the other hand women had to be careful about revealing too much flesh and appearing too fluffy and pretty. Women aspiring to managerial roles were counselled to wear navy or grey suits with pastel blouses (Kaye 2014). Male bodies are regarded as the norm and in order to be accepted women have to find acceptable modes of self-presentation and forms of femininity not perceived as too challenging. It is the same fine line young women students have to walk to avoid being labelled a slut or 'dog' on the one hand or unattractive, boring or a 'dyke' on the other. The point here is that femininity and female embodiment need constant effort, care and monitoring, while masculinity is an unthinking 'default' identity. That this identity work is an ongoing progress is nicely expressed in this statement from McDowell:

Men and women do not come to work with their gender attributes fixed in place but rather 'do' gender in the workplace, inscribing gendered characteristics on the body in ways which conform to or transgress accepted patterns of behaviour. (McDowell 1997: 133)

While McDowell's respondents struggled with these issues, a happier spin was put on sexuality at work by Halford et al. (1997). They argued that the expression of heterosexuality at work, within appropriate limits, was actually welcomed by managers as

improving employee morale. The managers believed that the stimulation provided by the presence of the other sex in the workplace encouraged teams to work harder and more creatively. The introduction of mixed working groups can thus be seen as a form of control of workers, one that humanizes the workplace and thereby promotes compliance. However, this development of working environments as sites of heteronormativity brings problems with it. Although, as the quotation above from McDowell stresses, it is also possible for employees to demonstrate transgressive forms of behaviour, it is very difficult for lesbians, gays, bisexuals and trans people to 'out' themselves at work without experiencing stigma and discrimination; which is widely reported, for example in a cross-European survey by the Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA 2013). Moreover, Hearn and Parkin (2001) show that high levels of sexual harassment and, in some environments such as the armed forces, extreme forms of sexual violence such as rape, are the consequences of the sexualization of work.

This period of research into gender then drew upon ideas of the 'culturization of work' (Du Gay 1996; Strangleman and Warren 2008), turning away from the more economic aspects of work to study identities, sexualities and embodiment as key features of the gendering of employment relations. Workplaces were viewed as active sites of identity construction, where prevalent discourses of femininity and masculinity shaped patterns of behaviour of female and male employees, encouraging conformity and emphasizing the difference and separation of the genders (Whitehead 2002). In such processes, views of appropriate masculine and feminine attributes may subtly alter, as dominant groups seek to maintain their power positions in the hierarchy. Thus Wacjman (1988) noted that in the face of the feminization of jobs, men were taking steps to be seen to acquire and deploy 'soft skills', while women may have to adopt masculine attitudes such as workaholicism, toughness and ruthlessness if they are to succeed in a male

world. There is a double bind here, though as noted by Arianna Huffington commenting on the case of Jill Abramson, who was sacked as editor of the *New York Times*:

There's no question that the language being used – that she was 'brash', 'abrasive' these are words used almost exclusively about women. Men tend to be 'driven' and 'authoritative'. There's no doubt that there is a double standard for women at the top. (Interview in the *Guardian*, 2 June 2014)

Like many other women who gain positions of power and authority, Huffington was frequently told that she was 'difficult'. A classic example is that of Hillary Clinton who was perpetually defamed and criticized in the press because she did not conform to the standard view of how a president's wife should behave, present herself and be dressed.

GENDER AND RECESSION: 'LA LUTTE CONTINUE'

One notable element of some of these discussions emerging from the post-structural and cultural turn in feminist thinking was an assumption – sometimes explicit, sometimes implicit – that the problems of gender inequality and disadvantage, at least in their more obvious forms, were diminishing and that patriarchal attitudes were in retreat. As Bea Campbell puts it:

In the twenty-first century the prevailing faith is that the age of patriarchy is over, the world's institutions have given up on it; women are winning and feminism, therefore, is passé; and if women aren't there yet then it is only a matter of evolution. (2013: 2–3)

Certainly in the late 1990s and early 2000s female students often informed me that 'we're all equal now'. Linked to this was the notion of post-feminism: the opening up of the labour market to women, their academic achievement and the outstripping of boys by girls in school examinations (a European-wide phenomenon), while the rise of dual-earning families and joint parenting practices

was seen to signal the end of economic inequality between the sexes. Even Sylvia Walby, in general no friend to postmodernism and post-structuralism, seems with hindsight to have taken an over-optimistic view in documenting the switch away from a domestic gender regime so that most women were able to work for wages rather having the obligation to see mothering and housework as their main or only tasks in life (Walby 1997).

In the twenty-first century this optimism seems misplaced. As was argued in *Myths at Work* (Bradley et al. 2000), the feminization of the labour force did not mean an end to gender segregation, either vertical or horizontal. Looking back, the achievement of second-wave feminism was to help well-qualified middle- and upper-class women fight their way into management roles and make some headway into the elite, traditionally male-dominated, professions, though not to the very top. It did little for working-class women, as manual work remained highly segregated by gender and jobs in the bottom end of the service sector, such as retail and private care, remained poorly rewarded with limited promotion chances. Above all, there has been no re-evaluation of care and reproductive work.

In their book *Hard Times*, Tom Clark and Anthony Heath (2014) note how inflation over the period of austerity in the UK (especially the rise in the prices of food, energy and petrol) affects not only the poor, but people in the middle ranges of society. An example they cite is Maria, a mother working full-time, who lives in Cricklewood in London. Her earnings give her £1,400 a month; her rent is £1,385. That leaves her just £15 per month. In the school holidays childcare costs her £28 a day. Childcare in the UK is the most expensive in Europe. The National Childcare Trust reckons that a couple with two children will have to pay around £7,500 per year for childcare. Women like Maria can only survive by means of child tax credits: even those have recently been cut. In the run-up to the current UK election, Chancellor George Osborne

spoke of freezing tax credits and benefits for more years: a terrible blow for lone mothers and mothers in poor working households. No wonder many women yearn for the kind of state involvement in universal childcare provision provided in the Nordic countries. In Sweden the cost of childcare for each child at a subsidized nursery is about £113 a month.

At the higher end of the social ladder, even the most privileged and well-qualified middle-class women can find it hard to access and to retain the highest-level jobs – the recent cases of Jill Abramson, noted above, and of April McMahon – Vice Chancellor of Aberystwyth University, who was subject to online petitions for her resignation, show the troubles women face when they reach positions of power. Decisive and authoritarian behaviour, typical of many male CEOs, is not seen as acceptable in women. Meanwhile many women (including myself) have been told they are too soft and emotional to take top jobs: the persistent double bind. Moreover, the long-hours culture which afflicts the corporate world in many countries, especially the UK and the US, deters women with children from seeking top jobs, as do the increasing demands of intensive contemporary motherhood: the school runs, the ferrying of children to after-school activities and the schools' demands for parental (usually maternal) involvement (Lareau 2003).

We can state, then, that women remain in the lower echelons of the division of labour and above all are constrained in their choices by the continuation of the 'dual burden'. Despite men as fathers showing greater commitment to engaging with their children and sharing in parenting, in the majority of households in every country in the world women bear the major responsibility for domestic labour, both childcare and housework. Oriel Sullivan and Jonathon Gershuny have been studying domestic work using time use data for many years. Their studies show that from the 1970s to the 2000s in the UK, the time when women were moving into paid work, men's contribution to the daily chores of housework – cooking and cleaning – increased at the rate of

Table 5.2 Daily contributions of men and women to domestic labour at different time periods

<i>Year</i>	<i>Women: average minutes daily</i>	<i>Men: average minutes daily</i>
Housework 1975	197	20
Housework 2004	146	53
Childcare 1970s	26	10
Childcare 2000s	42	17

Source: compiled from Campbell (2013), drawing on the work of Gershuny, Sullivan and Kan.

about one minute per day per year (Gershuny and Kan 2012; Sullivan 2000), although the gap between women's and men's contribution is decreasing. Table 5.2 highlights the disparities in women's and men's daily input into domestic labour and childcare.

If the housework gap is narrowing, the situation around childcare is stark (the lower overall times for childcare reflect the fact that not everybody has children). Not only do men do less than women, but women's daily input has increased since the 1970s, reflecting issues discussed earlier (the cost of childcare, the rise of intensive mothering). This, of course, continues to restrict women's labour market participation and progress. Budig and England (2001) found that the wage penalty for motherhood in the USA was 7%. This has subsequent effects on both pensions and promotion chances. When women have children they step off the career ladder while men continue to climb; and women returners may find themselves setting their feet back on a lower step.

A recent survey in Australia revealed that a third of women reported having experienced depression after childbirth (Campbell 2014). An interesting study by Paula Nicolson (1998) on post-natal depression analysed the 'baby blues' in terms of loss of identity and potential. The mothers experienced a shift in selfhood, often compared to an earthquake. While mothers stop paid work all together or, characteristically, move to part-time jobs, the counter-tendency is for men to take on more working hours, working overtime to ensure the family has enough for its increased

needs (ONS 2013). It is reported that 70% of fathers employed in the City of London work 10-hour days, meaning both that women find it hard to take such jobs and that fathers can have minimal involvement in childcare (Campbell 2013). The earthquake for men is more like a tremor!

All these trends, which persisted through the 1990s and into the 2000s were intensified by the world recession of 2008, which can be said to have made gender equality one of its many casualties, as was the case in earlier recessions (Edgell and Duke 1983). Interestingly, in both the US and the UK there was initial talk of a 'he-cession' as the first casualties were men in the hard-hit financial and construction sectors (Gottfried 2013). However, while male employment rallied with the slow economic recovery, in the longer run women suffered more greatly. The Fawcett Society, which lobbies for women's rights in the UK, described it as a 'triple whammy'. First, the slashing of jobs in the public sector as part of the austerity regime meant that many women lost decent well-paid jobs, and were forced into unemployment or into insecure, badly paid work. Second, welfare benefits were cut, leaving disadvantaged women struggling to maintain their families (witness the massive spread in food banks in the UK). Third, many state-run and voluntary-sector services and schemes designed to bridge the gap between poor families and the world of work were axed, depriving more women of jobs and cutting off other forms of support. Widespread youth unemployment, even among graduates, has increased the numbers of young adults remaining in the family home post-education, adding to the burden of domestic work for mothers.

Arguably the erosion of equal opportunities can be seen in the longer context of the rise of neoliberal forms of capitalism (Walby 2011). The ideology of freeing up the market has unleashed a ruthlessly competitive form of corporate strategizing, involving the shedding of secure jobs and their replacement with insecure jobs such as the infamous 'zero-hour

contracts'. The auguries for women are worrying. In the academic sector in the UK, universities are targeting older workers in non-professorial posts for redundancies and voluntary severance, replacing them with armies of temporary workers on fixed-term contracts and hourly pay rates. In the retail sector, a major employer of women, automatic tills are replacing female cashiers, and the giant supermarket chain Asda (Walmart's UK operation) announced in 2014 that it was intending to restructure, cutting out numbers of middle-management jobs, many of which will be held by women – supervisory and lower-management roles in retail have been one area where traditionally women without higher qualifications can climb up internal career ladders and gain reasonable salaries. In the UK the privatization of domiciliary care for the elderly deprived numerous women of local authority jobs with good pay and conditions. Private care companies do not pay for travel costs or waiting time, pushing the real wages of their employees below the level of the minimum wage, which stood at £6.31 per hour in 2014 in the UK for those aged over 21. These changes are legitimated by a liberal ideology of meritocracy which justifies increased pay differentials in terms of market needs and the 'war for talent'. The obscenely high bonuses paid to top bankers are a notable example, but this process also contributes to the continued undervaluation of work performed by working-class people and women, as noted by McDowell:

The shift from 'brawn' to 'brain' jobs, for example, is celebrated in the contemporary vision of a knowledge-based economy, where the trivial daily tasks of servicing the economy are ignored. (McDowell 2009)

The outlook for women in the post-recession recovery, then, seems bleak: the loss of decent jobs and the rise of insecure contracts push many of them into the precariat. This is the concept developed by Standing (2011) to describe the worldwide phenomenon of people trapped in episodes of insecure low-paid employment. Shildrick et al. define the

precariat as ‘both the working poor and the insecurely employed, but most importantly [those who] lack a secure work-based identity normally associated with building a “career” and belonging to an occupational community’ (2012: 25). However, Shildrick et al. dissent from Standing’s view that this leads to psychological deterioration and loss of the work ethic. They note that people who lose better-paid more skilled work are being ‘bumped down’ into low-paid insecure jobs. It has been noted in this chapter that attacks on welfare and the public sector and education mean that many of these are women, who retain their commitment to employment. Moreover it can be argued that in certain sectors skilled work, too, has been subjected to precarity; examples are digital media and computing and, notably, academia, which in the UK has the second-largest proportion of temporary workers after the hospitality industry (Bradley 2014). The precariat, then, is a rather different proposition to the former related groupings, such as the ‘lumpenproletariat’ or ‘underclass’. Indeed, Standing has recently argued that new forms of oppositional politics may spring from the precariat. However, membership of it is stressful and exhausting and particularly for those also bearing responsibility for caring for children.

GLOBAL DIMENSIONS OF GENDER

The precariat as described by Standing is a global phenomenon, and in the poorer countries women are strongly over-represented among its ranks of the casualized and temporarily employed. Indeed, many aspects of gendering of work are fairly universal. However, as has been emphasized throughout this chapter, contexts – economic, political and ideological – are extremely important. Globalization provides the context for the next phase of the gendering of work and is therefore an important topic for the new generation of feminist researchers, sometimes referred to as the third wave (Gottfried 2013).

The study of globalization has in the past been led by male theorists (for example, Jameson 2000; Robertson 1992) and has not necessarily been gender sensitive. There is a need, then, for ‘putting gender at the centre of considerations of globalization’ (Basu et al. 2001: 994).

Acker (2004) argues that the conditions of globalization appear to strengthen male domination of women in both the spheres of production and reproduction. This can be linked to Connell’s (2007) analysis of how globalizing hegemonic masculinities are developing as a result of the current global configuration. He points to the emergence of the heroic colonizer as a key figure in the imperial epoch: marked by a ruthless individualism but also with a view of paternalistic responsibility for dominated groups, be it colonial subjects, women or children. By contrast the new hegemonic figure is the transnational business leader: equally individualistic but with a commitment to apparently rational business practice and economic imperatives that take no account of the well-being of the dominated, and may even condone violence as necessary. The snatching of young rural women in South-East Asia to work in factories or in the sex industry springs to mind.

These are powerful arguments but perhaps may oversimplify the complexities of global relationships (Williams et al. 2013). There are differences in the sexual division of labour around the world, resulting from levels of economic development and, particularly, from religious beliefs and political configurations. This final section will give a necessarily brief overview of some of those differences.

In almost every country there has been an increase in women’s employment over the past years (Perrons 2004). However, the level of participation is highly variable as Table 5.3 shows. These figures do need to be treated with some scepticism as the methods of recording work are likely to vary from country to country. Much of women’s work in the Global South is invisible, carried out as family labour, on the farm or in the home,

Table 5.3 Female labour market participation (economic activity) rates in selected countries, 2012 (female population aged 15+)

<i>Country</i>	<i>Rate</i>	<i>Country</i>	<i>Rate</i>
Tanzania	88	Germany	53
Mozambique	86	France	51
Iceland	71	Japan	50
China	67	Bulgaria	49
Ghana	62	Greece	45
Canada	61	Hungary	44
New Zealand	59	Italy	38
Brazil	59	India	29
Australia	59	Turkey	28
Sweden	58	Saudi Arabia	17
USA	58	Iran	16
UK	56	Afghanistan	15
Russia	56	Algeria	15
Jamaica	56	Iraq	14

Source: World Bank website 2014.

or in the informal sectors. Street vendors of produce (craft and agricultural) and of street food, peddlers and market traders are another category which may not be recorded. Nonetheless, the figures, even if not totally accurate for each country, reflect a major range of differences in women's involvement in the public economy. The countries with the lowest participation rates are Arab and Muslim countries where traditional values prohibit women working alongside men who are not family members and where women are largely excluded from the public sphere.

Another country where there is low female participation is South Korea, which is discussed by Beatrix Campbell (2013) as an example of women's oppression in the global context. Like other East Asian societies, and some Mediterranean countries, the culture has a very traditional stance on women, who are seen as fitted for domesticity and care of their families. Three-quarters of married women do not work and among those that do the gender pay gap is 38%. Campbell states that 70% of women workers are in precarious work. In this society women remain highly dependent on men and this is a major problem where women do not have free access into the labour market. It means that women

are highly vulnerable to violence and abuse. Along with social conservatism, religion (in the Korean case Confucianism) may possibly be implicated in the denial of paid work to women. In the areas of Iraq and Syria dominated by Islamic State, young women enticed from the US, UK and Europe to join in building a new society based on a strict version of Islamic values find themselves confined to household duties as 'jihadi brides' (Khaleeli 2014).

In many countries women's work is primarily either contained within the home or in agriculture. Twice as many women as men work in agriculture in the Global South. Momsen (2009) describes the typical patterns of the sexual division of labour. Men tend to do the heavy work such as land preparation, and herding of animals which involves moving distances from home and driving cattle or goats; while women do repetitive work for example, weeding or planting, take care of smaller animals and tend market gardens. In Africa women in subsistence farming are responsible for fetching water and fuel. These patterns reinforce women's identification with the home (Bradley 1989) and as secondary labour to men as primary farmers. As farming becomes modernized, men take command of

the machinery such as tractors and harvesters. However, when men leave the farm to look for work in towns, or travel abroad for better economic opportunities, women may take charge of the farm and carry out some of the heavier tasks.

In countries such as China where modernization and globalization have been accompanied by a growth in female participation and a move from agricultural and informal work into industrial work, the situation is rather different but still highly exploitative. Women are employed on low wages and in poor, often dangerous conditions, such as in the factories of Foxconn, where Apple products are produced. In such organizations women from rural backgrounds are often virtual prisoners, sleeping in cramped dormitories on the factory premises. The treatment of these typically young women is reminiscent of the way women and children were utilized in the transitions to industrialism in the Global North. Lee (2007) explores the way young women from rural parts of China are drawn to the cities and trained to become effective service workers in the 'modern' sectors of the economy, employed as nannies, waitresses, hostesses, beauticians, and so on. However, these young migrant women are, Lee shows, only paid about half a standard urban wage.

Particularly notorious in this respect are the maquiladoras of Mexico where cheap clothes for the export market are produced by armies of women. These factories were located near the border with the United States to mop up the flood of illegal migrants from Latin America. Women are forced into these unpleasant jobs in order to help support their families and pay for their children's education (Williams et al. 2013). Salzinger's case study of the maquiladoras (2003) highlights the way that young women are presented as the ideal source of sweated labour in these factories, mirroring Lee's account of China. As happened also in the phase of early industrialization, globalization constructs a model of 'productive femininity'.

Proponents of globalization point to the way that the current phase of economic

development has promoted world tourism, alongside new and increased flows of labour migration. These trends have consequences for women as workers. In many countries of the Global South opportunities open up for women in hotels and restaurants and, less pleasantly, young women are lured into the sex tourism industry, often by initial promises of bar work in the big city. Meanwhile migration, which in the decades after the Second World War during the era of industrial reconstruction typically involved male workers later joined by their families, has increasingly been feminized, with women comprising an estimated 49% of international migrants. Rather than migrating as part of a process of family reunification, many such women are moving as independents seeking better forms of employment. One factor informing this trend is the phenomenon of global care chains, in which, typically, an impoverished mother in a developing country will hand over care of her own children to a daughter or relative while she moves to the city to act as a nanny for the children of another woman, who will go to Europe or the Americas to care for the children of middle- or upper-class women. Money then flows back from the migrant down the care chain (Hochschild 2000; Perrons 2004).

Of course not all migrants are poor, or indeed from the Global South. Certain features of globalization, such as the right of EU citizens to work in member states, the development of global markets in higher education, or the movement of skilled IT workers from India to Silicon Valley, have encouraged the growth of a migrant labour force of skilled professionals often described as 'cosmopolitans' (Devadason 2010; Favell 2009). This highlights the complexities surrounding the gendering of jobs on a global scale. In some cases these processes appear to involve reinforcement of traditional gender roles (especially in terms of domesticity, reproduction and care), but on other occasions they challenge them by opening up new horizons for women from differing cultural backgrounds (Williams et al. 2013). It is therefore necessary to look specifically at the different

contexts in which new forms of work are evolving.

Currently the notion of intersectionality is increasingly being utilized in exploring how particular patterns of gendering are specific to people of different ages, ethnic backgrounds or religious groupings. The concept found popularity through the work of Crenshaw which studied how racial and gender dynamics intertwined in America to produce particular patterns of disadvantage for women of colour. It has subsequently been taken up by rights organizations in particular, and informs much current research.

A major contribution to the notion came from Leslie McCall (2005), who discerned three different strands, or methodological approaches, within the broad church of intersectional thinking. The anti-categorical approach was that of post-structuralists who sought to deconstruct the existing categories of analysis, such as 'woman' or 'Black'. The second, intra-categorical, approach was the more conventional modernist stance which saw the categories of inequality as having a real existence but wanted to explore divisions within them. Finally, the inter-categorical approach was espoused by McCall herself, who saw it as a halfway position between the other two: a critical engagement with the relationships between the groups in such a way as to challenge the categories. This approach is particularly interested in those who breach the existing categories, such as transgender people.

Intersectionality has not been without its critics. One such is Nash (2008), who argues that the concept is vague, lacks a clear methodological procedure, is too focused on Black women as its quintessential subject and lacks evidence that it is a coherent account of women's experiences as agentic subjects. However, she states her aim is not to dismiss the concept but to refine it. In my own view, we should not treat it as a theory, but rather a perspective, a lens through which to view work relations and inequalities. One could argue that the concept of intersectionality was a way of incorporating the post-structuralist

stress on difference into modernist theorization. Currently a feminist lens on gender and work is likely also to be an intersectional lens.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

Beatrix Campbell has recently produced a manifesto, *The End of Equality* (2013) arguing that we are in a new epoch, that of 'neoliberal neopatriarchy'. While one might quibble with the term, I think she is right in her belief that we are seeing a return of patriarchal attitudes encouraged by the advocates of neoliberal capitalism, their hatred of the state and fetishism of the market. Perhaps stirred up by right-wing media and the trolls of social media, it seems that it is now becoming respectable to make derogatory remarks about women, ethnic minority citizens and LGBT people. Female medical students interviewed for a project, DARE, in Bristol reported that the kind of 'everyday sexism' uncovered by Laura Bates on her website of the same name (Bates 2014) was common in their hospital experience – persistent jokes, patronizing remarks, comments on their appearance, touching and so forth, which undermine women and mark them out as 'other' in the workplace. In this way powerful men continue to normalize the world of work as masculine.

Despite gains made by women in many countries since the rise of second-wave feminism in the 1970s and 1980s, recent economic and political developments pose a real threat to that progress. Austerity has not been kind to women. But clearly the impact of austerity has been mediated by class and ethnicity. The widening gap between rich and poor is evident in many countries of the Global North (Piketty 2014). Women in the wealthiest social groups and who hold jobs high up in corporate structures are isolated from the impacts of the recession and austerity politics. But, given the increasingly demanding time arrangements of both paid labour and the labour of motherhood, most women today, apart from those rich

enough to purchase full-time childcare, face what Banyard calls ‘the impossible choice of caring for her children or advancing her career’ (2010: 73). While equality and diversity legislation and policies are designed to make employment opportunities open to all, such apparent equality is, as Banyard points out, an illusion: employers are still wary of appointing young married woman who they suspect may become pregnant (requiring them to pay for maternity leave plus providing cover), while 300,000 women in the UK lose their jobs each year after pregnancy and childbirth (2010).

The mutual relationship between domestic and reproductive labour and paid work in the labour market continues to lie at the heart of gender inequalities; a useful approach to exploring this is Glucksmann’s notion of the total social organization of labour. Glucksmann (1995) argues that work is not only carried out in the sphere of production, but in the spheres of reproduction and consumption, and we need to explore the complex linkages between the three. Thus, for example, women enter the labour market not as ‘free agents’ like men, but charged with responsibility for childcare (reproduction) and household maintenance (consumption). This is why women cannot compete equally with men.

There can be no doubt that neoliberal policies, as Campbell forcefully argues, have not been favourable to the cause of gender equality, given the attacks on state welfare and the erosion of employee rights which characterize neoliberal political regimes. The strengthened support in the 2014 European elections for right-wing parties with anti-immigration policies suggest that an unfortunate side effect of austerity has been a recrudescence of racism and xenophobia. It is likely that ethnic minority women, given their clustering in publicly funded jobs will suffer particularly. While in the US the presidency of Barack Obama has perhaps meant that equality and diversity policies have not faced such an attack, the recent events in Ferguson (extensive rioting after the shooting of an unarmed Black teenager) show how

strongly divided by race the nation remains. In addition, increasing competition for good jobs has been shaped by changes in many countries to retirement and pension rights as a result of the global phenomenon of ageing populations.

Against this depressing picture, some positives can be gleaned by highlighting the actions of individuals and groups around the world protesting these trends, sometimes in the name of third-wave feminism, sometimes under the rubric of pro-democracy movements, with crowds setting themselves against the economic orthodoxies embraced by most political elites. A new generation of young feminist researchers is campaigning for women’s rights, often using the intersectionality framework in their work. Within the Global South, NGOs and local women’s groups continue to seek better employment openings for women. The effects of globalization may be seen as contradictory: the dominance of the transnational corporations, the ‘race to the bottom’ and the informalization of work push women into poverty and insecure jobs; but at the same time cultural and informational flows may encourage women to seek the openings they learn are available in other countries. The gendered nature of contemporary migration and its impacts both on individual women and their families is a fruitful area for further research.

As the consequences of these seismic social shifts play themselves out, there will be continued need both for further detailed research into the gendering of work, informed by a sensitivity to intersections with class, ethnicity and age and contextualized in terms of neoliberal globalization, and for a vigorous feminist politics affirming the right of women to decent, well-paid jobs backed with Scandinavian-style state support for families’ caring needs.

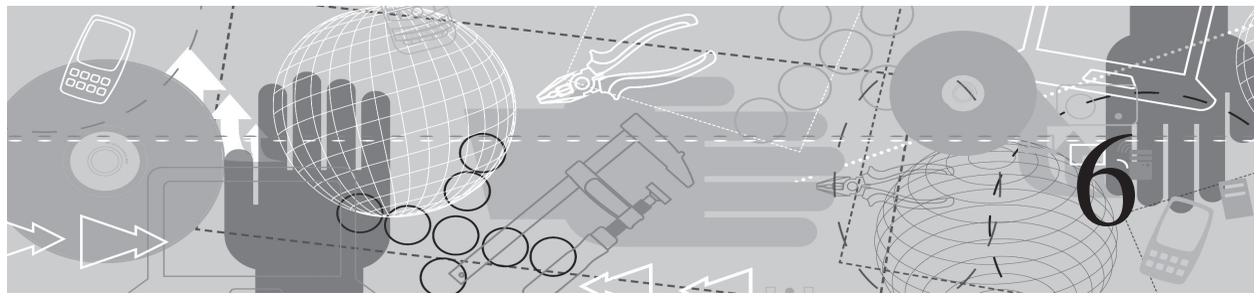
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Race, Racialization, and Work

Evelyn Nakano Glenn

Historically, racial inequality has been expressed, created and maintained through racialized hierarchies in the labor market. In many settings, stratification along race lines is rather obvious. The higher one goes up the managerial and professional ranks – for example among chairs of corporate boards, CEOs, and head surgeons – the ‘whiter’ the occupants appear to be. By contrast, at the lowest levels – for example among maintenance workers, janitors, maids, and agricultural field laborers – the more people of color we see. Additionally, one can observe racial-ethnic concentrations in particular lines of work or business. In some cases, the specialization grows out of demand for racial-ethnic services or goods, for example Senegalese in Great Britain engaged in hair braiding or Turks in Germany running kebab restaurants. In other cases the specialization develops as racial ethnic immigrants find a niche and introduce others in their families and communities into the same line of work, for example Koreans and dry cleaning in Los Angeles,

Vietnamese and nail salons in California. In other cases, workers from particular countries are recruited to fill specific labor needs, for example, Nepalese to work in construction in Qatar, Filipinas to perform housework in Western Europe, and Mexicans to do agricultural field labor in the United States. Racial stratification in the labor force is particularly important because employment status is directly related to income, degree of security, quality of housing, and access to education, healthcare, political representation, and many other aspects of well-being.

To go beyond everyday observation to actually gauge the extent of racial stratification in the labor force requires systematic collection and analysis of race and labor market variables. Government agencies, research institutes, and individual scholars have long focused on studying the relationship between race/ethnicity/gender and labor market measures using existing data sets or by collecting new data. Studies of occupational distribution of racialized minority and non-minority

men and women have amply documented differences in occupational and sectoral concentration, particularly between those identified as 'White' and those identified as 'Black' or 'non-White'. Researchers have analyzed racial disparities at various scales from national to regional to local, and even at the level of individual firms. Generally, the finer the breakdown of job categories, the more apparent are the disparities. Findings from such studies have been important in documenting the existence of racial inequalities and tracking changes over time.

Additionally, researchers have sought to explain disparities by identifying factors (intervening variables), such as average differences in amount of education and experience, that might help account for part or all of the disparities. Generally, any differences remaining after these variables have been controlled for are considered to be attributable to racial discrimination. Findings from such studies have been used to argue for the need for laws and policies to combat discrimination and to assess the effectiveness of such laws and policies before and after their implementation.

Traditionally, as in the studies mentioned above, research on race and labor has treated race as an independent variable. That is, race is considered to be a pre-existing fact such that workers can be sorted into mutually exclusive racial categories. Then workers' 'race' can be correlated with other factual data, such as occupation, employment sector, and earnings. In some ways this approach is curious because historians and social scientists have demonstrated that racial identities and definitions of racial categories are unstable and shift over time. Indeed, it has become commonplace for sociologists to acknowledge that 'race' is a social construct that does not correspond to any meaningful biological referent. Rather, they understand race as a system of creating and categorizing human difference, discursively and materially.

Many social scientists and historians have adopted the influential racial formation framework of Michael Omi and Howard

Winant (2015), for whom the term 'race' is used to refer to meanings, identities, and relationships organized around supposedly natural, even primordial, differences. Importantly, within this framework, race is understood as not solely or even primarily a characteristic of individuals. Rather, it is also a constitutive feature and organizing principle of collectivities, social institutions, historical processes, and social practices. Thus race is considered an organizing principle of corporations, workplaces, work policies, and shop-floor practices. As an organizing principle, race involves both cultural meanings and material relationships. That is, race is constituted simultaneously through deployment of racial rhetoric, symbols and images and through allocation of resources along racial lines. Therefore, an account of labor from the perspective of race requires looking at both representation and material relations.

That race is socially constructed and does not correspond to any biological referent does not mean that it has no real consequences. Indeed racial categories have concrete impacts on people's lives because, as David Freund (2003) notes, 'they've been used to discriminate and to distribute resources unequally and set up different standards for protection under the law. Both public policy and private institutional and communal actions have created inequalities based on race'.

Viewing race as socially constructed centers attention on 'racialization', the processes by which individuals, groups, organizations, and cultural productions are assigned to racial categories and/or ascribed with racial meanings. This processual view of race is a counterpoint to the usual practice in the social sciences of treating race as a pre-existing social fact, especially in quantitative studies of racial disparities. In studies of labor market inequality, for example, researchers usually treat race as an independent variable to be correlated with or regressed against other variables. How categories such as Black and White were historically constituted and maintained through the organization of the labor market is not

examined in these studies. Some social historians, however, have focused attention on just this issue. Labor historian David Roediger (2006b), describing his book on how Eastern and Southern European immigrant workers who occupied a ‘confused’ racial status in nineteenth-century America came to be considered White in the twentieth century, has opined:

I think the big advantage we have now in scholarship on race in the last several decades is that we get to start from the fact that it’s a biological fiction. So a term like racialization is just meant to say that race is not biological and is made in society. It describes the processes in which race is made, both by how groups of workers are slotted into jobs economically and are brought to nations under certain economic circumstances but also in the way that they’re treated in terms of citizenship rights by the state. Mainly those two processes determine how workers get put into a certain category.

The social constructionist and racial formation conceptions of race parallel the development of social constructionist conceptions of gender, sexuality and even class. Thus it encourages an awareness that race never functions alone, but always in interaction with other vectors of difference, especially gender and class. This is particularly obvious in relation to work and labor markets, which are simultaneously structured according to principles of race, gender, and class. Further, ‘racialization’ functions in interaction with processes of gender and class formation to classify workers as racialized, gendered and classed beings, and workplaces as racialized, gendered, and classed spaces.

Given a social constructionist view of race and racialization in mind, there are certain key questions and issues that arise, and that will be dealt with in the remainder of this article:

- What are the historical origins of racial stratification of labor in the Western world and how have patterns of stratification persisted or changed?
- What are the contemporary forces in the global political economy that are renewing and/or reconfiguring racial stratification of labor?

- What has research revealed about racial disparities in the labor market and about the structures and practices that create and maintain these disparities?
- How does race/ethnicity (in interaction with gender) shape peoples’ experiences and interactions with others in the workplace?
- To what extent has racial discrimination been reduced or changed in the wake of civil rights struggles and the implementation of anti-discrimination policies? Has there been a shift to more indirect and subtle forms of racism?
- What are some of new directions for research that can respond to changes in ideologies about race and in the practices that maintain White privilege in the post-civil rights era?

PAST AND PRESENT FORMATIONS OF RACIALIZED LABOR

Prior to the modernization of employment relations, Western law and custom regulated the relation between worker and employer in ways that constrained the freedom of workers to withhold their labor or leave their positions. They also imposed obligations on employers to provide for the maintenance of the worker. These ‘unfree’ arrangements were broadly applicable to all workers and not restricted to racial ‘others’. However, ‘unfree’ labor became associated with racial others as Europeans established colonial footholds – including settler colonies, such as the United States and Australia, and franchise colonies such as the British Raj and Dutch West Indies. To ensure a sufficient labor force particularly for the primary sector of the economy, clearing and cultivating land and extracting resources, and building roads and other infrastructure, colonists appropriated native labor or imported slave or bonded labor from Africa, Asia, and other regions. In such circumstances colonists established hierarchical labor systems that distinguished colonists from colonized and imported workers. Higher positions, such as shareholders, financial managers, and certain types of skilled or technical occupations were reserved

for those of European origin, while lower level positions, such as field workers, ditch diggers, and common miners, were relegated to native or non-European imported labor.

The most important distinction, however, was that between so-called free workers and slave or bonded labor. The distinction between 'free' and 'unfree' was racialized, such that White became synonymous with 'free labor' and Black, Brown, Yellow was equated with 'slave/coolie/contract labor'. The democratic revolutions of the late eighteenth century eventually led to the overthrow of traditional arrangements, such as indentured service and master-servant apprenticeships, that constrained the freedom of White workers. Yet, Black chattel slavery survived, and in some cases expanded in much of North and South America until the latter part of the nineteenth century, when Western societies, including settler colonial nations, legally abolished slavery, thus ending the formal association of color with bound labor. However, these societies did not ban legal and de facto segregation. Segmentation of the labor market along race as well as gender lines flourished and can be documented for societies that collected labor market data broken down by race and gender by examining patterns of over-representation and under-representation in occupations and industries. Within industries employing both White and racialized minority workers, jobs were segregated along racial lines, with managerial, skilled, and 'clean' and safe jobs reserved for Whites, and subordinate, manual, 'dirty' and dangerous jobs assigned to racialized minorities. Since labor markets were also segregated by gender, there were separate tiers of jobs for White women, White men, racialized minority men and racialized minority women.

About the same time that societies which historically had racially segregated labor markets were starting to institute reforms intended to promote greater equity and inclusion of women and racial minority workers, Western and northern European societies that had been more racially homogeneous began to develop more diverse labor forces through

the institutionalization of transnational labor migration to fill labor demands in their growing economies. The Scandinavian countries entered into a Nordic labor agreement in 1954 to create a common labor market to foster labor migration between countries in that region. Labor migration from countries outside of Europe initially drew on colonial and post-colonial connections. For example, in the 1960s, Britain attracted Black migrants from India and Pakistan as well as Jamaica and other British colonies in the Caribbean. Then in the 1970s several western European nations, such as the Netherlands, West Germany, Belgium, and Austria, entered into bilateral agreements with countries in the Mediterranean region to regularize labor migration from Turkey and other countries in that region. Labor migration to western and northern Europe was ratcheted up in the 1990s via European Union enhancements of 1992-94, the end of communism and the spread of neoliberal globalization. Adding to employment-driven migration was the large-scale movement of peoples fleeing conflicts and war in southeastern Europe following the break-up of Yugoslavia. Serbs, Albanians, Bulgarians, Turks, Armenians, and Azeris were among those seeking asylum as well as jobs. As for the Americas, there has been a long history of labor migration from Central America and Mexico across a relatively porous United States border during times of economic distress. Late twentieth- and early twenty-first-century surges occurred in the wake of worsening poverty and political repression brought about by corrupt right-wing military-backed governments in Central America and economic turmoil in Mexico resulting from warfare among drug gangs, as well as continued persecution of indigenous populations. Whereas earlier Latino settlements were concentrated in the American Southwest, a noticeable portion of these later migrants have moved on to the Midwest, Southeast and Northeast regions of the United States and, to a lesser extent, Canada. Adding to north-south migration were sizable cohorts from other parts of South America and the Spanish-speaking

Caribbean. By 2013, the U.S. Census Bureau estimated that about 54 million Hispanics lived in the United States, making up 17 percent of the total population and comprising the largest racial-ethnic minority (U.S. Census, 2014). Filling out the ranks of the non-White U.S. labor force were migrants and refugees allied with the U.S. during World War II, the Cold War, the Vietnam War, and other military excursions, such as Filipinos, Chinese, South Koreans, Vietnamese, Cambodians, Hmong, and Laotians.

To be sure, some racialized labor migrants have been recruited to fill demands for trained and educated professionals that could not be met by native-born and trained residents. Examples include physicians and nurses in the healthcare sector and engineers and technical workers in the high-tech sector. However, the vast majority of labor migrants have been slotted into lower level manufacturing and service jobs, agricultural labor, and domestic service. The gender composition of labor migration has also changed, as migrant women are drawn by the availability of feminized jobs in elderly care, childcare, and housekeeping. The prevalence of migrants in certain jobs has led to the racialization of these jobs as ‘non-White’ and the people who do them as ‘colored’ or ‘not quite White’.

Further, labor migration has increased at the same time that new forms of labor exploitation have emerged. Deindustrialization and economic restructuring, according to Geoff Ely (2015), have ‘led to prevalence of low wage, deskilled, deregulated, deunionized, debenefitted, illegal, semi-legal conditions of work for which new migrants are perfectly fitted’. The worsening of labor conditions at the same time as the growing presence of immigrants from outside of western Europe has fueled racist exclusionary movements, much like the anti-Chinese exclusionary politics of nineteenth- and early twentieth-century America were fueled by the influx of Chinese coinciding with the growth of monopoly capital, deskilling, and labor-management conflicts.

Only with civil rights movements of the 1950s and 1960s did some nations begin to establish anti-discrimination and fair employment laws and enforcement mechanisms. By the turn of the twenty-first century, the majority of Western countries had adopted such measures. Time series studies document a decline in the extent of segregation of the labor market from the 1970s to the 2010s, but also the continuation of racial disparities in occupational status, pay, and unemployment/non-employment. Racial disparities in the labor market, including inequality in occupational status, pay, and unemployment are pervasive and widespread throughout the world and have been well documented through quantitative studies based on census and other survey data. However, because individual countries differ in their racial ethnic compositions, history of race relations, and racial classification systems, it is difficult to do justice to the array of findings in a short review. In terms of breadth, the most ambitious global surveys of findings have been undertaken by the International Labor Organization (ILO), which issued reports on various forms of labor inequality in 2003, 2007, and 2011. In their discussions of racial inequality, the reports focused particular attention on the disadvantaged positions of Blacks of African origin in many countries; indigenous peoples, particularly in the Americas; Roma/travelers in western Europe; and labor migrants from the global south working in the global north. The 2003 report points out that discrimination against a specific person may occur on multiple grounds, thus necessitating intersectional analysis to comprehend the experience of specific subgroups of persons, such as Black women. Discrimination on multiple grounds produces ‘specific experiences of discrimination’, and also increases the severity or intensity of disadvantage (ILO, 2003: 27). All three reports also described local and national programs and policies designed to promote greater equality and inclusion (ILO, 2003, 2007, 2011).

Generally speaking, systematic data on race-based occupational segregation and

racial disparities in earnings and unemployment are most abundant for the United States, but are also available for other countries, including Great Britain and Brazil. In all three countries, whites were more likely to be evenly distributed among occupational categories and to enjoy higher average occupational status, higher wages, and lower unemployment rates than racial ethnic minorities. For the purposes of illustration, it may be useful to hone in on the situation of Blacks of African origin in these three countries.

For the U.S., a great deal of research has highlighted occupational segregation by race, with a disproportionate concentration of African Americans in low-wage, low skilled occupations and their under-representation in well-paid skilled and professional fields. Occupational segregation in turn contributes to inequality in earnings and to higher rates of poverty among Blacks. However, it does not account for all earnings inequality: within any given occupational category, Blacks earn less than their White counterparts, particularly in jobs requiring university degrees (Dodoo and Takyi, 2002). Perhaps the most striking racial disparity is in unemployment. Since the 1950s, African Americans have had twice the unemployment rates of Whites, a pattern that persisted through 2015, when Black unemployment was 9.6 percent compared to 4.6 percent among Whites (Fairlie and Sundstrom, 1997; U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2015). Kenneth Couch and Robert Fairlie (2010) tested the 'last hired, first fired' hypothesis to explain higher Black unemployment using U.S. Current Population Survey data over a 20-year period. They found Blacks were more likely to be let go during an economic downturn, but that the patterns of hiring in an upturn were more complicated.

Similar patterns of racial segregation in the labor market and racial disadvantage in earnings and unemployment have been documented for Blacks of African or Caribbean origin in Great Britain through analyses of British Census data on 13 racial/ethnic groups for 1991, 2001, and 2011 (Catney and

Sabater, 2015; Kapedia et al., 2015). Black Africans experienced the greatest degree of occupational segregation, having the lowest representation in managerial positions and skilled trades and a disproportionate concentration in personal service jobs, for example as nursing auxiliaries and assistants. Black African, Black Caribbean, and other racialized minorities were more likely to be employed in part-time jobs, which generally were more insecure and paid lower wages than full-time jobs. Black African and Black Caribbean men earn lower wages than White men largely due to their lower representation in better-paid occupations; however a small part of the gap is due to Blacks getting paid less for equivalent jobs (Brynin and Guveli, 2012; Metcalf, 2009). African-origin men have also historically suffered higher unemployment. Over the 20-year period between 1991 and 2011 Black Caribbean and Black African men aged 25–49 had about three times the unemployment rate of their White counterparts (Kapedia et al., 2015).

As for Brazil, where the majority of the population is of African origin, Blacks and Browns have been found to be severely disadvantaged vis-à-vis Whites (Garcia et al., 2009). In 2005, White men's earnings were almost double that of Afro-Brazilians, while White women's earnings were nearly double those of Afro-Brazilian women (Gradin, 2007). Racial differences in education, training, and experience are particularly stark in Brazil, accounting for much of the wage gap. On average, White women have more years of education than Black/Brown men and women, and consequently earn more than both groups. However, in occupations requiring university degrees, the race difference in remuneration falls to 15 percent (Saboia and Saboia, 2009), and Black/Brown men actually earn more than White women, indicating that gender disadvantage is particularly powerful (ILO, 2003). Rates of unemployment have historically been higher for Blacks/Browns than for Whites, but the gap has been smaller than in the U.S. or Great Britain (Telles, 2004). For example, in 2009,

the unemployment rate for Blacks/Browns was 10.1 percent, compared to a rate of 8.2 percent for Whites. Moreover, once unemployed, Blacks/Browns tended to remain jobless for longer periods than Whites (ILO, 2011).

Much research has also been directed at uncovering the mechanisms (intervening variables) that account for racial disparities in the labor market aside from employer discrimination. As indicated previously, a sizable portion of differences in occupational status can be attributed to average group differences in education, training, experience and other kinds of human capital. These differences, in turn, grow out of other forms of discrimination, especially housing segregation and ghettoization. The quality of local schools varies considerably in White-majority and -minority neighborhoods. Thus housing segregation prevents racial minorities from acquiring high quality education, job training, and employment experience. Additionally, since labor markets are highly localized, residential segregation and concentration may also limit the industries and occupations that are readily accessible to those living in areas of racial ethnic concentration. In addition to distance, the lack of access to transportation may make it doubly difficult for those living in minority areas to commute to good jobs in predominately White areas.

Sociological and economic theories to explain race/ethnic inequality in employment rates, occupational attainment, and pay are more or less the same as those used to explain gender inequality in the labor force. Orthodox individualistic theories focus on presumed characteristics or deficiencies of disadvantaged groups that lead to their concentration in lower level jobs. For example, economist Gary Becker's (1959) theory of human capital hypothesizes that racial/ethnic workers bring lower average levels of valuable characteristics such as education, skills, and experience, while economist Thomas Sowell's (1985) culture of poverty thesis posits that some racial ethnic groups bring undesirable attitudes and behaviors, such as

lack of a work ethic, that hamper them in the labor market, while other groups bring cultural attributes that foster success in the labor market.

Still, when differences in human capital are controlled for, racial disparities remain, such that, for example, at every education level, Blacks or Browns are disproportionately located in lower level, lower paying occupations than Whites with comparable levels of education. Becker's (1959) theory of discrimination attributes these remaining disparities to unwarranted preference on the part of employers for members of some racial ethnic groups and/or dislike of members of other groups. In Becker's formulation, such employers are indulging their 'taste for discrimination'. This preference may stem from conscious or explicit bias or from unconscious or implicit bias.

From a Marxist perspective, employers should want to employ the cheapest workers for every job in order to maximize profits. Thus, favoring White men for certain jobs might seem irrational. To explain race segregation, Marxist theories turn to class conflict, with some theorists focusing on capitalists' desire to create divisions among workers along race lines to undercut class solidarity, while others focus on White (male) workers' desire to forestall or reduce competition from racialized minorities by having them excluded from desirable jobs (see Reich, 1981). In circumstances where White workers have leverage, for example to disrupt production, employers may accommodate them by reserving higher skilled, cleaner, more secure, and better paid jobs for dominant-group workers. Additionally, worker organizations and politicians who represent White working-class interests have often mobilized to bar or reduce entry of racialized (im)migrants into the metropole. It can be argued that capitalists would prefer to use lower wage workers regardless of race, but cannot fill all positions with minority workers. By reserving and limiting high wage work to White male workers they gain labor peace by diverting worker resistance toward opposition

to racial minorities. At the same time, labor market segregation leads to the crowding of minorities into fewer occupations, driving down wages in those occupations and thus further disadvantaging minority workers. White workers gain (arguably a Pyrrhic victory) by securing a monopoly on better jobs and a higher social status, that is, by enjoying what social historian David Roediger (2007) dubbed the 'wages of whiteness'.

There are also structuralist approaches, such as dual labor market theory – both Marxist and non-Marxist – that posit the existence of separate and unequal labor markets, a primary market consisting of skilled, well-paid, and secure jobs, and a secondary market made up of unskilled, low-paid and insecure jobs. According to these models, White workers are more likely to be tracked into the primary market, while workers of color are more likely to be tracked into the secondary market. Workers in the secondary market tend to remain stuck there, sometimes for their entire working lives because of lack of entry points and/or barriers (including experience in the primary labor market) (Gordon, 1972; Saint Paul, 1997). In a related vein, some theorists point to the role played by internal labor markets within firms (Doeringer and Piore, 1971). For example, firms may recruit from specific pools of possible workers (for example graduates of particular schools or training programs) that contain few, if any, people of color.

New racial theorizing is expanding the range of explanatory frameworks. One area of theorizing has been whiteness studies, of which David Roediger has been a pioneer, particularly as it relates to historical and contemporary labor studies. Up until recent times, studies of race and race relations have focused on the problems and disadvantages of Blacks and racial others. Critical whiteness scholars have brought attention to whiteness as not only constructed in opposition to racial others, but as an assumed and invisible norm against which racial others are judged as deficient. In this line of thinking, whiteness has been the unnamed status that carries

the privileges of citizenship, civil rights, and legal standing. Those lacking White status are in varying degrees non-citizens, lacking full rights and standing, which makes them more exploitable and expendable in the labor market.

Michael Omi and Howard Winant (2015) have identified the 'racial state' as a powerful player in the racialization of groups previously not thought of in racial terms. The state has power to shape the racial structuring of the labor force through its governance of immigration and naturalization. Laws are mostly used to exclude groups that would be racialized as non-White in the receiving country, but they can also be used to recruit non-White workers for particularly devalued jobs and under restrictive conditions that limit their mobility and close off citizenship. For example, some affluent countries have instituted guest worker programs that recruit immigrants to enter for a limited period of time and only to provide needed labor in a particular sector, such as agricultural field labor, construction, or live-in domestic service. Guest workers may not be allowed to change employers or become permanent residents. Another example is the arrangements for 'refugees' that allow entry, work permits and long-term residency, but that keep the migrants in a liminal status that does not offer a path to citizenship. These kinds of special programs serve to racialize the workers as not-White by treating them as a 'cheap' labor force whose members do not have to be fully integrated or recognized as full members of the nation.

In order to uncover the meso- and micro-level mechanisms that create and maintain racial segregation of jobs, and exclusion of racial minorities from positions of authority, researchers have turned to qualitative methods such as participant observation and open-ended interviews. Feminist researchers have led the way in carrying out research on gender inequality in the workplace and on the experience of women in male-dominated workplaces. Joan Acker (1990) developed the concept of gendered

organizations to describe the way masculine ideals shape organizational structures and practices. Later, she and some race scholars began to point out that organizations are simultaneously raced and gendered (Acker, 2006; Omi and Winant, 2015). Thus, standards for competence, professionalism, and job performance are those that define White manhood, thereby excluding White women and people of color.

Some professions or workplaces are dominated by White males so that women and people of color may constitute a small numerical minority. In the late 1970s, Rosabeth Kanter (1977a) attributed the problems faced by women executives to their position as tokens, that is as a small fraction of those in high positions in the corporate hierarchy. As tokens, they suffer from hypervisibility (which increases performance pressure), marginalization (which decreases influence and power), and isolation (which cuts access to mentoring and useful information). The concept of tokenism has subsequently been applied to racial minorities in White-dominated organizations. For example, Ada Harvey Wingfield (2013) conducted in-depth interviews with 42 Black lawyers, physicians, engineers, and bankers in the United States. Wingfield argues that Black professional men experience only partial tokenization because their visibility may create undue performance pressures, but may also make them better known by co-workers. They also report their being able to engage in talk about sports and other masculine interests with their White male colleagues.

Meta-studies have analyzed findings from multiple qualitative studies to address the question of why there are fewer and fewer White women and people of color as one goes up the levels of authority (Smith, 2002; Elliott and Smith, 2004). These meta-studies indicate that besides direct discrimination by those in positions of power to hire and promote, two other mechanisms may play critical roles. First, minorities tend to be excluded from informal social networks which provide valuable career information and mentoring

that their White male colleagues receive. Elliott and Smith (2004) point out:

Research on this subject generally shows that work-related networks help workers gain skills, acquire legitimacy, and climb promotional ladders (Bridges and Villemez, 1986; Campbell and Rosenfeld, 1985; Podolny and Baron, 1997) and that these resources are important because most employees' job training and career development come from informal instruction rather than continuing education and explicit on-the-job training.

Second, those in positions of high authority tend to pick others who are like themselves to work under them. Since the upper ranks of authority are predominately White males, they tend to prefer White males. Rosabeth Kanter (1977b) referred to the practice of promoting similar others as homosocial reproduction because it tends to replicate the ascriptive characteristics of those holding power over successive generations. According to Kanter, the preference for similar others for high-prestige, high-reward positions is due to the high degree of uncertainty involved and the reliance on trust and personal discretion required. In such circumstances, those in power feel there will be greater predictability and clear communication if those below them are like themselves.

In terms of the complex relations across race and gender lines, attention has been focused on the special problems faced by women of color. A familiar canard is that Black women may be favored over Black men for professional employment, both because they are seen as less threatening and because they can be counted twice for purposes of meeting diversity goals (e.g. Epstein, 1973). However, researchers have attempted to refute this conception and have argued that women of color are not advantaged relative to Black men, but are merely less disadvantaged in relation to men of their race than are White women in relation to White men (e.g. Benjamin, 2005; Fulbright, 1986). Moreover, women of color experience special problems, one of which is 'racialized sexual harassment'. Black women in the U.S. have been found to be more likely to report being sexually harassed

at work than White women. In an interview study involving 65 African American women police officers, they recounted frequent incidents of sexual harassment by both Black and non-Black colleagues or superiors. Their descriptions of incidents indicated they were targeted not just as women, but as 'Black women'. However, because of their precarious position in a male-dominated macho occupation, they were reluctant to report the incidents to superiors (Teixera, 2002). Most studies of racialized sexual harassment have been conducted in the U.S.; however, a small study was conducted in Great Britain involving 17 subjects that the researchers identified as 'Black Asian' and 'Minority Ethnic' (FAME) women. These women were chosen because they had experienced or witnessed sexual harassment in their workplaces. They described such incidents, saying that often they had been harassed by men of their own racial ethnicity. However, less than a quarter had reported these incidents to superiors because of 'fear of job loss, reprisals from male family members, and negative organizational consequences' (Fielden et al., 2010).

NEW AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

As stated previously, newer understandings of race as being socially constructed have thrown into question the fixity of race and have emphasized the processes by which individuals and groups become racialized. The processual constructionist approach to race offers alternatives to studying the relationship between race and labor via the usual practice of treating race as an independent variable that affects or determines a person's occupational status, pay, unemployment rates, and other indices of inequality. Instead, we can begin to look at race sometimes as a dependent variable that is influenced by social factors, such as changes in work status or racialization processes in the workplace. We can examine, for example, how upward or downward mobility in the labor force

influences both others' perception of one's race and one's own racial identity.

Research in this area has been pioneered by Aliya Saperstein and Andrew M. Penner (2012), who analyzed two national longitudinal data sets to assess the extent of change in an individual's racial classification as defined by others and their racial self-identity over a 23-year period. Focusing particularly on individuals who were classified as White or Black in 1979, Saperstein and Penner found a small but identifiable subgroup whose racial classification and/or identity changed over that period. In examining social status changes that were correlated with changes in race, they found a number of negative events that were associated with changes from White to Black in racial classification and/or self-identified race, including being below the poverty line, being incarcerated, and being unemployed for a period of more than four months. Demonstrating the complex interactions of gender and race, Penner and Saperstein (2013) later reported differential impacts of social status on changes in racial identity. For example, they found that while falling below the poverty line decreased both men's and women's odds of being classified as White, the effect was stronger for men, presumably because of the societal emphasis on men's responsibility as breadwinners. The findings indicate that racial discrepancies in occupational status, earnings, and unemployment may be magnified by racializing successful people as White and unsuccessful people as non-White.

A next step for researchers could be to study processes of racialization – that is, how race is made salient and how 'race appropriate' demeanor might be produced through workplace rules and interaction. A model in the case of production of gender is Leslie Salzinger's (2003) study of four maquiladora plants in Mexico, each of which used gender in distinctly different ways to 'constitute' their workers as gendered beings. For example, one factory was set up in such a way that young women were encouraged to use their femininity to compete for the sexual attention

of male supervisors, while in another women and men were clothed in gender neutral smocks and caps and treated as ‘masculinized’ workers. In considering the production of race in the workplace, we can start with the fact that minority workers are more often employed in large organizations to do ‘race work’, to oversee equal employment and diversity initiatives, or to engage in outreach to minority communities (Wingfield and Alston, 2014). An examination of the effects of doing such work on the visibility of race, the salience of racial stereotypes, and racialized interactions would be enlightening.

Another new research direction has been to pay greater attention to race as not made up of mutually exclusive categories, such as Black, White, and Red as in the United States, but as a continuum as in the case of Brazil and many Latin American countries. In the former case, race has been viewed as a matter of ancestry, with the White category being seen as made up of those with exclusively European ancestry, while the Black category is made up of all those with any trace of African ancestry. In the latter (Latin American) case, race is more a matter of physical appearance – skin color, hair texture, facial features – than ancestry. Siblings with the same mother and father may be considered to be of different races. Abundant research in Brazil has documented the significant relationship between skin tone and inequality, including differences in labor-related disparities such as earnings, rates of unemployment and occupational status (e.g. Arcand and D’Hombres, 2004; Loureiro et al. 2004; Lovell, 2006; Monk, 2013; Telles, 2004).

As for the United States, research on skin tone differences has long been studied in the context of social relations in the African American community. However, the diversity in status among people classified as Black has been overshadowed by differences between those classified as Black and those classified as White (Herring, 2002). More recently, researchers have focused on the larger societal implications of skin tone in the United States, including its role in socioeconomic inequality

(e.g. Goldsmith et al., 2006; Wade et al., 2004). At least one researcher (Gullickson, 2005) has found a decline in skin tone differentials in the post-Civil Rights era among an undifferentiated male and female survey sample. However, another researcher (Keith, 2009), using the same survey data, but differentiating the sample by gender, found significantly higher occupational status among lighter toned women. The relationship between skin tone and occupational status was not monotonic, however, in that ‘Very Dark Brown’ women actually did better than ‘Dark Brown’ women.

In one of the most recent studies, Ellis Monk (2013, 2014) used data from a 2001–2003 national survey that included skin tone as a variable and found significant relationships between socioeconomic measures and skin tone. Darker skin was negatively associated with educational level, but not with being employed. Unlike studies based on earlier surveys, Monk discovered that skin tone was not a significant predictor of occupational status for Black women. However, for men, ‘very dark skin’ had particularly negative effects: male ‘respondents with “very dark skin” had 73% higher odds of having a less prestigious occupation than all other respondents even after controlling for their age, education, and other sociodemographic controls’ (Monk, 2014). Monk suggests that the apparent greater bias against this group currently than in the past may be due to a shift to greater dependence on White gatekeepers in now-integrated workplaces than in the past. Thus the tendency of Whites to associate dark skin with criminality may have a particularly negative impact on darker skinned Black men in the labor market. These continuities and changes point to the need for more attention to skin tone and other sources of diversity *within* racial categories that affect labor outcomes.

Still another development has been the rise and triumph of color-blind ideology as the dominant mode of racism. Unlike overt racist attitudes and actions, such as refusal to hire minorities that may be challenged

and addressed, color-blind racism presents particular difficulties because it is based on denial and avoidance. Color-blindness is the belief among Whites that the society has progressed so that people of color are no longer discriminated against and that they themselves are not racist (Bonilla-Silva, 2009). In the workplace, color-blind racism takes the form of denying the existence of institutionalized racism. In her study of racial dynamics in a large corporate law firm, Jennifer Pierce (2012) found White male lawyers were discomfited by or hostile toward race conscious policies of inclusion, such as affirmative action, on the grounds that such policies were no longer needed because of social progress and that neither the firm nor they themselves were racist. 'In this professional milieu, like many others, the ideology of meritocracy is the central frame of reference for explaining success and disparaging failure ... Within these meritocratic workplace cultures, there is no acceptable language for stories about structural inequality, such as institutionalized racism'. The only two Black male attorneys the firm had ever hired reported many small acts of discrimination, such as colleagues ignoring their comments in meetings, forgetting lunch dates, losing a report that took a long time to research, and being given an assignment in an area that was unfamiliar. Both eventually quit. Long after one of the Black lawyers had left the firm, the White attorneys said he didn't fit in, his clothes were too flashy, he was demanding and abrasive, and they had doubted his qualifications from the beginning. By denying the existence of systematic racism and their own involvement in marginalizing and excluding racial others, the White lawyers were also constructing themselves as innocent.

In this climate, direct questions about prejudiced beliefs and motives on the part of employers and managers are unlikely to be fruitful. Further, racial bias is expressed in less observable ways. As Douglas Massey (2007: 54) points out, 'when pushed by the federal government to end overt discriminatory practices, [Whites] are likely to innovate

new and more subtle ways to maintain their privileged position in society'. Thus it has become more challenging to demonstrate the continuing significance of race in employment and to uncover discriminatory practices. One interesting method that offers possibilities is the field audit. Field audits are an innovative method adopted in the 1960s to uncover the extent of housing discrimination, especially in the wake of fair housing legislation in cities in the United States. Fair housing groups would send matched White and racial ethnic applicants (generally actors and actresses) to look at apartments that were advertised as available for rent. They found ample instances of discrimination. Racial ethnic applicants were routinely told by agents that an apartment in a predominately White area was no longer available; subsequently, matched White applicants who came later were told the apartment was available and were invited to apply (Yinger, 1995).

The necessity of using live applicants, of course, means that there may be unidentified individual variations other than race – such as demeanor or speech patterns – that might affect landlord responses. However, the frequent usage of paper and electronic application processes in employment offers the possibility of careful control of non-racial variations. Two recent field audit studies of racial discrimination in hiring were carried out in eight cities in Great Britain and in three localities in the United States. The British study was conducted by researchers from the National Centre for Research on behalf of the Department for Work and Pensions (Wood et al., 2009). The researchers set up an elaborate matrix in order to send out three sets of applications that were equivalent; one from a man or woman with a recognizably White native British name, and two from a man or woman with a stereotypically Black African, Black Caribbean, Chinese, Indian, or Pakistani name. 'Success' was defined as receiving a positive response – an offer of an interview or request for further information. One of the main findings was that applications with a White name were more likely

to receive a positive response: 'Of the 987 applications with a White name, 10.7 per cent received a positive response, compared to 6.2 per cent of the 1974 applications with an ethnic minority name' (Wood et al., 2009). Another way to express the difference was the rate of success. An ethnic minority job seeker would have to send 16 applications to get a positive response, while a White job seeker would have to send only 9 applications.

The American study received a great deal of media attention because it added to previous American field audit studies (e.g. Bertrand and Mullainathan, 2004) by varying the prestige of the university from which applicants had received their degrees. The researcher, Michael Gaddis (2015), focused on internet job advertisements requiring electronic applications for positions requiring a college degree. He created applications from matched pairs of ostensibly Black and White male and female applicants who listed a degree either from a high-status private university (e.g. Harvard) or from a solid, but less selective, public university (e.g. University of Massachusetts, Amherst). Otherwise, the only other difference was the first name on the application. These names had been shown in tests to be widely understood to be African American or European American from high-status, middle, or low-status backgrounds. Gaddis reported:

White candidates with a degree from an elite university have the highest response rate (17.5 percent), followed by black candidates with a degree from an elite university (12.9 percent) and white candidates with a degree from a less selective university (11.4 percent), and finally black candidates with a degree from a less selective university have the lowest response rate (6.5 percent).

These findings are interesting because they show that for Blacks, earning a degree from a prestigious university rather than a middle-level university more than doubles the chances of a positive response. However, Blacks with prestigious degrees still are about only two-thirds as likely to receive a positive response as Whites with equivalent credentials. In fact, they were only slightly

more likely to receive a positive response than Whites with lesser credentials. These latter findings are important because improving human capital/credentials is often touted as the way for minorities to catch up to Whites. Obviously, education does help lift minorities, but not to the level of Whites with equivalent education.

The new directions that have been described in this final section indicate the need to raise awareness of the continuing significance of race as an organizing principle in the labor market. They also point to contemporary changes that have altered the ways and means by which White racial privilege is maintained. Researchers will have to continue to innovate in order to be able to expose the workings of racism, and to bring attention to hidden structures and ostensibly race-neutral practices that help to create and maintain racial disparity and discrimination in the labor market.

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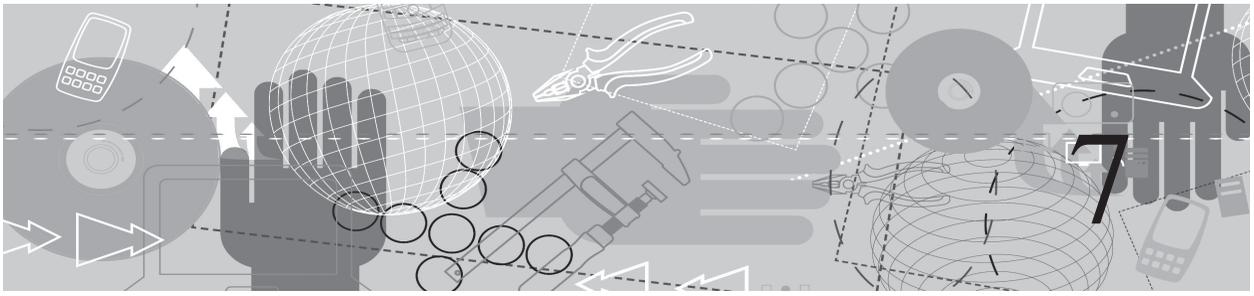
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Good Jobs, Bad Jobs

Arne L. Kalleberg

Creating good jobs and avoiding bad jobs are major priorities for all nations because work is central to human welfare and to the functioning of organizations and societies. The notion of job quality communicates that it is the *nature* of work that is important to workers, not just whether they have any job at all. Job quality has been historically a major theme in the study of work and employment, and has always attracted a great deal of attention from a diverse group of social scientists. The prevalence of bad jobs – such as marginal and irregular work – was common among the laboring classes in industrial countries in the nineteenth century. The ratio of good jobs to bad jobs increased sharply in the twentieth century – especially during the high rates of economic growth after World War II – as unions and governments in many countries helped to construct labor market institutions that provided relatively well-paying and secure jobs.

The end of the twentieth century and the first decade of the twenty-first century saw a reawakening of fears about the deteriorating quality of jobs. Academic and media attention

increasingly focused on people's anxieties about their inability to obtain jobs that pay a living wage and that are relatively secure and offer opportunities for advancement. Political debates about booms and busts of the economy paralleled discussions among social scientists regarding whether recent changes in the world of work resulted in gains or losses for different groups of workers. While many of these concerns are not new (especially for women and non-whites), they created especially great disruptions in people's established patterns and in their expectations about their work lives, since this took place following the three decades after World War II that were marked by sustained growth and prosperity in the global North. As a consequence, enhancing the quality of jobs constituted new and pressing challenges for individuals and their families, businesses, labor, governments, and society.

The importance of a focus on job quality is rooted in the realization that work is central to addressing a variety of social and individual concerns. It is now widely recognized that people are more likely to remain in jobs

if they are of good quality, which would help to increase the employment rate and avoid the revolving door of unemployment. Good jobs provide a foundation for economic development as well as a higher quality of life, healthier workers, and stronger families and communities. Elements of good jobs, such as having control over what one does in the workplace, have far-reaching effects on one's psychological functioning and non-work life. By contrast, bad jobs contribute to a wide range of social problems such as working poverty, inequality, family disruption, stress and poor health, and community disorder.

The spotlight on issues of job quality brings to the forefront a number of key issues related to how we think about jobs and the benefits and costs associated with them. One is how to conceptualize and measure job quality and its various dimensions. A second is to explain why jobs differ in their quality and why some people tend to have better jobs than others. These explanations need to account for why job quality varies among countries as well as change over time. Finally, we need to understand how to enhance the quality of jobs by creating more good jobs and making bad jobs better.

This chapter first discusses what is meant by good and bad jobs and how it has been studied by various social science disciplines. I next provide an overview of explanations of differences in job quality, especially how it differs among countries and over time in the recent past. I will give special consideration to arguments about the polarization of jobs, such as how the growth of nonstandard work arrangements often has been accompanied by an increase in bad jobs in some countries. I finally consider future directions for research on job quality and policies that might enhance the quality of jobs.

DEFINING GOOD JOBS AND BAD JOBS

A *job* refers to the specific set of tasks that people do for a living. Jobs are embedded in broader aspects of working conditions that

characterize the employment relationship, such as those classified as occupations and workplaces. Jobs are complex and, from a 'worker-centered' point of view can provide workers with many potential *job rewards*, or benefits and utilities that individuals may possibly obtain from their work activities (Kalleberg, 1977; Green, 2006). Since jobs are comprised of bundles of different kinds of rewards, job quality is a multidimensional phenomenon, reflected in diverse understandings of what constitutes a 'good' job.

Dimensions of Job Quality

A number of multidimensional definitions of job quality have been suggested. The International Labour Organization's (ILO) conceptualization of 'decent work' includes nearly a dozen components (each comprised of numerous indicators) such as: employment opportunities; adequate earnings; decent hours; stability and security of work; arrangements to combine work and family life; fair treatment in employment; a safe work environment; social protections; social dialogue and workplace relations; and characteristics of the economic and social context of work (e.g., Ghai, 2003). The European Commission's (2001) related concept of decent work similarly includes ten components, such as: intrinsic job quality; skills; gender equality; health and safety at work; flexibility and security; and work-life balance (see also Green, 2006). The vagueness and all-encompassing nature of the ILO's and EU's conceptualizations of job quality has made it difficult to agree on how to measure the concept and obtain internationally comparable data on it (Burchell et al., 2013). There have been efforts to reduce the dimensions of job quality to a more manageable number. Holman (2013), for example, combined 38 indicators into five dimensions: work organization; wages and payment system; security and flexibility; skills and development; and representation and engagement (see also Bustillo et al., 2009).

While there are many aspects of work that might constitute potential rewards, most people would agree that job quality depends heavily on the following components, which have been emphasized by researchers from different disciplines: economic compensation such as earnings and benefits (e.g., health insurance and pensions); the degree of job security and opportunities for advancement to better jobs; the extent to which people are able to exercise control over their work activities and to experience their jobs as interesting and meaningful; and whether peoples' time at work and control over their work schedules permit them to spend time with their families and in other, non-work activities that they enjoy.

Different disciplines have emphasized some of these dimensions more than others. Economists tend to equate job quality with the level and stability of economic compensation (especially wages), presuming that good jobs pay high wages and bad jobs pay low wages (e.g., Acemoglu, 2001). This assumption is not unreasonable, as earnings are a fairly reliable indicator of the differences between good and bad jobs (Ginzberg, 1979). Economic compensation also includes benefits such as health insurance and pensions, and some economists have included the rate of employer-provided health insurance as part of their measure of job quality (e.g., Farber, 1997). Such economic benefits are an important job reward especially in countries characterized by an employer-centered model (such as Japan or the United States) that underlies much of the distribution of health insurance, retirement pensions, and other economic benefits. Nevertheless, some economists are beginning to pay more attention to non-economic aspects of jobs, such as job satisfaction (e.g., Hamermesh, 2001) and time poverty (e.g., Mullainathan and Shafir, 2013).

By contrast, sociologists have long emphasized the importance of non-economic aspects of jobs. Marx underscored the desirability of workers being able to conceptualize how to do their work as well as to execute it (Braverman, 1974). When conception is

not separated from execution, workers can exercise discretion over their work and have real input into decisions that affect them. A large literature in sociology has underscored the importance for workers' well-being of having autonomy and control, or self-direction, over what they do and how they do it (e.g., Kohn and Schooler, 1973). Psychologists have also stressed the centrality of non-economic dimensions of jobs such as autonomy and control for the quality of one's work experience and the ability of workers to achieve self-actualization (Maslow 1954; Hackman and Lawler, 1971).

Workers who are able to control how and what they do at work are also more likely to obtain intrinsic rewards from their jobs. These are benefits and utilities that people obtain *from* task performance, as opposed to extrinsic rewards such as money or fringe benefits, which people obtain *for* performing their work. Intrinsic rewards reflect people's ability to utilize their skills, knowledge, and abilities in their jobs, and to have interesting, meaningful and challenging work. An additional aspect of control is the capacity to decide the pace and scheduling of their work. Workers who have little control over how much effort they expend or the number and timing of hours that they work are more likely to suffer stress and other negative consequences.

Jobs that do not provide any real opportunities for advancement to better jobs (or an increase of wages in the current job) might also be regarded as bad jobs. Such 'dead-end' jobs do not offer the promise of more non-economic and economic rewards in the future. A lack of advancement opportunities is especially problematic for people who have completed their formal education and have families to support.

Some of these aspects of job quality are easier to evaluate and measure than others. There are relatively good data on the distribution of (and changes in) earnings and economic benefits, for example. Others are measurable in principle but data are not easily available, such as job security and

statistical probabilities of opportunities for advancement. Still other dimensions of job quality are difficult to measure even in principle, such as cooperation among coworkers and intrinsic rewards.

Overall Job Quality?

There are good theoretical reasons to expect that the dimensions of job quality are generally positively interrelated, and so we can speak of the overall 'goodness' or 'badness' of jobs. Labor market segmentation theories, for example, assume that various aspects of job quality co-vary such that 'only certain configurations of [governing] rules tend to fit together' (Tilly, 1997: 269). The dual labor market theory proposed by institutional economists in the 1960s and 1970s posited that various dimensions of job rewards cohere together into clusters of 'good jobs' and 'bad jobs'. Thus, the *primary* labor market segment was comprised of good jobs (i.e., well-paying, relatively secure jobs that were associated with job ladders in large firms) and a *secondary* segment consisted of bad jobs (i.e., relatively insecure jobs associated with low-wage employment and the absence of job ladders and opportunities for advancement to better jobs) (Bluestone, 1970; Doeringer and Piore, 1971; Kalleberg and Sørensen, 1979).

Economic and non-economic rewards may also be positively related due to their common dependence on skills. Some writers (e.g., Green, 2006) regard skill as a separate dimension of job quality because skill utilization has intrinsic value. Others (e.g., Kalleberg, 2011) argue that skills are important for job quality mainly because of the job rewards that derive from the greater market power enjoyed by those with more skills. Higher skilled workers are generally more sought after by employers, which tends to bring the workers more earnings as well as giving them more autonomy and control over their work activities and schedule, and more job security.

An alternative view is that interrelations among job rewards are relatively weak.

Workers who have jobs that are intrinsically interesting or convenient (in terms of flexibility) may not necessarily be well paid or have opportunities for advancement with an employer. In addition, some relatively low-skilled jobs in the primary labor market that are unionized may provide good economic benefits and high wages, at least in the past. This is consistent with the 'summative' view of job quality held by neoclassical economists, who assume that employers can vary job rewards at will (within certain limits); a job can be good on some dimensions and not on others. This leads to the possibility of compensating differentials, such that one kind of benefit may compensate for another (Tilly, 1997) and workers can trade off the attainment of some types of job rewards to obtain others (Rosenthal, 1989). Employers may have to pay workers more, for example, to get them to work in insecure conditions where there may not be much chance of advancement, as in the case of many relatively high-skilled consulting arrangements.

In any event, it is likely that interrelations among dimensions of job rewards have loosened over time. For example, all jobs have become more insecure, though some jobs and persons are more vulnerable than others to both the risk and consequences of job loss. Thus, job security may have become even negatively related to income and other job rewards. Since both good jobs (e.g., well-paid consultants) and bad jobs are generally insecure, it has become increasingly difficult to distinguish good and bad jobs on the basis of their degree of security.

Job dimensions may also be arranged in different patterns so as to yield diverse types of good or bad jobs. Kalleberg and Vaisey (2005) find that there were various pathways by which workers may consider jobs to be good; job quality among their sample of unionized workers in the United States is related especially to satisfaction with benefits, interesting work and autonomy. Sengupta, Edwards, and Tsai (2009) use data from 66 firms and 203 workers in the United Kingdom, and find that jobs in food

and media occupations pay poorly but have relatively high autonomy. Holman (2013) analyzes differences in patterns of job quality among 27 European countries, using data from the 2005 European Working Conditions Survey. His cluster analysis identified six different job types or patterns of job quality measures: active jobs (which combine high discretion and high demands) are high in quality on all dimensions; saturated and team-based jobs have many features of high-quality jobs, but these are partially offset by high workloads, nonstandard hours and low flexibility; passive-independent jobs have some high-quality features (high security), but more low-quality aspects (low resources, flexibility and skill development); and insecure and high-strain jobs have mostly low-quality features.

At any rate, the current state of data collection is such that there is no widely accepted single measure or index of job quality that enables us to examine changes in job quality over time and that includes both economic and non-economic factors. Hence, most studies investigate the various key dimensions of job quality separately (Commission of the European Communities, 2001: 7).

Role of Individual Differences

People have differing opinions about what constitutes a ‘good’ job since they seek to attain diverse goals from work. Some will say a good job is one that pays well or that provides health insurance, is secure, or leads to higher paying jobs in the future. Others will maintain that a good job is one that a person enjoys or finds interesting, challenging and fulfilling. Still others believe that a good job is one that, alternatively: provides them with a convenient and easy commute; allows them to leave ‘work at work’ and does not interfere with life on weekends or in the evenings; permits one to work in pleasant surroundings; doesn’t (or does) require a person to move around from one place to another; and so on. To some extent, then, the

quality of jobs should be evaluated in terms of personal choice and so whether particular job characteristics constitute potential job rewards depends on individual differences (Kalleberg, 1977; Clark, 1998).

The importance that people place on various aspects of jobs differs in part according to their opportunities for the attainment of various kinds of job rewards: within a society, a person’s work values and expectations are related to his or her gender, race or age, as well as their education and work experience. Two alternative theories of the relations between work values and job rewards are the *reinforcement* explanation, which holds that people tend to adapt to the realities of their occupational experience, and the *problematic rewards* account, which suggests that people are apt to value most highly those job rewards that they feel least certain about obtaining at a certain time. Less educated workers and blacks – the groups most vulnerable to job and economic insecurity – are more likely to place high importance on income and security, which is consistent with the problematic rewards explanation (Kalleberg and Marsden, 2013). On the other hand, women tend to place less importance on high earnings than men, which is more in line with a reinforcement hypothesis since women typically earn less than men in large part because women are crowded into a relatively small number of traditionally female-typed jobs that pay less, as well as into lower paid specializations within male-typed jobs (Reskin and Roos, 1990). (For discussions of the magnitude and reasons for the gender gap in earnings, see, e.g., Blau and Kahn (2007), and Gottfried (2012).)

There are also modal, cultural and institutional understandings of what constitutes ‘good’ and ‘bad’ job characteristics in a particular society and time period. Workers are likely to calibrate their standards of what constitutes a good or bad job based on economic conditions. During economic downturns, for example, workers are likely to be happy to have a job at all (even a ‘survivor’ job) as opposed to suffering through long-term spells

of unemployment. In the Great Depression, a 'good' job was one that provided enough money to live on. By contrast, in the relatively affluent decades of the 1960s and early 1970s, the standards for evaluating a job as good was raised to one that provided meaningful and interesting work that enabled persons to self-actualize. Younger workers in these decades appeared to emphasize the importance of intrinsic rewards – raising fears among the media, social scientists and managers regarding possible widespread 'alienation' from work – while older cohorts of workers remained concerned with obtaining extrinsic benefits such as earnings and job security. This changed in the 2000s, with workers placing relatively greater importance on income and security (Kalleberg and Marsden, 2013).

EXPLAINING JOB QUALITY

Numerous factors and forces at multiple levels of analysis influence job quality. Job quality is a contextual phenomenon, differing among persons, occupations and labor market segments, societies, and historical periods.

Differences in job quality result from two main sets of factors. First, economic, political and sociological forces shape the structural and institutional contexts of work and help to explain how and why employers make various decisions, industries grow and decline, occupations expand and contract, and the extent to which workers are able to exercise, in greater or lesser degrees, individual and collective power in relation to their employers. The debate between those who argue that work structures are central for explaining job quality and those who maintain that job characteristics result from market forces has been a major source of contention in the intellectual history of theorizing and research about the labor market. Neoclassical economists, for example, generally assume that market forces primarily determine job quality, and their models leave little room for

the independent roles played by institutions, laws, and regulations (though see, for example, Levy and Temin, 2007). This view underpins many of the neo-liberal, pro-business/anti-union policies that have dominated the global economy since the late 1970s, especially in liberal market economies such as the US and UK (started by Reagan and Thatcher and continued by Clinton and Blair), which played an important part in the economic and political restructuring after the 1980s in these countries and is a key reason why jobs have generally become more insecure.

Second, changes in the composition of the labor force and in the needs and preferences of workers affect the fit between job characteristics and workers' values, needs, and expectations, and thus influence what features of work are salient for defining a good (or bad) job, as I discussed in the previous section.

Country Differences in Job Quality

There are country differences in job quality that result from both institutional and cultural differences. Neo-institutionalist theories of differences in job quality among countries maintain that there are growing dissimilarities that are due to labor markets and other institutions. By contrast, universalistic theories predict that country differences in job quality should be minimal and decline over time.

Two influential neo-institutionalist theories of differences are those associated with the 'varieties of capitalism' (VoC) or 'production regime' theory and the 'power resource' (PRA) or 'employment regime' approaches (see Gallie, 2007a, 2007b; Olsen et al., 2010; Holman, 2013). These frameworks link macro institutions to micro behavior, pointing to how institutional similarities and differences have implications for the quality of employment and workers' well-being. Both theories predict that there will be country differences and make some of the same predictions with regard to how job quality differs between countries. The VoC and PRA

approaches differ in their assumptions about which institutional features are more important for explaining differences in job quality: VoC emphasizes the preferences and actions of employers; whereas PRA regards the power of workers through unions as the main driving force for divergence.

VoC or production regime theory categorizes countries based on the interrelations between their production and institutional systems. The distinction between regimes reflects distinctions in the interrelations among four main ways that production is organized and how companies coordinate production through markets and market-related institutions: the financial system; the industrial relations system; the educational and training system; and the inter-company system (Soskice, 1999). Nations are clustered into distinct groups depending on how these spheres interrelate, leading to the distinction between liberal market economies (LMEs) and coordinated market economies (CMEs). Examples of ideal type LMEs are the United States, Ireland and the United Kingdom, and of CMEs are Germany and the Scandinavian countries. (There are also two variants of the CMEs: northern European, in which the most fundamental patterns of coordination take place within industries; and Asian countries such as Japan and South Korea, in which there is a stronger company-based coordination (Soskice, 1999).) Whereas CMEs are characterized by a higher degree of non-market coordination, the LMEs exhibit far more limited non-market coordination between companies, where labor is largely excluded and the state plays a smaller role (Soskice, 1999).

The two regime types are argued to be associated with differences in job quality. The LMEs tend to rely on general skills combined with greater opportunities for inter-firm worker mobility, whereas CMEs depend more on specific skills and continuous training. Responsibility can be more easily transferred to employees when they are more skilled and experienced (for instance, when they are organized in autonomous teams) (Soskice, 1999). The differences in

skill systems between CMEs and LMEs are likely to affect dimensions of job quality such as job security and intrinsic rewards derived from the exercise of autonomy and control, participation in decision-making and opportunities for learning, and other forms of skill acquisition. However, some have questioned the utility of the distinction between CMEs and LMEs for explaining country differences in job quality, as the pattern of firm-specific skills shows large variation among the coordinated countries (Gallie, 2007b; Edlund and Grönlund, 2008).

On the other hand, the PRA or employment regime theory emphasizes the distinct interests held by employers and workers (Korpi, 2006). Power exercised through unions enables workers to improve working conditions, constraining the actions of employers by mechanisms such as resisting tight employee control systems. PRA posits a somewhat more fine-grained clustering of countries than VoC, distinguishing between: social-democratic, liberal, and corporatist welfare states (Esping-Andersen, 1990); or inclusive, dual, and liberal employment regimes (Gallie, 2007a). This categorization emphasizes that the employment systems differ in a systematic way in terms of the involvement of organized labor, principles underlying employment policy, the role of the public sector, the salience of work-life programs, support provided to balancing work and family lives, and the level of welfare protection offered to the unemployed (Gallie, 2007a). For example, dualist employment regimes differ from inclusive regimes by providing strong rights only to the core workforce at the expense of the peripheral workforce, such as those on temporary and other nonstandard contracts. Due to differences in the strength of unions, and the distinct roles unions play in the labor market in inclusive and dualist regimes, the risk of polarization is greater in dual employment regimes (Gallie, 2007a).

Holman (2013) finds support for divergence theories through his analysis of differences among countries in the patterns of job types. He finds that social democratic

institutional regimes (Denmark, Finland, Sweden) have the greatest proportion of high-quality jobs. Southern European countries (such as Italy, Greece, Spain) have especially high proportions of passive-independent and insecure jobs, whereas transitional institutional regimes (Eastern European countries) have high proportions of high-strain jobs. He argues that these country variations in job quality are rooted primarily in differences among institutional regimes in terms of their employment policies and the relative organizational capacity of labor.

Gallie (2007b) points to the distinctiveness of Scandinavia's welfare regime and argues that the evidence is more consistent with employment regime theory as opposed to production regime theory in explaining job quality (see also Edlund and Grönlund, 2008). Comparing five countries (UK, Germany, Sweden, Denmark, and Finland) with regard to the differences in teamwork and autonomy, Gallie found that Germany and the Scandinavian countries were consistent with the predictions of production regime theory in terms of skills, but not with respect to control, teamwork and participation. Furthermore, employees in Denmark and Sweden enjoyed a higher quality of work tasks and better opportunities for involvement in decision-making. On these latter dimensions, Scandinavian countries are distinct, which he argues is explained better by welfare regimes rather than employer preferences, and so concludes that this underscores the ability of Scandinavian governments and unions to influence the actions of employers and to enhance job quality for employees.

Also building on explanations rooted in PRA, some institutional theorists argue in favor of societal effects in that employment systems operate according to different logics (Fligstein and Byrkjeflot, 1996). Workers in the Nordic countries, in which employment systems are characterized by skill-orientation, were found to have greater discretion than in the rule-oriented employment systems in the United Kingdom and the United States (Dobbin and Boychuk, 1999).

Green et al. (2013) use a series of European Working Conditions Surveys from 15 European Union countries between 1995 and 2010 to examine both country differences in job quality and changes in job quality over time (see below). They use four indices of non-wage job quality: work quality (skill use and discretion); work intensity; good physical environment; and working time quality. They found that the average levels of job quality were generally higher in more affluent countries. While they did not group countries into particular institutional categories, they found that social corporatist countries (such as Denmark, Finland, Sweden) had the highest work quality and lowest dispersion for all four indices, which they attributed to their long history of trade union activism that has helped create a more equal balance of power and lower levels of income inequality.

By contrast, universalistic arguments state that market and economic forces are so strong that each nation and each organization has to adapt to similar organizational and market logics. Organizations and welfare and production regimes come under pressure to compete in the increasingly internationalized markets. At the firm level, organizations tend to become more similar, and the conditions for job quality will over time become more homogenous among firms in different production and employment regimes. Thus, globalization, deregulation and changes in technology may weaken the impact of the institutional context, making the quality of jobs in different countries converge.

Some studies have found support for convergence theories. For example, Green (2006) argues that technological and organizational changes (e.g., new monitoring systems, as in call centers) affect all firms. Furthermore, many countries have faced a growth in non-standard forms of employment that may have made jobs more precarious (e.g., Rubery, 2005). There is also evidence of convergent pressures in European industrial relations as market, technological, and political developments create an impetus towards convergence (Vos, 2006).

Olsen et al. (2010) find support for both divergence and convergence theories. They report that job security, the ability to work independently, and the quality of working conditions and interpersonal relationships tend to be greater in Norway and West Germany than in the United States and Great Britain (in 1989 and 1997), while US workers tend to be most satisfied with advancement opportunities, intrinsic rewards, and overall job satisfaction (in 1997 and 2005); these findings underscore the importance of institutional differences. They also find a convergence in job security and work intensity among these countries, which may reflect increased market pressures that encourage a 'lean and mean' strategy both in production and employment regimes.

TRENDS IN JOB QUALITY

The real test of divergence as opposed to convergence theories of job quality, however, is whether country differences increase or decrease over time. An issue here is whether there are trends in job quality at all, or if differences among countries or over time simply reflect changes in job opportunities associated with business cycles (Schmitt, 2007). This is a matter on which sociologists and economists tend to disagree, with the former more likely to view changes in job quality as reflecting the outcomes of structural trends. Kalleberg (2011) argues that the growing gap between good and bad quality jobs in the United States is a long-term structural feature of the changing labor market and not merely a temporary aspect of the business cycle that will correct itself once economic conditions improve. Social scientists generally agree, though, that many dimensions of job quality (such as job security, career opportunities, wages, though not necessarily intrinsic rewards) generally increased during the post-World-War-II period relative to the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in most industrial countries. The debate here, then, is about the more recent trends in job quality.

There are several contrasting convergence theories of the trends in job quality since the decline of the Fordist mass-production system (see Handel, 2005; Gallie, 1991). The 'post-Fordist' view suggests that there has been a general increase in job quality as technological advancement and organizational restructuring have led to higher skill levels and better jobs (Kerr et al., 1973). The 'neo-Fordist' perspective argues that there has been a decline in job quality, resulting in large part from work being increasingly deskilled (Braverman, 1974). Though differing in their predictions about the direction of changes in skill, these perspectives are both universalistic in the sense that they assume that processes of control and skill development would lead to convergence or greater similarity across countries.

The 'post-Fordist' theory argues that competitive pressures associated with capitalism have pushed organizations to take the 'high road' and to compete by making investments in their workers, and to consider them as human resources as opposed to being merely labor costs of production. One way that organizations have sought to do this is by giving workers more control over their jobs and greater input into decision-making. The growth of 'high-performance' work organizations represents efforts by employers to elicit the discretionary effort of their workers by allowing them to participate more in decisions as to how their work is to be done, and to have more autonomy and control over essential aspects of their jobs. Workers who are employed by these kinds of high-performance organizations are also likely to be relatively well paid. At the same time, workers in these kinds of organizations are generally thought to have more job security, as it is commonly assumed that employers need to promise workers greater job security in order to elicit their loyalty and commitment. Since these jobs involve considerable training of workers, there are opportunities for advancement to higher skilled jobs that are linked in job ladders within occupational if not organizational internal labor markets

(see Appelbaum et al., 2000). There is evidence that the use of high-performance work organizations diffused rapidly between 1992 and 1997 in the United States (Osterman, 2000) and that there was an increase in the adoption of high-road strategies among companies in Norway from 1997 to 2003, for instance via increased use of teamwork and job rotation (Olsen et al. 2010). These high-road strategies were at times unstable, however, as some collapsed in the 2000s (Osterman and Shulman, 2011).

Occupational restructuring during the past 30 years has also been argued to have created good jobs, a perspective that extends the liberal, up-skilling theory advanced by Clark Kerr and his colleagues in the 1950s. The 'skilled-biased technological change' story maintains that there has been an increase in high-skilled jobs due to the requirements of more sophisticated technology. Low-wage, low-skilled jobs have been shifted overseas or automated, leaving better jobs for Americans. As a consequence of these more advanced technological requirements, economists have documented an increase in the wage advantages enjoyed by college graduates compared to less educated persons in recent years (e.g., Goldin and Katz, 2008).

Kalleberg (2011) finds that there has been an expansion of opportunities for workers to exercise autonomy and discretion in their jobs, to participate in decision-making in their organizations, and to obtain intrinsic rewards from their work. Responses to survey items tapping these three sets of concepts administered to national samples of workers in the United States over a 25- to 29-year span, provide suggestive evidence that there has been an increase in their overall mean levels.

Green et al. (2013), in the study referred to earlier, found that the levels and dispersion of the four work quality indices remained relatively stable over the period 1995–2010 in all 15 European countries that formed the European Union in 1995, though work quality and working time quality each rose in several countries. The dispersion in working time quality, work intensity and good physical

environment also decreased in many of the countries. Green et al. take these trends as supporting optimistic universal theories, especially the finding that working time quality increased the most, which they interpreted as reflecting the responses of countries to the changing work-life balance needs of their labor forces.

By contrast, the neo-Fordist theory argues that the conditions of capitalism have not changed fundamentally, and that the principles underlying the way in which firms organized work during the Fordist period of mass production still persist. Thus, forms of hegemonic despotism still persist (Burawoy, 1983), as employers still seek to cut costs by means of coercion, reducing wages and utilizing market mechanisms to maximize profits. The creation of bad jobs has been argued to result from attempts by managers to restructure organizations by means of 'low road, stick' (rather than carrot) strategies (Gordon, 1996) such as cutting costs through de-skilling jobs and subcontracting jobs as much as possible. Work has worsened while many companies have prospered.

The *McJobs* scenario holds that the rise of the service sector has led to the creation of more bad jobs, since average wages are higher in manufacturing than in services. Thus, Bluestone and Harrison (1986) argued that most of the jobs created during the 1980s in the United States were low-wage jobs, reflecting a shift from manufacturing to services. Ginzberg (1979) also pointed to the increase in service-sector jobs in an earlier period (1950–1979) as indications of a growth in bad jobs, noting that jobs in these sectors were more often part-time and wages tended to be low. Some observers have argued that the increase in large numbers of service jobs, regardless of their quality, has been the focus of American industry, as compared to Europe, where there has been more emphasis on creating fewer, but higher quality jobs (Lowe, 2000).

Gallie, Felstead and Green (2004) find evidence that task discretion declined over the decade of the 1990s in the United Kingdom: there was a significant downward

trend in discretion even after controlling for changes in skill requirements, the spread of automated or computer-based technologies, indicators of high-performance work organizations, and measures of occupational and labor force composition. They speculate that this decline in task discretion reflects the consequences of work intensification and the need to adhere to deadlines due to increased competitive pressures, as well as to forces promoting greater accountability and the wider regulative framework of employment. However, their study leaves unanswered whether this negative trend in task discretion also characterizes the period between the 1970s and 1990s.

The neo-Fordist perspective also emphasizes the growth of nonstandard (Casey, 1991; Blank, 1998), contingent (Freedman, 1985; Polivka and Nardone, 1989; Barker and Christensen, 1998; Kalleberg, 2000), or externalized (Pfeffer and Baron, 1988) forms of employment. Temporary work, outsourced and contracted work, often part-time work, self-employment and independent contracting represent these work arrangements. These signify a departure from the standard employment relationship which constituted the norm during the post-World-War-II period in most industrial countries and which was characterized by relatively high job security and mobility within the firm, accompanied by training opportunities and the progressive development of skills and knowledge. The growth of certain types of nonstandard work (especially temporary work) has been shown to be associated with a decline in the quality of jobs, including pay, security of employment and pensions, especially in liberal market economies such as the United States (Kalleberg et al., 2000) and the United Kingdom (McGovern et al., 2004). However, the extent to which nonstandard employment relations represent bad jobs varies among countries: for example, the quality of temporary jobs depends to a large extent on a country's labor market and other institutions, which affect whether or not temporary jobs are bridges to better jobs or traps that

consign people to dead-end jobs. In Social Democratic countries, the growth of temporary and part-time work reflects to some extent the demands of progressive social policies (such as child care or maternity leave), rather than resulting from efforts by employers to cut costs.

The neo-Fordist view also suggests that all jobs have generally become more insecure and have fewer opportunities for advancement, as a growing portion of the labor force, both in white- and blue-collar occupations, are feeling greater insecurity. The rise of contingent work (especially temporary work) has put pressure on permanent workers, much in the same way as a reserve army of the unemployed did in earlier periods. This general increase in insecurity has spread to the labor force as a whole, with the result that 'bad' job characteristics are now found in more jobs. Bad jobs often tended to be concentrated in blue-collar jobs in the past, but now the distinction between blue-collar and white-collar occupations has been blurred: for example, contingent jobs are found among professional (such as academic) workers as well as in blue- and white-collar jobs. Corporate restructuring and other organizational changes in the economies of industrial societies during the 1990s (such as downsizing and technological control) has produced a deterioration in working conditions in white-collar jobs (for those who are lucky enough not to have been laid off) that is reflected in an increase in workloads and hence time pressures, lower salaries, an erosion of pension and health benefits, and greater insecurity. These changes have created a sweatshop atmosphere among white-collar workers (see Fraser, 2001). Again, the extent to which insecurity is a problem is likely to vary among countries depending on their institutions, such as the extent of active labor market policies provide unemployed workers with economic compensation and opportunities to obtain skills to re-enter the labor market.

The combination of organizational restructuring and an increased emphasis on occupational skills has also created more free

agents, or workers who are able to move from one firm to another with relative ease. Workers with skills that are in short supply and relatively high demand are assumed to be able to exert more control over their careers as a result of their portable competencies. These new free agents are governed increasingly by market mechanisms, reflecting a new understanding of the employment relation or a 'new deal' between employers and employees (Cappelli, 1999).

Polarization in Job Quality

As the example of good and bad insecure jobs suggests, there may have been an expansion of *both* good and bad jobs. There could be an increase in high-skilled, good jobs and low-skilled, bad jobs, along with a decline in semi-skilled, well-paying jobs that has shrunk the size of the middle class in many industrial nations. Some jobs have gotten better, but others have become worse, resulting in greater inequality in especially income and wages, but also in job security and stability, autonomy and control over jobs, and opportunities for advancement (Lowe, 2000; Kalleberg, 2011); there has been an increase in poorly paying jobs at the same time as other jobs are being paid higher wages.

There are several competing explanations of the polarization in job quality. One account argues that polarized employment systems result from the economic restructuring and removal of institutional protections that have occurred since the 1970s in many industrial countries, which have made bad jobs a central, and in some cases growing, portion of employment in many industrial countries (e.g., Kalleberg, 2011).

Another view explains the growing polarization between high-skilled occupations such as managers, professionals and technical workers, on the one hand, and lower skilled white-collar and blue-collar occupations, on the other, in terms of technological changes and skill differences. The increasing use of computers has permitted managers to routinize

and automate middle-level occupations (Levy and Murnane, 2004; Autor et al., 2006), which reduces inequality between these and low-end jobs, which are less amenable to computerization. Goos and Manning (2007) extend Autor et al.'s arguments about routinization to suggest that this has resulted in a polarization of the occupational structure since the 1970s in the United Kingdom, as the bottom and top tiers of the employment structures (which they term as consisting of 'lousy' and 'lovely' jobs) increased more than middle-level jobs, which were more likely to be routinized. They further expand their argument (Goos et al., 2009) by showing that this kind of technology-induced polarization also increased elsewhere in the EU15 (except perhaps in Italy and Portugal) between 1993 and 2006.

Building on comparative institutional approaches, Emmenegger et al. (2012) underscore the importance of politics by arguing that political and economic processes increase dualization and social divides in society. They emphasize particularly the role of immigration policies and related migration flows in producing patterns of polarization and inequality between 'insiders', who are often in standard employment relations in core sectors of the economy, and 'outsiders', who frequently work in nonstandard employment relations and are denied social protections (see Gottfried, 2014).

Kalleberg (2011) finds that there has been an increase in the degree of polarization or inequality in a number of non-economic rewards, especially for opportunities to exercise autonomy over work tasks and to participate in decisions, in the United States. The significant increases in the variances of measures of these concepts are over and above changes in their mean differences, as well as in a large number of explanatory variables, and are consistent with a scenario that there has been a growing polarization in the responses of organizations to macro social and economic forces.

DiPrete et al. (2006) contend that economic polarization between high and low-paying jobs is not the only way in which countries

have responded to the broader macroeconomic forces that have led to a higher demand for some workers than others. They contrast the case of the United States (which has experienced polarization with regard to wages) with France, which has seen a growing polarization between skilled workers in relatively standard employment relations and lower skilled workers in insecure, nonstandard jobs (see also Maurin and Postel-Vinay, 2005).

Fernández-Macías (2012) uses differences in wages and education among occupations to examine polarization in 15 European countries from 1995 to 2007 (cf., Goos and Manning, 2003; Wright and Dwyer, 2003). He finds that only some countries (continental countries such as the Netherlands, Germany, France and Belgium) fit the polarization pattern of increases in both good and bad jobs, while others were more consistent with patterns of general structural upgrading and increases in good jobs (Denmark, Finland, Sweden, Ireland, and Luxemburg) and the relative expansion of middle quality occupations (Southern European countries). He also finds that liberal market economies such as the United Kingdom and Ireland were characterized by a pattern somewhere between polarization and upgrading.

LOOKING AHEAD: ISSUES FOR RESEARCH AND POLICY

The issue of job quality is likely to continue to increase in importance in the future despite concerns about unemployment and the quantity of jobs, as social scientists and policymakers are apt to become increasingly aware that the kind of jobs that people have matters greatly for individuals and organizations. Addressing the issue of job quality raises a number of important challenges for social science researchers, employers and workers, and policymakers (cf., Findlay et al., 2013).

One is to reach agreement as to how to conceptualize job quality. At present, the identification of the dimensions of job

quality is somewhat contested, differing among researchers across as well as within disciplines. It is generally established that job quality is a complex, multidimensional construct that consists of both objective characteristics, such as level of earnings or the safety of working conditions) and subjective aspects, such as the degree of meaning and challenge people want and obtain from their jobs. The notion of good jobs in particular is a normative construct that is gendered, contested, fluid, contingent, and evolving. Greater consensus is needed as to what constitutes the most essential features of jobs for a variety of work and non-work related outcomes. The multidimensional nature of job quality calls for a multidisciplinary research effort, with contributions needed from sociology, economics, industrial relations, management, law, psychology, and political science, among other areas.

Advancing our understanding of job quality also requires some concord on how to measure this concept. Studies of the quality of jobs differ in their methodologies, complexity, and dimensionality as well as levels of analysis. Some rely exclusively on objective indicators, such as administrative data, labor statistics, policies, and laws; some use subjective measures including perceptions of job characteristics such as adequacy of pay, degree of challenge or overall assessments of satisfaction and happiness at work; and some use both objective and subjective indicators. Some studies focus more on specific jobs while others examine aggregations of jobs into occupations or industries. Moreover, some researchers have sought to develop measures of the overall quality of jobs while others maintain that the worth of the various dimensions of jobs need to be assessed separately.

Explaining differences in job quality also presents challenges since we do not yet have unanimity on a theory or model of what differentiates good and bad jobs. While it is clear that job quality depends on characteristics of both jobs and people, studies have tended to emphasize one or the other, often

ignoring social factors such as class, gender, and race (a notable exception is Gittleman and Howell (1995)). Thus, we need better multi-level models that integrate macro and micro approaches in order to explain how work is structured (among occupations and organizations, for example) and how people respond to (and try to change) those structures. The far-reaching consequences of job quality are becoming better understood, though more research is still needed on how jobs affect health, family life, social integration and other aspects of life.

We also must gain a better appreciation of how country differences generate job quality. National employment regimes, government policy, trade union power, and cultural norms are among the salient aspects of countries that shape the quality of jobs (for examples, see the relevant chapters in Gautié and Schmitt (2010)). Cross-national studies should ideally be longitudinal, so as to be able to assess patterns of divergence or convergence in job quality and the structural reasons for changes in the quality of jobs. Considerable progress has been made on this issue in Europe, where the collaboration among researchers from a variety of countries has enabled the collection of comparable data sets that have permitted the assessment of institutional theories of job quality (e.g., Gallie, 2007a; Green et al., 2013). But these European studies need to be supplemented by comparable studies of job quality in the Americas, Asia, Oceania and elsewhere, in order to describe and explain a broader range of variation in job quality.

A major concern related to job quality is the growing precarity and insecurity associated with both standard and nonstandard jobs in virtually all industrial countries. In this regard, the notion of 'flexicurity' has attracted a great deal of attention among European labor market reformers looking for a way to give employers and labor markets greater flexibility and still provide protections for workers from the insecurity that results from this flexibility (Wilthagen and Tros, 2004; Viebrock and Clasen, 2009). Groups such as the European Commission (2007), for

example, have supported this policy, maintaining that adopting flexicurity arrangements will result in widespread economic and social benefits. The exemplars of this approach are found in Denmark and the Netherlands, but it has also been adopted in Asian countries such as Japan and South Korea (Kalleberg and Hewison, 2015). Nevertheless, the applicability and potential of flexicurity policies, especially during times of economic crisis, have been the subject of considerable debate in recent years (e.g., Heyes, 2013).

Understanding the nature and causes of job quality is not only important for social science research, but also for social policy and business practice. As noted above, enhancing job quality is a pressing issue given the centrality of work to both economic performance and individual well-being. Yet the imminent characteristics of work are by no means certain, as globalization and technological change do not automatically translate into particular work characteristics. Rather, governments and companies have considerable latitude in the choices they are able to make about what kinds of jobs are created. Thus, it is possible that the future of work in some countries may consist of good jobs that are relatively secure and well-paying, or bad jobs that are precarious and characterized by large numbers of poor workers, or a polarized economy in which there is a wide gap between good and bad jobs. Comprehending these possible scenarios provides the potential to institute social and economic policies that might enhance the quality of work for individuals and societies.

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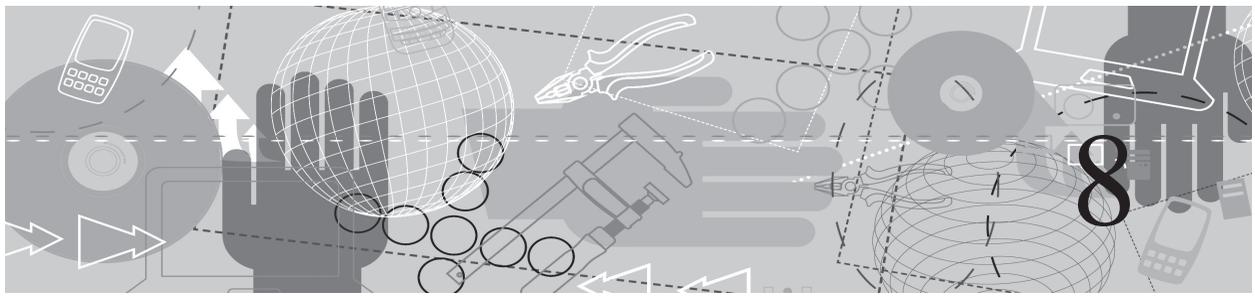
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The Origins of the Idea and Ideal of Dignity in the Sociology of Work and Employment

Philip Hodgkiss

INTRODUCTION

This chapter sets out to provide an overview of the origins of the relationship between the world of work and the idea and ideal of human dignity. A fundamental question to be explored at the outset is the way in which the very nature of being human and human individuality came to be cast in a qualitative relation with work. After considering the influence of the Enlightenment and Romanticism, the chapter proceeds to explore the way in which the engagement of dignity and work became a substantive issue for the founders of sociology. The analysis of the literature will then lead on to a review of the contribution of empirical sociology in various guises where, in the first instance, the question of dignity in relation to work remains largely suggestive. However, its implications have been drawn out quite explicitly by more recent interventions and the discussion, at this point, rehearses the current priorities of that social enquiry.

The chapter will culminate in the assessment of the prospects for the future direction of theory, research and practice. One note of caution is no doubt in order. Dignity is a wide-ranging concept of potentially universal application so there has been an obvious need to narrow down its remit and terms of reference in this context in order to make any analysis here at all manageable.

THE SOCIAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

To set the scene in the first instance we need to consider three related dimensions: firstly, the idea that the individual is unable to realize their human essence in capitalist industrialism; secondly, the presupposition that work per se is either intrinsically rewarding or inherently demeaning; and thirdly, the contention that the first two dimensions are inevitably qualified by the type of work and

employment and, specifically, the type of occupation and skill in question.

Whilst the Enlightenment settlement saw individuals being accorded equal dignity, for the Romantics dignity was that property accompanying individuals in their quest for their own original way of being. For Schiller (Schiller in Curran and Fricker (eds) 2005) human beings would have to escape from the mechanizing forms of society otherwise the development of industrial society would inevitably turn man into a mere imprint of his occupation, only able to fashion himself as just a fragment of the whole, with the free realization of human potential being confounded. In his view, the current state of civilization was wounding modern man to the quick. In the generation after Schiller, Fourier in France picked up on and systematized such ideas, stressing that work should not result in a degradation of the human spirit (see Granter 2009). Within a few short years Auguste Comte was using the terms 'nobility' and 'dignity' to capture a quality of social relation, judged by him as having relative strength or energy and, in the case of dignity, a pervasive quality (Roche de Coppens 1976: 36). Comte's near contemporary Proudhon, though working with completely different priorities, again focussed on dignity (see Hodgkiss 2013). The idea of the fragmentation of 'the Wholeman' and the need for the free realization of human potential informs Marx's thinking about alienation, as it does, equally, his thoughts on human dignity. In the 'Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts' (1992) often the word 'worth' is chosen to suffice but Kaufmann's choice of translation in Schacht (1971: xlix) depicts the worker as losing 'value and dignity' the more value he creates for capital. Later, in the same section on 'Estranged Labour', Marx observes that whilst still a 'slave', a rise in wages or better pay 'would not mean an increase in human significance or dignity for either the worker or the labour' (Marx 1992: 332). Quite crucially, then, dignity becomes a dynamic property of the free creativity of labour. This forms a major bifurcation in the history of

the concept of dignity per se, as it becomes attached to both ethical life and the creation of material life ultimately forming a bridgehead at the confluence of the two. Marx provides a systematic critique of the fate of dignity in capitalist social relations rather than a method of discerning an isolated ethical ideal. The fullest development of human dignity itself is contingent upon total emancipation from an iniquitous mode of production to be replaced by a truly human form where each doubly affirms himself and his neighbour in the process, with labour becoming authentic, active property. For Marx, each individual human being has intrinsic dignity and equal moral worth which cannot be compromised by, ultimately, arbitrary material conditions wherein the bourgeois individual had come to resolve 'personal worth' into exchange relations.

Though we might hesitate to include Marx in this company, it has been said of the first generation of sociologists that: 'All thought the modern order had much to offer mankind; that it was bound up with the effort towards progress and justice; but all saw, also, that it contained great threats to the very qualities of human dignity which lay at the heart of this promise' (Fletcher 1971: 455). There is a view that, in their different ways,

the founding fathers of the sociology of work each conceptualise increasing industrialisation as entailing a possible denial of dignity. Marx's focus on alienation and capitalism as a threat to our 'species being', Durkheim's concern that the relentless drive towards economic efficiency leads to a state of *anomie* (normlessness) and Weber's pathos for the individual trapped in excessive bureaucratic rationality. (Bolton 2007: 3)

Each in their own way came to identify the mechanisms by which the ideal of human dignity can be forsaken: the capitalist mode of production (alienation); anomie and the play of non-rational forces; the rationalization and disenchantment of western civilization; and reification and the fracturing of subjective and objective culture have all featured as possible sources of the negation of dignity. Though that which divides the work

of Marx, Durkheim, Weber and Simmel, too, on the fate of the individual in industrial capitalism appears on first acquaintance to be more in evidence than that which unites them, there is a remarkable continuity in their substantive concerns (see Hodgkiss 2013).

Though there are certainly significant references to the dignity of the individual in Durkheim's first major work *The Division of Labour* (1933), levels of anomie (normlessness) are identified in the transitional forms of the division of labour as mechanical solidarity yields to its organic counterpart. The evidence adduced in *Suicide* (1970) confirmed his view that the modern individual was experiencing debilitating levels of anomie, convincing him of the need to work on models for the regeneration of the moral life of industrial society. He found himself persuaded by the valued estimation of the person as embodying individual dignity with the implication that this entity was the indispensable unit of moral cohesion. In his lectures on moral education he stressed that inspiring in the child a feeling for the dignity of man was one of the chief aims of *L'education morale*. This aspect of humanity, worthy of respect, is not contained wholly in the individual; it is diffused throughout all humanity in general. Dignity, then, is not a particular property but a universal one. In contrast, the underlying assumption for Weber is that 'today only the "individual", the self-sufficient single person, is true and real and entitled to existence, because "objectivities" of all kinds have been demystified (through rationalisation) and no longer have independent meaning' (Löwith 1982: 39). Being persuaded that "'the dignity of the personality" consists in the "existence of values to which it relates its life"' (Weber cited in Rose 1995: 18), Weber's ultimate aim was to defend the autonomous individual and their responsibility to themselves. In this scenario, action of the choice-making individual is brought together to make up an equation with dignity and culture. Weber's hope is that human dignity, their own and others', ultimately informs the individual's resolve.

In a situation of perceived threat, for example, from encroaching bureaucratization, Weber was always concerned with preserving of the dignity and well-being of the individual, as for him it would always be moral decision-making that was at issue in taking every specific action.

In common with Weber and Durkheim, Simmel stresses autonomy and freedom as being the prerequisites of dignity; when these human ideals are absent so, too, is dignity. In a state of reification when an overbearing objective culture weighs heavily on the individual's effete subjective culture, the orientation to dignity cannot be sustained. Yet, he refers to 'the all-decisive feeling of dignity and of a life which is its own master' (Simmel 1950: 283). Dignity for the classical sociologists is inextricably linked to the emergence of individual freedom and autonomy and throughout the long course of increasing individuation of human populations the individual human subject is seen to have grown in dignity to become an indispensable unit of moral cohesion. Though the extent to which, after Marx, classical sociology focused on the issue of dignity in work and the workplace can sometimes be underestimated, the founders of sociology were, however, 'only secondarily concerned with workers' active struggles to achieve dignity. They focused on the social structures that limit workers' lives and undermine their dignity and well-being' (Hodson 2001: 50). It is only by acquaintance with their quite disparate solutions that we can see how it is Marx and Durkheim especially who at least conceive of the need for the resolution of such struggles.

In the middle decades of the twentieth century it was most notably the Frankfurt School of Critical Theory (see Jay 1973) who picked up the baton from Marx and the classical sociologists. Marcuse, for example, in his early work (see Granter 2009), saw capitalist social relations as undermining work as free creative activity and the realization of human essence and, by implication, the source of human dignity. Though without making an outright case for dignity, Adorno,

for his part, identified the compromising of how we construe our moral worth when 'humanity' is recognized and not recognized simultaneously in the expropriation of labour power: 'For Adorno, this has been the most pervasive threat to human dignity in the modern experience, and hence how our conception of human dignity is formed in resistance' (Bernstein 2001: 142). A further echo of Schiller and Marx can be found in Gramsci's specific identification of Americanism and Fordism. For him, American industrialists like Ford immediately smash the 'humanity' and 'spirituality' of the worker:

This 'humanity and spirituality' cannot be realized except in the world of production and work and in productive 'creation'. They exist most in the artisan, in the 'demiurge', when the worker's personality was reflected whole in the object created and when the link between art and labour was still very strong. But it is precisely against this 'humanism' that the new industrialism is fighting. (Gramsci 1971: 303)

Gramsci's early targeting of Fordism was to prove prescient. In more recent generations this theme is perhaps best represented in Braverman's *Labor and Monopoly Capital* (1974), where the emphasis is placed on the deskilling of work, management control systems and the technical organization of the work process (the legacy of Taylorism/Scientific Management and Fordism). Significantly, for Braverman, following Marx, the culprit is not a vague 'industrialism' but historically specific forces and relations of production: the mode of production of industrial capitalism. However, the idea that work is, or should be, a source of dignity has not gone uncontested.

Sennett (2004) has indicated that the concept of the dignity of labour was totally foreign in ancient society with such economies dependent on slavery. Whilst monastic labour was exclusively directed to the service of God and not dignified in itself, the later middle ages saw various guilds and specialized craft workers recognizing something approximating dignity in the kind of tasks undertaken. It is really only with the

eighteenth century that a substantive debate on the merits of human labour begins to emerge (see Ackroyd 2007). Sennett notes the difference of opinion of Diderot and Adam Smith on where the inherent dignity of labour might lie. Whilst Diderot saw routine as comprising a particular form of dignity in all that it 'teaches' human beings, Smith identified routine with a deadening of the spirit, with a lack of control in work leading to a totally dulled mentality – routine was something that had to be broken out of to achieve any acquaintance with dignity. To Smith the stultifying effect of routine could only repress the potential for any outpouring of human sympathy. Marx notes that Smith conceived of labour as a burden and a sacrifice and something akin to the curse that Jehovah bestowed upon Adam: 'Thou shalt labour by the sweat of thy brow'. With Smith considering 'labour from the psychological point of view' (Marx in McLellan 1980: 135) in relation to the intrinsic rewards it offers, liberty and pleasure are seen to lie in a realm of rest. In contrast, Marx sees individuals coming to need a rest from rest, recognizing the challenges inherent in the purposefulness of labour – in itself, a source of both liberty and pleasure: 'The result is the self-realisation and objectification of the subject, therefore real freedom, whose activity is precisely labour' (Marx, in McLellan 1980: 133). Echoing certain passages in Hegel (1977), Marx saw work as intrinsically rewarding and as a source of self-actualization; labour itself is seen as a means to dignity that has had its object expropriated by the capitalist mode of production. However, he says in criticism that though Hegel 'sees labour as the essence, the self-confirming essence, of man; he sees only the positive and not the negative side of labour. Labour is man's coming to be for himself within alienation or as an alienated man' (Marx 1992: 386). It is because of Hegel's limited and one-sided take on both labour and alienation that for Marx the nature of underlying social relations are neglected. In Marx's critique of capitalism the humanity of the case is clear in his observation that

‘the brotherhood of man is no empty phrase but a reality, and the nobility (dignity) of man shines forth upon us from their toilworn bodies’ (Marx in Fromm 1966: 150).

Though it is, perhaps, Smith who begins the tradition that views work, itself, as a painful necessity, a century later Nietzsche was not persuaded of the idea of the dignity of labour, which he dismissed as a painful exercise and a shameful necessity (Nietzsche cited in Rosen 2012: 46). In America, at the turn of the twentieth century, Thorstein Veblen saw the pressing question as being how to sustain one’s dignity and self-respect in the eyes of others? The answer to the craving for the acknowledgement of social worth under modern impersonal conditions came down to economic success and its conspicuous display. For him: ‘The concept of dignity, worth, or honour, as applied either to persons or conduct, is of first-rate consequence in the development of classes and of class distinctions’ (Veblen 1994: 9–10). Charting the emergence of the kinds of employment to which a degree of honour attaches and those conspicuously failing to attract any such attribute, he saw that some employments are deemed worthy and others unworthy, with manual labour becoming the preserve of the inferior class usually comprised of women and/or slaves. In what he calls Barbarian culture a distinction is drawn between exploitation and drudgery which corresponds to a further opposition of prowess and diligence. War and priestly activity is characteristic of the first instance in each pairing, whilst anything to do with the actual creation of material life finds itself exclusively relegated to the second term in the couplets. Thus, labour has become irksome and has fallen below the dignity of able-bodied men – it is without honour. Veblen remarks that our habitual aversion to menial employment has continued on into modern life as man seeks the accomplishment of some concrete, objective, impersonal end in every act undertaken, displaying utter distaste for futile effort. He refers to this as ‘the instinct of workmanship’ (Veblen 1994: 9–10). Veblen’s near

contemporary John Dewey was to write that for a ‘skilled artisan who enjoys his work’, both morally and psychologically,

the sense of the utility of the article produced is a factor in the present significance of action due to the present utilization of abilities, giving play to taste and skill, accomplishing something now. The moment production is severed from immediate satisfaction, it becomes ‘labor’, drudgery, a task reluctantly performed. (Dewey 1930 [1922]: 271)

In the previous generation, William Morris had something like this in mind as he sought to recapture the dignity inherent in work as the skilled endeavour of the craftsman.

In Sennett’s view the heir to Veblen is C. Wright Mills (Sennett 2008: 118) who refers to the ‘ideal’ of craftsmanship and about which he talks in almost metaphysical terms. Although there are only a few oblique references to dignity in work to be found in Mills, this is what he is talking about in all but name. Craftsmanship is actually a joyful experience in Mills’ estimation, involving mastering the resistance of the material worked upon and finding solutions to self-imposed tasks: ‘As he gives it the quality of his own mind and skill, he is also further developing his own nature; in this simple sense, he lives in and through his work, which confesses and reveals him to the world’ (Mills 1956: 222). The person becomes so attached to the skill component that his (sic) feelings, as internalized standards, transcend any institutional demands. Traditionally, when such persons are grouped together in something like a guild, this will involve the development of ethical and status codes to valorize standards. In concluding his book *The Craftsman*, Sennett surmises that the craftsman who puts the completion of their work above all else, even when stricken bodily in the instance he gives, is ‘the most dignified person we can become’ (Sennett 2008: 296). Even within Fordist production processes dignity seems to have been aligned with craft. Beynon, basing his view on his own fieldwork reproduced in *Working for Ford*, remarked that skilled workers have a ‘freedom which finds its

expression in the dignity which printers and other skilled men derive from the superiority of their work ... Assembly line workers are not dignified. There is no dignity to be gained from screwing on wheels so they don't think about dignity' (Beynon 1973: 187). This is dignity as achievement or as possession indicated by the use of the words 'derive' and 'gained'. Nevertheless, in referring to craftsmen, Sabel (1984) sees dignity as something that can be affronted, with workers being sensitive to insults to their dignity. He says that 'management was always suspected of neither respecting the dignity of skilled workers nor appreciating the moral basis of their work' (1984: 15). However, different work groups will differ about which 'powers' at work define dignity: comprehensible for each party only in its own terms. By their own standards, one group of workers can regard a certain job as beneath their dignity whilst another work group views it as quite appropriate.

THE EMERGING FOCUS ON DIGNITY IN WORK

In Britain, Lockwood (1966) and Goldthorpe (1966) saw the work situation (including socio-technical environments) as creating and sustaining the basic social imagery of a class around which characteristic values and attitudes cluster. However, these authors came to emphasize workers' 'prior orientations', which ultimately implied interdependence with immediate contexts, 'orientations' being how individuals give coherence and direction to life and articulate their expectations and priorities to make sense of their lives. 'Orientations' became the independent variable in the analysis of attitudes to, and behaviour at, work. Goldthorpe et al.'s (1968–69) sample of workers appeared to be viewing work in an instrumental fashion, as a means to an end external to the work situation, i.e. a valued standard and style of life of which work had no part. It is their view that

the individual actually experiences both structured inequality (alienation and exploitation) and the 'civilization of individual consumers' but the one is not necessarily subsumed to the other in consciousness. Ostensibly, this is the world of production/world of consumption divide and in Goldthorpe et al.'s view the latter inhibits the critical apprehension of the former. Subsequently, Parkin (1972) and Mann (1970, 1973) came to juxtapose individual orientations with supra-personal values systems; workers' interpretations of the social world depended upon the meaning system drawn upon. Whilst Parkin concluded that 'the subordinate class tends to have two levels of normative reference, the abstract and the situational' (Parkin 1972: 95), Mann maintained that connections between segmented aspects of life had not been made by the working class with a 'dualistic' contradictory consciousness existing and depending upon whether the level was abstract or concrete (situational): 'Co-existing with a normally passive sense of alienation is an experience of (largely economic) interdependence with the employer at a factual, if not a normative, level' (Mann 1973: 68). Abercrombie and Turner (1978), in their own work, have pointed to the vacillation of the working class between dominant and subordinate conceptions, abstract norms as separate from concrete situations, which is consistent with the work of Parkin and Mann. Abercrombie et al. also identify a pragmatic acceptance which is seen as the result of the coercive quality of everyday life and of the routines that sustain it; management control of the work process, and, consequently the worker, forms the fundamental economic process of capitalism (Abercrombie et al. 1980: 166). Moreover, whilst the immediacy of social life may be emotionally charged, there is no argumentative consistency in everyday moral consciousness; instead, there is a compartmentalization of moral and strategic action – all of which militate against consistency in moral orientation across the board.

Dignity is not a component part of the agenda of this tradition of the sociology of work and employment and, as they would see it, not at all a substantive part of their research aims and objectives. They had quite other priorities, and dignity in work is not even mentioned directly, yet the question of dignity remains implicit in their analyses. For instance, Marx's worker/citizen divide is extrapolated by Goldthorpe and Lockwood into the divide of a world of production and a world of consumption – the civilization of individual consumers. Here, we have inside and outside of the factory gates, atop which dignity balances precariously. Moreover, if we consider the idea of pragmatic acceptance in Mann (also present in Abercrombie et al.), we find little evidence for normative acceptance, the implication of which is that working-class individuals do not perceive themselves as inferior; their intrinsic worth, their dignity, is not being directly impugned as it would be by accepting their inferior position as normative. But nor, incidentally, is the situation viewed directly in terms of justice or fairness. Abercrombie et al. cast doubt on Marx's expansive claim that the working class is indignant at its abasement in capitalism, asserting that in working-class life there is a compartmentalization of moral and strategic action militating against an all-encompassing moral orientation (Abercrombie et al. 1980: 54). What remains implicit in this approach as regards dignity has been brought out explicitly by Honneth.

Honneth agrees with Mann that only those sharing in societal power need develop consistent social values. Again like Mann, and Parkin for that matter, Honneth recognizes the operation of an abstract/concrete differential in working-class normative consciousness. Referring to their work, Honneth claims that empirical investigations 'show that members of the working class treat the moral problems of their own environment in a normatively secure and ethically mature manner, but fall back helplessly upon standard normative clichés when asked to deal

with questions about the possible value principles of social orders in general' (Honneth 2007: 86). He concludes, along with Mann, that there is a pragmatic acceptance of the hegemonic normative order on the part of the working class, though they may remain sceptical of the bases of its legitimacy. The social control of moral consciousness in Honneth's view hinders from an early stage the development of an alternative, conflictual moral code based on a sense of social injustice. As Mann says, values are promoted that do not allow the working class to correctly interpret the reality it actually experiences. Subordinate classes in society are not encouraged to make explicit their normative convictions and Honneth, here, refers to Bourdieu who ultimately saw the working class as having been denied control of their 'political tongue' (Bourdieu 1986: 461). In other words, what is being identified is an expropriation of speech – the linguistic and symbolic means of expression are withheld and the articulation of social injustice is blocked. Honneth's view is that, as the social demands of the working class are denied a moral character, the focus of normative conflict shifts away from class to be centred on other locations; workers' construction of a counter culture of compensatory respect re-defines, in thought, the parameters of job/occupational status or re-locates it altogether to a world of private life attribution.

In concert with both Bourdieu (Bourdieu and Passeron 1977) and Mann (1970, 1973), Honneth points to the effect of cultural reproduction through the school system as closing down working-class ethical vitality. The communicative infrastructure is missing that would both articulate a sense of social injustice and support an alternative moral initiative of collective and cooperative endeavour. Instead, a range of life-course options are trailed that promote a competitive individualization of risk and reward. The experience of success and failure in social life is thus personalized and the chances of any genuine perception of social injustice in collective terms become even more remote.

The normative claims of the working class, lacking a linguistic and symbolic articulacy, are most likely to present as typical perceptions and feelings of injustice rather than being formulated as a coherent, positively expressed conception of justice and value. Yet, Honneth is persuaded that any 'uncoordinated attempts to gain, or regain, social honor, which have been largely deprived of coherent linguistic expression ... are based on a highly sensitive consciousness of injustice, which implicitly lays claim to a social redefinition of human dignity' (2007: 94). He says he believes that: 'Unarticulated indications of moral condemnation of the existing social order are hidden ... in largely individualized struggles for social recognition and in daily struggles at the work place' (2007: 93). For him, Sennett and Cobb (1972) have shown how 'unequal distribution of social dignity drastically restricts the possibility of individual self-respect for lower, primarily manually employed occupational groups' (Honneth 2007: 93). With Honneth, a sociology of dignity has been co-opted into philosophy to great effect; how by the 1980s is dignity faring in the sociology of work and employment itself?

There are some notable interventions from the period of the mid-1970s onwards, concentrating on both the quality of work and the quality of the experience of work. Examples are wide-ranging: Braverman's (1974) *Labor and Monopoly Capital*, taking a Marxist standpoint, which became a landmark; classic compilations from Wood (1982) *The Degradation of Work? Skill, Deskilling and the Labour Process* and Giddens and MacKenzie (1982) *Social Class and the Division of Labour*; and Burawoy (1985), in his own historically informed, *The Politics of Production*. A substantive discussion of dignity, here, however, is conspicuous by its absence. Despite the legacy from the classical sociologists, as we have seen, the connection with dignity in this range of the literature does not appear to have been made. We perhaps get a little closer in this period with Ryan (1977) exploring the philosophical

roots of humanistic work and Agassi (1986) making the connection between alienation and dignity in the workplace – one of the first statements to place dignity in work quite firmly in the realm of ethics. Whilst Agassi refers to dignity quite explicitly, one wide-ranging contribution, often overlooked, is that by Sabel (1984) though reference to dignity, here, remains rather more implicit. Despite appearing to credit dignity with substantive importance for the purpose of his account, its meaning remains largely unexplored and it is not developed throughout as a theme. Though he refers to the principles of dignity and honour which workers are seen to bring to the factory and that such ideas inform political programmes and give rise to conflict, it is through the idea of the worker's 'world view' that dignity is to be most clearly understood. A 'world view', in Sabel's estimation, is like a code of honour whereby actions are categorized as licit or illicit, honourable or dishonourable, forming 'an independent and integral whole in which ideas of ambition and dignity, early experiences at school and on the labor market, outbursts of rage at management, and even acceptance of certain hardships combine according to stylistic canons that the worker recognizes as his own' (Sabel 1984: 80–81). Workers live up to the standards of dignity implicit in their 'world view', and from their different vantage points can demand the recognition of their dignity. Ideas of dignity are something that are quite distinct but can be compromised by situational variables (migrant workers, for example, can be marginalized both inside and outside the factory and isolated from fellow workers).

Since the 1980s the service sector has become increasingly a focus of attention for research. Service work involves face-to-face interaction or voice-to-voice communication, where the emotional style of offering the service tends to be part of the service itself. The skill in question is not concerned with the fashioning of material objects but, instead, the execution of a personal performance in the delivery of a service to a customer or

client. Here, too, C. Wright Mills provided the initial insightful interpretation. In *White Collar* he had seen that: ‘The real opportunity for rationalization and expropriation are in the field of the human personality’ (Mills 1956: 185). In subsequent work, Gerth and Mills indicated how we come to recognize affective intent and construe emotional gestures. Just as there may be various discourses available, people are very adept at drawing on emotional vocabularies. The meaning of the situation to the person sets the tone for the emotional vocabulary: ‘These meanings vary according to the person’s past experiences; these experiences, in turn, must be explained in terms of the person’s position and career within given kinds of social structure’ (Gerth and Mills 1970: 54). Gerth and Mills confirm that the extent to which persons do not actually feel the emotion whilst playing the role involving emotional gestures varies widely. One person may identify emotionally with the role whilst another may gesture in a calculating and detached fashion. They say that ‘often emotional gestures may be “put on” without any “corresponding” affective feelings being present’ (Gerth and Mills 1970: 57). As it appears to us, we would be faced with the question: is the display or performance genuine or is the worker just going through the motions (‘e’-motion)? On the one side there are, in Gerth and Mills’ words, emotional masks and hollow gestures; on the other side are clients, consumers and service users, who will always be very adept at discerning between genuine and sham displays of emotion. Here, potentially, the dignity of the participants on either side of the service delivery equation, is in danger of being compromised. Drawing on Mills’ original formulation of the commodification of appearance and feeling, Hochschild (2003 [1983]) employed the term ‘emotional labour’ to denote the management of feeling in the creation of publicly visible bodily and facial display. Although explicit references to dignity are few and fleeting in Hochschild, we can see how it can come into play. In an illustration of the micro-politics of

voice-to-voice encounters we can see how claims and counter-claims to dignity can become a battlefield in the workplace – a veritable war of manoeuvre for respect and self-respect. Hochschild testifies that when chased by the debt agency the debtor sometimes reacts ‘by defensively withholding their names from the collector in order to protect at least their names from indignity’ (Hochschild 2003 [1983]: 144), though, if in response, the debt collector then resorts to his own colourful names for them, the debtor ‘may become upset and agitated and may vigorously assert his or her own dignity’ (2003 [1983]: 144). This idea of the commercialization of feeling would come to provide the added dimension of emotion to the lexicon of concepts promoting our understanding of the role of dignity in work.

DIGNITY AND WORK IN EXPLICIT FOCUS

It is since the turn of this century that contributions to the literature on dignity at work have begun to be viewed as comprising a substantive area in its own right. Testimony to this is Bolton’s research report (2005), which provided an evaluative overview of the literature in this area, and the review article by Stranglemen (2006), which considered in the same breath pieces from, amongst others, Sennett, Lamont (2000) and Hodson (2001). Perhaps it is, above all, Hodson who first overviews the sociology of work through the lens of dignity per se in a landmark project. In an imaginative and testing exercise, he undertook a large quasi-survey of a range of studies in the US and UK – both quantitative and qualitative – which were narrowed down to over fifty in the first case and over thirty in the second. The secondary data was then collated. A major legacy of research of this nature was facing up to the problem of what any number of researchers were taking ‘dignity’, itself, to mean. Bolton was to maintain that although the word ‘dignity’

appears frequently in contemporary accounts of work, it is often only after authors have ‘talked loosely’ about it under a variety of headings. Whilst what little empirical research there has been explicitly focusing on dignity remained at a premium, with most literature on dignity at work originating in North America, her scrutiny of specific ‘Dignity at Work’ policies revealed reference to dignity only within narrow limits. In her view, then, there has been little consensus on how dignity might be defined so that it has remained ‘an entirely relative term with little analytical value’ (Bolton 2005: 14). She remarks, nevertheless, that originating from many different perspectives, dignity is seen as ‘an essential core human characteristic that should be respected but often is not’ (2005: 14). In response she settled upon a conceptual framework, ‘Dimensions of Dignity’, which was to introduce ‘a new conceptual lens through which dignity at work might be understood’ (2005: 15). Her methodological means to achieve this was to draw a distinction between dignity ‘in’ work (dignified work) and dignity ‘at’ work (dignified workers), thereby accounting for both subjective and objective factors. Examples of dignity ‘in’ work would be autonomy, meaningful work and job satisfaction; in the case of dignity ‘at’ work, equality of opportunity, health and safety at work and security of employment. A particular focus of attention, here, turned on how dignity is experienced by various groups or categories of worker and the extent to which dignity can be created in the workplace. Touching on ideas enshrined in the statutes of international constitutions, Bolton is led to contend that dignity, and its realization in work, is a collective achievement rather than being an individual attribute.

It is significant that the question of method becomes a substantive issue in the subsequent Bolton (2007) collection of contributions, and attendant on this is the immediate problem of the operationalization of dignity. It becomes quite obvious from studying the range of contributions to the Bolton anthology that

there is an issue with the transmutation of the question of dignity into questions of working conditions, job satisfaction or pride in work undertaken; dignity, too, is often seamlessly interwoven with other related concepts such as alienation, de-skilling and conflict (misbehaviour). The idea of dignity has also been subsumed to bullying at work, for example. Indeed, Bolton points to the fact that research into dignity at work involves a ‘multi-dimensional analysis’ (Bolton and Wibberley 2007: 149) and Hodson concedes that dignity is a ‘broad concept with multiple facets and implications’ (Hodson 2007: 129). Sayer, in the same volume, makes the case that dignity involves, at one level, workers being respected as people and not being treated as a mere means to the ends of others, whilst, at another level, they are to be trusted to act responsibly and autonomously and taken seriously as part of a communication community. He draws a valuable distinction between ‘identity-sensitive’ and ‘identity-insensitive’ variables of inequality. Examples of the former would be racism, sexism and homophobia, with the latter being grounded in the very nature of the capitalist social relation of work and employment where the instrumentality of such relations compromises dignity. Holding that the type of work undertaken should not be, in itself, demeaning and that advantage should not be taken of the vulnerability of others, indicates the further range of Sayer’s framework (2007: 17).

One of several related definitions of dignity that Sayer rehearses is:

To be dignified or have dignity is first to be in control of oneself, competently and appropriately exercising one’s powers. Most obviously, then, dignity is about self-command and autonomy. As with so many other matters relating to moral sentiments, dignity is partly consciously, partly unconsciously, signalled through the body – in our bearing, in how we hold ourselves. (Sayer 2007: 18)

In this regard, it is worth noting that specific reference to body parts, alienated from the corporeal totality of the person, can impugn

dignity. For instance, the idea (the nomenclature) of ‘hired hands’ has an undoubted negative connotation and has implications for the prospects of dignity ‘in’ and ‘at’ work, as does referring to the need to have enough ‘bodies’ for the task in hand.

In his own work Sennett has been able to identify two predominant senses in which dignity has been used: one that focuses on the sanctity and integrity of the body and a second typified by the dignity of labour. Both are universal values, though the latter had to wait on the coming of modern capitalism to achieve that standing: ‘While society may respect the equal dignity of all human bodies, the dignity of labour leads in quite a different direction: a universal value with highly unequal consequences. Invoking dignity as a “universal value”, moreover, provides in itself no clue about how to practice an inclusive mutual respect’ (Sennett 2004: 58). The two definitions of dignity, of the body and of work, appear at first blush to be diametrically opposed: the pathos of self-direction, autonomy and freedom, and, with the characteristic features of working life in capitalism, a landscape so often devoid of such features where only a few can ever hope to achieve the dignity of work (2004: 58). In fact, this contradiction is an ongoing dialectic in the disclosure of dignity in the world of work; work and the body are only alienated one from the other in specific social and historical circumstances. With an ever-increasing service sector, the question of emotional labour surfaces here in the employment and, then, deployment of the body. Building on the pioneering work of Mills, more recent contributions such as Hochschild (2003 [1983]); Warhurst and Thompson (1998) and Warhurst et al. (2000), have thought of labour as having distinct components that could be described as ‘emotional’ or ‘aesthetic’ in the delivery of a service. Research in this area has often featured the retail and hospitality sector in employment such as fast-food restaurants, hotel work and tour guiding. One further related instance is airline flight attendants (Hochschild 2003 [1983]). Data on call centres (Taylor et al. 2002) and

sales calling has demonstrated that in IT voice-to-voice work, the struggle for dignity is as engaged as in more traditional forms of employment with a recognized knowledge base, being here, too, an invaluable means to gain control of the work process.

In rehearsing a really quite optimistic scenario, Dant (2010) sees the artisanal work of car repair as being typified by variable emotional tone and engagement together with the gathering of flexible sensual knowledge required by such a task. This embodied interaction with the material world is viewed as satisfying and rewarding, and, although he does not take issue with dignity per se, Dant sees such endeavour as being in tune with Marx’s concept of work realizing man’s species-being. (There is here, also, an echo of the discussion of craftsmanship above.) There are other instances, about which we can be less sanguine, where emotional investment, and both knowledge and skill, ultimately may be to no avail. One example of this is the ‘releasing’ of young apprentice footballers by professional football clubs. After being ‘warmed-up’ for years from being children, they are ‘cooled-out’ instantly by a few moments of conversation, a phone call or letter. They have no future in ‘the game’ (i.e. professional football). They are surplus to requirements – rejects and failures. The impact is devastating emotionally and, as O’Hara (2014) has pointed out, these young men are in need of counselling, advice and an education strategy. The thwarted career of the professional orchestra musician having finally become the soloist manqué, provides another not dissimilar instance. Here, there is no possible emotional distancing of performance and display from emotional investment, and the question of dignity is at a premium. A further, slightly different example is when careers come to an end in the armed forces, involving a notoriously difficult emotional adjustment to civilian life. Emotional pretence or artifice would not be allowed by military discipline and was certainly never part of the highly prescribed role in question – other than, of course, the

perfecting of an extreme version of affective neutrality. So, there is more to the idea of emotional labour than a concern with exclusively low-paid, insecure employment or the situation represented by ‘McDonaldization’ (Ritzer 1998). Hochschild explored the tension between an acted ‘false self’ and an ‘inner jewel’ of a ‘real self’ (Hochschild 2003 [1983]: 34), and we may wish to conclude that emotional distance in the performance of certain public display tasks may inure the individual to indignity along the lines of ‘It’s not really me, anyway’ or ‘It’s this job, not me’. As Hochschild observes, and she may as well have used the word ‘dignity’ here: ‘To keep on working with a sense of honor a person has to stop taking the job seriously’ (2003 [1983]: 135). This kind of ploy may be true in an unspecified number of cases, whilst elsewhere this stratagem refuses to work and the lack of dignity consistently ‘hits home’ with collateral damage emotionally.

COMING TO TERMS WITH DIGNITY: DESIGNS ON FUTURE RESEARCH

One of the major developments evident in Bolton’s (2007) collected volume that will impact on the empirical study of dignity, is a serious concern with modelling and method, with examples of the included research having recourse, in some instances, to a quite clear triangulation of method (including the input of ethnography). Whilst Bolton’s own contribution produces a survey of best companies with best management practices chosen from an extensive list, Hodson (2007), responding to a perceived call to combine quantitative and qualitative techniques, fashions a very elaborate systematic approach including the coding of ethnographies. With this volume a significant marker has now been put down to indicate the required levels of sophistication for the future sociological investigation of dignity at work, and efforts at a conceptual systemization, whilst

undoubtedly pioneering, need to be built upon and extended. The critical moment of dignity has to be retained and the temptation to construe it purely as a palliative force in the workplace should be resisted. There are, however, some critical moments, with Bolton saying, for example, that the call for cohesive corporate cultures and employee engagement in some management texts reflects the influence of the early Human Relations tradition. Descending upon the original Human Relations approach as his culprit, Marcuse issued a salutary warning 50 years ago in *One Dimensional Man*. Under the heading of ‘The Research of Total Administration’, he chided that researchers were letting the operational treatment of concepts perform a political function with the priority being adjustment to extant social relations. Giving industrial sociology as his prime example, what Marcuse calls the ‘therapeutic character’ of the operational concept shows itself ‘most clearly where conceptual thought is methodically placed into the service of exploring and improving the existing social conditions, within the framework of the existing societal institutions’ (Marcuse 1968: 94). Good labour-management arrangements assume a priority as its ideological and political character remains repressed. Thus, the ‘science’ of management becomes a means to improve social control and, in the process, the depth of worker experience is arrested and transmuted by both concept and method. More recently, Bourdieu (1990) has made a similar case. The focus on efficiency and organizational productivity facilitated by management’s development of strategies to enhance worker dignity, is a quite different proposition to the sociological enterprise of understanding, explaining and analysing dignity in work. Bolton remarks that despite ‘the apparent importance and universal acceptance of the “inherent dignity of the human person” (*The International Bill of Rights* in Perry 2005), dignity is not something that is generally referred to within management texts’ (Bolton 2007: 134). In his discussion of inequality, Alfred Schutz remarked that

'the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of the United Nations (art. 2) proclaims moral and juridical equality, that is to say, it is equality in dignity, formal equality in rights and equality of opportunity, but not necessarily material equality as to the extent and content of the rights of all individuals' (Schutz 1970: 308). This rehearsal of the 'ideology' of morality being estranged from the basis of the creation of material life would have been no surprise at all to Karl Marx.

The basis on which work is offered is at issue not solely whether the work itself nurtures a sense of dignity or whether managers try to promote it. Such factors as zero-hours contracts, part-time work, low pay and the consequent generation of a sense of insecurity (Standing 2011) in themselves over-determine dignity in/at work. This is not a work/non-work divide per se but a fluid interface. These immaterial 'terms of engagement' are neither what is worked upon in the work situation, nor the product of the producer, they are specific forms of the labour market and cash nexus that will gainsay all other attempts to garner dignity. When someone is acutely aware that they are a commodity to be used prior to actually being in employment, then the prospects for dignity in and at work itself are systematically compromised. Purser (2009), in fieldwork comparing two contrasting day-labour hiring sites, explored how Latino immigrants struggle to 'find', 'assert' and 'retain' dignity in their search for work. A key feature in an emerging discourse appeared to be the disparagement of the group from the other site: a 'shop-floor' style divisiveness to belittle rival workers and drive home a dubious distinction. In the terms of such banter and bravado is a modicum of dignity salvaged from the precariousness and short-termism of the cash-nexus. However, the expectation of being treated as having individual worth and intrinsic value may already have been down-graded. The worker is socialized into what might be the expectations of her at work, beginning with childhood in working-class culture and education, through youth culture

and peer groups, going on to be confirmed by such things as shop-floor culture and the apprenticeship system (or equivalent). This is not any easy transition. It involves levels of anxiety, a lack of confidence and inadequate knowledge on being inducted into the mysteries of the world of work. This is a sophisticated and protracted *rite de passage* and the nature of the processes of preparedness for work should remain a substantive issue for research. Such existential, life-course considerations remind us not to exclude from our thought process the lingering impact of the experience of family, class, culture and education, and the role of such things as 'prior-orientations' and 'world views': they comprise the contents of the back-packs that individuals carry with them into the work situation as they walk with dignity or, conspicuously, without it.

One way of approaching the question of dignity in work empirically is by asking working people themselves where they stand in relation to the idea and ideal of dignity. There is an enormous literature in our area on working-class imagery, and it has been beset at every turn by methodological problems and inconsistent findings varying from one industry and technology to another. Finding out what working people think about concrete things has proven difficult in itself; with something as abstract as dignity the task was never going to be easy. Honneth has challenged the presuppositions lying behind recent variants of moral philosophy such as discourse ethics, and the question appears to be, at bottom, how do we warrant the voice of the morally tongue-tied? (Bourdieu 1986). A further issue is whether the response obtained is to be taken as free-standing and judged in its own right or related back to something approximating Goldthorpe and Lockwood's original model of 'social imagery' or Sabel's 'world view' in order to contextualize it. Sable, for example, is not persuaded by any ideas of worker consciousness per se, or by theories of contradictory consciousness as he contends that propositions governing the experience of working life may coexist with

other contradictory versions in relation to politics:

[which] is particularly likely to be the case in liberal democracies like our own in which the dominant ideology distinguishes sharply between the roles of citizen and worker. In such societies, therefore, not only will there be diverse world views, but no single world view is likely to capture completely all of any one person's experience. (Sabel 1984: 13)

The mention of the distinct 'roles of citizen and worker', here, is significant.

In contrast to Sabel, Coates, by entertaining the positive prospect of a successful marriage of citizenship and working life, presents a challenge to the Marxist idea of the citizen/worker divide (see Coates 2007). Hodson, in the same volume (2007), uses the expression 'organizational citizenship' or 'employee citizenship' (Bolton, too, makes a similar reference) as an obvious value but without further elaboration. Now the gauntlet of citizenship in the workplace has been thrown down it will remain a challenge for further research to assay the viability of utilizing this 'cross-over' concept (i.e. from the political to the economic sphere). Certainly, a key to understanding the relationship of dignity to the world of work is the distinction between the citizen of public sphere and the worker of civil life. Though Kant says that 'no man in a state can be without dignity, since he at least has the dignity of a citizen' (Kant 1991: 139), Marx's rejoinder would be that '*man* is greater than the *citizen* and *human life* than *political life*' (Marx 1992: 419). Supposed dignity at the level of the citizen 'blanks' its significance at the level of the worker as far as Marx is concerned. However, his near contemporary J.S. Mill (1991: 254–256) reflected on the gulf between the citizen and worker, which he thought could be bridged to some degree by increased involvement in public life. If there is an actual shortfall in freedom and autonomy in the everyday transition from one 'location' to the other then the question of dignity is immediately broached. If it were to have a genuine role in the workplace to help nurture dignity, citizenship

would have to undergo a re-generative re-fit for purpose. In our time, there has been a UK government bill on dignity in the workplace but, as we know, underlying social relations remain unchanged. The dichotomy of the worker and citizen and empirical sociology's division between the experience of structured inequality (alienation and exploitation) and the civilization of individual consumers provide a key heuristic device. The creation of material life in industrial capitalism came to develop a fundamental fault-line between work and non-work, between production and consumption and between labour and leisure. Whilst the outside is the realm of the citizen and of human rights characterized by freedom and autonomy, the inside is the domain of the worker (and, perhaps, the trade unionist) characterized by the cash nexus and management control systems. The outside is an entire world of qualitative social relationships and self-actualization; the inside, is an alienative sphere by definition and only theoretically a source of intrinsic reward. What it is important to recognize in the first instance is that human beings are accorded a different qualitative moral status directly contingent upon their relative levels of freedom and autonomy, of self-direction and determination and both legal and civil rights.

It is undoubtedly the case that dignity has become a central discursive device in articulating the demands of a range of working people, whilst also acting as a vehicle to reach out to a wider public for support. It has also become a means of engaging government and testing out the legal status of the case. For example, there has been the ILO's campaign for 'decent' work and legislation in Britain regarding both dignity at work and work/life balance. In effect, dignity has been readily co-opted for its symbolic value – a banner around which to rally. Nevertheless, it is worth remembering that John Dewey once remarked, somewhat wryly, that men 'hoist the banner of the ideal, and then march in the direction that concrete conditions suggest and reward' (Dewey in Thayer (ed.) 1982: 311) and that symbols 'which are often

written about as “values” are historically and sociologically irrelevant unless they are anchored in conduct’ (Gerth and Mills 1970: 299). We should note, too, how easy it is for a symbol that is both so volubly claimed and acclaimed to become detached from that which it symbolizes, with the dynamic of the symbolic sphere becoming virtually self-perpetuating. Bearing in mind its symbolic value, then, there has to be a careful delineation of dignity conceptually to maintain its forcefulness and veracity for the purposes of research. We should not forget that dignity, like alienation, seems to approximate what Alisdair MacIntyre called a ‘contrast concept’ (see Schacht 1971: 242); it is only through an implicit absence or negation that we come to be acquainted with it at all. In return, we can understand a lack of dignity in the workplace only if we can appreciate fully what it would mean to have dignity – a challenging proposition for both worker and researcher. However, this is not only a ‘double hermeneutic’, in Giddens’ (1984) sense, but a triple hermeneutic in the case of ‘dignity’: the understanding by lay actors of the meaningful world they constitute; a singular part of the meta language drawn upon by sociologists to understand and interpret that world; and a third dimension, representing the understanding and employment of dignity in high-profile public pronouncements and policy statements. Given this, it is the right strategy to be aware that dignity, whilst being informed by other closely related concepts both philosophically and empirically, needs to be distinguished from them (see Sayer 2007: 18, for thoughts along these lines).

Though Bolton is, indeed, aware of the dangers of falling back on ‘near relative’ conceptualizations (status, for example) rather than dignity itself, she says “dignity” is what makes us human and separates us from animal life; it is something we possess by virtue of our shared humanity’ (Bolton 2007: 6). She adduces an impressive range of support for this claim, yet this kind of Kantianism should not go unchallenged, with critiques of this presupposition in the work

of philosophers from Schopenhauer (1995) to Agamben (1998) providing adequate testimony. At very least, the point is that dignity *per se* cannot conclusively exclude animals (we can even think about working dogs, for instance, though they themselves obviously have no concept of ‘dignity’) and may not apply at all, ‘by virtue of our shared humanity’, in the case of extreme low points in human experience (Auschwitz, for example). To avoid running the risk of debasing the available conceptual currency, perhaps the way forward is to resist the temptation to escalate everything to the level of ‘dignity’ *per se*. Ironically, there is a very honourable precedent for this. Kant uses the term *price* (see Kant 1991: 230; and for discussion, Parfit 2011) for a lesser value when man (sic) is conceived as a commodity in exchange, than the ultimate value of dignity reserved for man as ‘person’ (i.e. back to the designation of citizen). Often, in the world of work, it is about having some control; having some ‘say’. It is about being treated with some regard; being appreciated for what you offer. It suggests courtesy and consideration. It may also come down to a question of pride rather than dignity *per se*: pride in a ‘job well done’; taking pride ‘in one’s work’; but, also, the idea of pride ‘being hurt’ or ‘injured’ by what has ‘gone on’ at work. This counters the danger of being too precious (and too liberal) with the application of dignity and, crucially, credits the worker involved with their own situation ethics sensibility. But, even here, we have to be guarded. Ironically enough, dignity, as it is appearing in the current literature, tends to be totally subjectivist: it is how ‘I’ feel about the way ‘I’ am treated; not how ‘I’ might regard ‘the Other’. If we are to avoid potentially self-regarding, self-obsessed (even narcissistic) measures we have to bear in mind how individuals feel about their own dignity quotient but also the dignity quotient they may or may not recognize in the case of others. If human dignity is to be adequately operationalized in the context of the world of work it will have to contain intrinsically this Other-directed

component, and, as Mills says, be ‘anchored in conduct’. Bolton’s push to see dignity as a collective achievement is a welcome corrective here.

CONCLUSION

So, what can we conclude from our discussion of dignity and work? Firstly, that in theoretical terms the connective tissue of industrialized work and human degradation stretches as far back as at least the eighteenth century. Secondly, that work itself as ennobling and worthwhile has been questioned during the same time-frame. Thirdly, that the type of work – skilled or professional – has emerged as a crucial variable in rewarding endeavour and has also come to feature significantly.

These dimensions will still need to form the backdrop to any future discussion of dignity and work. As for Marx and the classical sociologists there is no further need to reprise the composition of dignity in their contributions. It is quite explicit in the early Marx and in Durkheim, and perhaps more implicit, though no less insistent, in Weber and Simmel. Their joint legacy is that we still need to disclose the nature of underlying social relations in all their historical specificity to make any real sense of the application of dignity to the world of work. Though the conventional wisdom in industrial sociology in the 1950s and 1960s had been that the imagery and values of ‘industrial man’ were shaped by the world of work, that conviction was shaken by Dubin (1956), for example, whose findings suggested that work appeared no longer salient in the lives of working people. This reflected what Mills had called ‘The Big Split’ (Mills 1956: 235–236), though for him the world of consumption could not provide a genuine source of *otium cum dignitate* (leisure with dignity) (Veblen 1994: 59). Goldthorpe and Lockwood, Mann and Abercrombie et al., have all emphasized the pragmatism of the interdependency of employer and employed

at a factual rather than normative level, and have pointed to the effect of life in the wider community – consumption, family and education (see Edgell and Duke 1986). It would seem prudent not to sideline this contribution from extant research as the debate moves on, and, in principle, collating data across the board (somewhat in the fashion of Hodson) can prove a fruitful exercise.

Instrumental behaviour has operated both ways in working life. As working people have resisted controlling, exploitative strategies in the workplace, they have cultivated their own free time as the epitome of autonomy and freedom. Certainly, they may have an ‘industrial identity’ and a shared sense of belonging (perhaps particularly strong in the past), but Lamont’s (2000) sample of workers, for example, indicate an intrinsic sense of their own dignity that is independent of work and that stands over and against it. For the majority of working people, their sense of themselves, their identity, who they think they really are, is not forged and reinforced in the workplace. Investment in the world of consumption has a not entirely unexpected return on expectations of the world of work. The evidence suggests workers put up with (various levels of) indignity in the short-term (the working week) because they know it does not fatally undermine their human dignity, which is reinforced elsewhere. It is largely people who look for dignity in/at work in skilled and professional employment who are disconcerted if it is not forthcoming. The demand for self-actualization and recognition in this type of work has a corresponding expectation for intrinsic regard and respect. Moreover, we might well be led to believe that the commodification of the personality in service work, in practice acting as a ‘commercialized lure’ (Mills 1956: 183), involves the service worker being actively complicitous in the compromising of their own dignity. The extent to which we can make blanket evaluations of the compromising of dignity in work is limited by the dynamic of the situation identified by Mills, Hochschild and others. Some people in some

situations will feel a sense of indignity whilst others, even in the same situation, will manage it in an instrumental fashion.

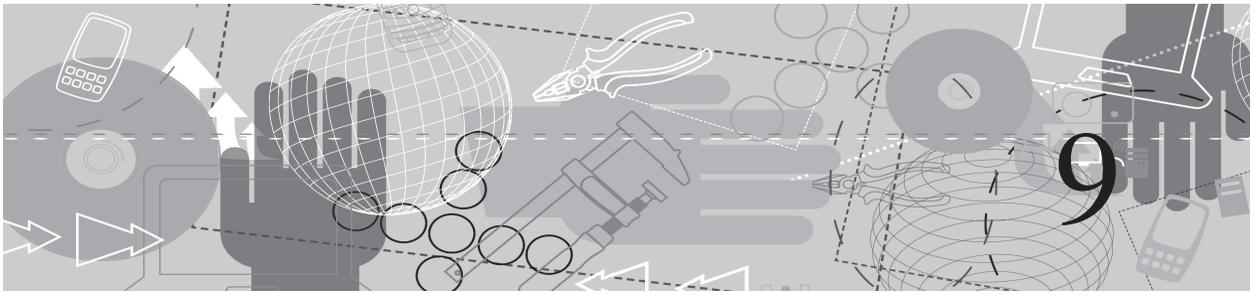
As fieldwork progresses, the operationalization of dignity will continue to be a priority as it is tending to be too readily subsumed under other agendas, and its chequered past in the history of social thought too easily overlooked (Rosen 2012). Moreover, whether a concept such as citizenship, more at home in the political domain, can be harnessed to work and employment remains to be seen. Whilst the recent empirical study of dignity in work is welcome, it has concentrated exclusively on the workplace and on effective participants (managers, for example). Though Bolton's 'in' and 'at' work model is an extremely useful device, dignity cannot be safely contained within its precincts simply because it is too wide-ranging spatially and temporally; this is supremely well-expressed by one of Bolton's respondents: 'Dignity is dependent upon an even more basic question: What is a human person? How we see human persons affects how we treat them' ('Male, 36, Parent' as cited in Bolton 2007: 248). We cannot conveniently ignore this 'more basic question' which still holds all the promise of Romantic and Enlightenment radicalism.

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Capital and Labour: The Shifting Terrains of Struggle and Accommodation in Labour and Employment Relations

Miguel Martínez Lucio

INTRODUCTION

Many factors contribute to the way people work, how they are remunerated and how their workplace environments are supportive of them (or not) as workers and citizens, yet the fundamental relation and tensions between labour and capital and the way this relation configures the very nature of the employment relation needs to be an important reference point for any analysis and review. Work and employment has at its core a tension whereby the owners of the means of production attempt to extract from the workforce as much effort as feasibly possible. This tension and this relation configures the way capitalist societies have evolved their practices and systems of work and employment. However, this relation exists in time and space. That is to say there are different spatial contexts consisting of different human, geographical, institutional and cultural factors which can shape the nature of this relation and tensions, and their outcomes.

This chapter therefore aims to introduce how we understand the nature of the relation between capital and labour, and how the tensions between them and forms of accommodation are important for the way we can explain the nature of work and labour markets within the context of capitalism. The chapter will therefore start with an outline of the economic antecedents of this relation and the manner in which it was structured during the nineteenth and the early twentieth centuries, when capitalism was evolving as the dominant model of economic organisation, by reviewing some debates and earlier analysis. Having done this, the chapter will outline how economic tensions and conflict evolved, contributing to the instability of the capitalist system and seeing the emergence of an independent form of labour representation.

The following section introduces the important role of regulation and accommodation between capital and labour at the micro level in terms of the emergence of collective bargaining, and the way the 'industrial relations'

academic discipline in the United States of America (USA) and the United Kingdom (UK) emerged as a dominant form of analysis. It will focus on the emergence of pluralism and the influence of Durkheim on specific theories and approaches from the 1930s to approximately the 1960s. After that the chapter goes on to look at how this process of institutionalisation and accommodation became crystallised in core developed countries within the capitalist context at the macro level through the development of formal political relations and systems of representation between capital, labour and the state. This gave rise to an emphasis on welfare services and the indirect wage (through welfare services such as health and education). Some have defined this period as the age of organised capitalism during the post-Second-World-War period, although this age was specific to developed countries and specific aspects of developing countries only: hence the section will look at variations in terms of this politics of accommodation. The chapter will emphasise these developments at the macro and micro level.

In the following section, the chapter will focus on the 1960s through to the present day, where we see a new politics of worker involvement and a greater interest in extending political rights into the employment relation. This corresponds to the re-emergence of the Marxist tradition and the increasing interest in the study of industrial conflict and alternative forms of worker participation, and through this the emergence of the 'labour process' tradition. This section also looks at the emergence of equality issues in the form of minority ethnic rights, for example. The final section ends with a discussion on two key developments. The first is the way management and capital respond to these new challenges from labour in the form of trade union radicalisation and new labour movements in terms of equality. The response of management through what some term *new management practices* and new forms of *Human Resource Management (HRM)* focuses on the attempt over the past 20 years

to wrest control back from the workforce. This more recent period sees also the tension between capital and labour played out across a whole new range of sites such as the body and the individual in terms of the question of bullying, violence, harassment, stress and related forms of workplace malaise and dangers. This period also sees the emergence of new actors and players within the politics and regulation of work which require a new approach to the study of the subject.

THE HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF EMPLOYMENT RELATIONS

The relation between capital and labour in capitalist societies, and its development over time, is a broad and complex subject. Many factors have contributed to this development. Within the Marxist tradition the separation of ownership and control means that at the heart of the employment relation there is an antagonism, as those labouring and producing are disconnected from broader questions of policy and purpose: this constitutes one of the basic political tensions at work. The sheer extent of individual contractual relations between employers and workers, the pressures to generate surplus value and the distancing of workers from their own outputs, which are controlled by their employer, leads to *alienation* within capitalism. Marx saw alienation as an inevitable outcome of the separation of execution from conception (Meszaros, 1970). The emergence of industrial capitalism and the increasing control it achieved by continuously divorcing workers from the ownership of the means of production meant that work was very much a contested terrain that formed a focus for political struggle. What is more, the tendency of capitalist development to extend market-based forms to the employment relation created an ever larger subaltern class, increasingly deskilled and concentrated in spatial terms, which in turn created a fundamental social and economic instability. For some, the

social and economic outcomes of this greater marginalisation and greater concentration of the industrial workforce generated the seeds of the potential destruction of the capitalist system (Marx, 1976).

This disjuncture and its consequences for a society based on an industrial capitalist model was taken up by Emile Durkheim, another key figure in late nineteenth-century sociology. For Durkheim modern industrial societies presented a range of challenges to individuals due to the complex division of labour and the failure of early industrialism in particular to manage and regulate the allocation of tasks and jobs fairly: hence the term *anomie*. It is a condition where workers lack clarity as to their purpose and the value of their work, and cannot perceive the importance of their position within the overall context (Durkheim, 1952). This is a result not only of property relations and general issues of alienation, but also of the nature of mutual dependencies in modern society and people's lack of clarity about their role. The division of labour requires a moral consensus in society, on the one hand actually creating greater interdependence, but on the other throwing up the challenge of how this should be organised and morally underpinned (see Swingewood, 2000). Regulatory processes and intermediate organisations play an important role in these issues: we return to this later when discussing Dunlop's work.

It has been argued that capitalism and the way it is configured by, and in turn configures, work relations is influenced by other non-economic factors. Max Weber, in *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (1930), argued that the rise of a Protestant and Calvinistic legacy was important in imbuing significant parts of the European continent, for example, with a work ethic and entrepreneurial dimension producing an approach to work and employment distinctly different to that of the past. Whether these cultural factors and the emergence of a new form of individualism facilitated, or were facilitated by, the emergence of

capitalism is a matter for debate. Weber notes that we need to appreciate economic culture and values, and how – by chance or design – these feed into the development of capitalism.

Weber's contribution is significant because of his work on bureaucracy and the increasing imperative to organise and rationalise relations within and beyond the firm. As capitalism developed in size, capacity and reach throughout the nineteenth century, it required an ordering mechanism, especially since society's increasing democratic expectations called for transparency, coherence and consistency. It needed organising principles and values both in the division of labour, organisational hierarchy, authority and rules within and beyond the firm, and in public administration, the impersonalisation of office, and the emergence of meritocracy (Weber, 1968 [1922]). In effect, it was not just an 'entrepreneurial' spirit but also an 'organising' and 'rationalising' one that underpinned capitalist development. Weber's dual contribution arguably implies a tension between the innovative and transformative features of capitalism and the need to regulate their negative outcomes. The question of consistency and congruency is essential to our understanding of the emergence of regulation, and is discussed later.

Capitalism also exists in a spatial context in terms of workplaces, living spaces and local territories. The development of capitalism, according to the British sociologist Anthony Giddens (1991), is premised on the growing separation of the *time* and *space* that influence these contexts. With the growing mobility of capital and labour, and ever more intensive forms of communication, an increasing space–time *distanciation* (building on the work of various authors) points to the parallel evolution of social structures and relations in terms of (putting it crudely) where we are and when we are in these spaces (Giddens, 1991). This creates new possibilities and new forms of relations but it also fundamentally disrupts

traditional, settled relations, and whilst this has been the case since pre-capitalist periods, the emergence of industrial capitalism has seen an acceleration of these changes. Enhancing and managing (in the broader sense of the term) these developments is an ongoing challenge within the context of changing and increasingly insecure patterns of employment.

Within these changes, issues of control, labour market engagement processes and the social sites of workers' existence create tension and conflict. The economic and social nature of capitalism brought workers into new larger workplaces and living spaces during the nineteenth century; this physical transformation brought about by industrialism and urbanisation led to new dynamics of conflict and representation. The classical debates allow us to understand the underlying economic, social and organisational, and political dynamics that have led to growing exploitation and disjuncture in the way we work: but on the other hand we see a dynamic based on extending the control, regulation and social dimension of work as a consequence of this exploitation. These tensions form the basic contradictions at the heart of capitalist employment relations but they coincide with a political imperative for change and democratisation which is at times at odds with the economic agendas of employers. This has necessitated a study of how questions of social justice can be linked to the practice and study of work and employment. These broader sociological approaches allow us to see how the economic, political and social dimensions of the capital and labour relation develop and mutate.

CONFLICT AND REPRESENTATION ACROSS TIME

The emergence of work under capitalism is linked to ongoing questions of conflict and politics. Capital and labour are marked by changing relations which are constituted

and reconstituted in different ways and at different times through a range of interventions. Conflict can also be understood in different ways, and within employment relations it may take a variety of forms. The more explicit forms of conflict are industrial actions where workers collectively withhold their labour due to a specific set of grievances and issues. However, a wide range of debates within the field of industrial and labour sociology are also concerned with more informal and hidden types of conflict. The question of conflict is a broad one, but within the Marxist tradition the emergence of capitalism is fraught with contradictions and tensions. In the work of Marx and Engels strikes were a manifestation of the inherent tension in employment relations. Engels (1987 [1844]) argued in *The Condition of the Working Class in England* that strikes represented a form of social warfare which could develop into a more systematic conflict between the bosses and their workers: schooling the proletariat into political conflict. These tensions were seen within such intellectual traditions as vital for the undermining of capitalism. During the nineteenth century, industrial conflicts were legally and politically constrained in Europe. Strikes were specifically focused on certain economic issues, although they were often linked to the broader political tensions between specific classes. The Aberdare Strike of 1857–58 in a Welsh mining town, a conflict concerning the reduction of wages by employers, focused on core economic and basic living conditions in terms of pay, and to an extent, working hours. During this period such industrial conflict often faced a strong response from employers and from a repressive state, normally in the form of the armed forces. The legal framework did not consistently assist such forms of collective action, given the undeveloped nature of worker rights and the dominance of property rights both in the economic and political sphere. Yet industrial conflicts grew in the United Kingdom and throughout Europe during the nineteenth century.

Across Europe and the USA general strikes were not uncommon as an early vehicle for the expression of more general discontent and a response to the reaction, or potential reaction of the state at a time when formal political representation of workers was fairly limited. The general strike thus became a focus of attention for many libertarian and emancipatory traditions due to the way it transcended sectional local interests and represented a political vehicle for collective emancipation, as in the Anarchist tradition (Woodcock, 1986).

However, regardless of these developments, the key issue for the Marxist tradition(s) was the economic character of strikes and the limitations of such forms of conflict for the purpose of social change. Conflict at work was primarily 'economic' in character, even if dealing with these economic issues raised political questions due to the regulatory context in nineteenth-century Europe and the North American state. For Lenin – as a leader and analyst of worker politics – strikes and their representatives in the form of trade unionists required political leadership and articulation for broader and more substantive gains to emerge (Lenin, in Hyman 1971). Hyman (1971) labelled this the pessimistic tradition within the study of labour representation and conflict. Hence, industrial conflict and collective action is a more complex and ambivalent space.

Within the sociology of work there are three major contributions to our understanding of this question of conflict and representation at work in relation to capital and labour. The first concerns the spatial dimensions of conflict and labour. Kerr and Siegal (1954), whilst often criticised, made one of the first systematic attempts to explain the relationship between space and conflict. They argued that conflict was not solely the outcome of the basic economic antagonisms between capital and labour, but was also determined by social and spatial factors. For example, questions of industrial specialisation and the concentration of workers in

isolated communities contribute to the propensity for collective action amongst such communities as coal miners. Other studies have tried to refine this (e.g., Lincoln, 1978), but there has been an interest in how specific forms of occupational identity and spatial factors may contribute to long-term forms of industrial conflict.

Second, the conflict under study may not be broadly inclusive or based on expansive solidarity; it may be focused on internal segments of the working population, according to gender as well as race and ethnicity studies. Phillips and Taylor (1980) argued that skills and labour identity can be constructed in such a way as to exclude women from core employment. Conflict can emerge in terms of groups of workers protecting their privileges vis-à-vis other groups of workers. Hence the question of conflict requires an awareness of intra-class relations and not just inter-class relations, which means that we need to be wary of inter-sectionality issues in the study of capital and labour relations (McBride et al., 2014).

Third, the question of mobilisation has increasingly been understood in broader political terms, given the ever more porous boundaries between the economic, the social and the political, as well as the growing interest in rights. Work-related conflict within a capitalist context has many dimensions and features. How it evolves may depend on a series of different internal and external factors. More recently, mobilisation theory has allowed us to understand the complex dynamics of industrial conflict, especially through Kelly's (1998) development of Tilly (1978): conflicts develop as a result of employers' and the state's responses, which in turn can politicise conflict beyond its original objectives. This means that we need to be sensitive to the context and dynamics of disputes. The historical evolution and development of strikes means that conflict is not only the outcome of various structural factors such as the nature of the employment relation, but also institutional and contextual factors.

ACCOMMODATION, NEGOTIATION AND REGULATION: THE EMERGENCE OF THE INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS PARADIGM

The mid-twentieth century saw the emergence within key capitalist countries of a more organised and centralised approach to managing and regulating the firm and the economy (Lash and Urry, 1987). The organisation of capitalism (Lash and Urry, 1987) developed, and was in turn sustained by a stable dialogue and interaction between capital and labour. During this period we saw the emergence of an ‘industrial relations’ tradition both in practice and in the nature of academic study that built on the antecedents of early theorists (Kaufman, 2004). The institutionalist and pluralist tradition of academic research in the area of employment focused on the role of explicit rules and regulations that evolve over time and play a part in establishing a framework of expectations and behaviour. The argument here is that collective bargaining – the joint regulation through processes of negotiation between stakeholders of employment conditions – is the main focus of industrial relations (see Poole’s (1981) discussion of Clegg (1976)). Variations in collective bargaining in terms of the extent (how many workers are covered), scope (what is negotiated and dealt with), nature of union involvement (the precise role of worker representatives), and the level (whether the negotiations take place at national or local level for example) – amongst other factors – were seen to be a major influence on trade union behaviour (Poole, 1981). However, these in turn were seen to be the outcome of employer and management attitudes and the role of state intervention, which play a part in shaping the nature of employment regulation in the face of worker representation.

Whilst the pluralist tradition of individuals such as Hugh Clegg allowed for an element of difference and diversity in terms of industrial relations processes—collective bargaining, aspects of such a tradition do

link back to the work of the American labour economist, John Dunlop (1958), who emphasised the role of rule maintenance and order within industrial relations. In Dunlop’s view, the specific character of industrial relations systems derives from rule-making independently of decision-making in the economic system. Whilst environmental factors in terms of the nature of the economy, society and polity contribute to the development of industrial relations, one must observe the internal processes of rule maintenance and the autonomy they may acquire. Hence, countries may differ in part as a result of the nature of economic development but – presumably – the evolution, stability and complexity of rules and traditions governing relations between unions and managers, for example, are also a factor, suggesting that political relations must be considered in the manner in which consensus is forged around the nature of regulation. This is, however, a view geared towards a systems approach to economic relations, based on the importance of equilibrium and a consensual view and understanding of the role of different actors through the joint establishment of rules; what we might call a functionalist approach. The fact that different actors may vary in terms of their capacity or resources is not a major point of discussion.

Within the Anglo-Saxon context, the industrial relations traditions began to emphasise the role of joint regulation and the importance of collective bargaining as a social and institutional mechanism for the reconciliation of differences between what Budd et al. (2004) describe as worker and property rights. In the United Kingdom and especially the United States of America there was a liberal tradition of study emerging during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries that began to emphasise more the alleviating possibilities of dialogue and contract and less the embedded tensions that Marxists in general spoke of. Beatrice and Sydney Webb (1897) in the United Kingdom note how collective bargaining can be used by workers to offset the use of competition

between them by employers. It is in effect a corrective mechanism. For Slichter (1941) in the United States collective bargaining represents the introduction of a democratic principle of representation within the economic sphere. These types of 'joint regulation' were the subject of a range of interventions during the twentieth century (Poole, 1981), which saw them as correctives to market relations, forms of democratic expression/dialogue on employment relations, and even ideological processes which facilitated the establishment of a plural understanding of society.

Dahrendorf (1959), as a leading commentator on post-Second-World-War capitalism and society critiques both Marxist and functionalist perspectives for their failure to capture key changes in modern society. He pointed to the fundamental role of social change, greater social fluidity, and the role of consensus generation in the formation of modern social and political relations. Class conflict is in effect habituated and controlled through a series of relations and ongoing dialogues:

Dahrendorf claims that capitalism has undergone major changes since Marx initially developed his theory on class conflict. This new system of capitalism, which he identifies as post capitalism, is characterised by diverse class structure and a fluid system of power relations. Thus, it involves a much more complex system of inequality. Dahrendorf contends that post capitalist society has institutionalized class conflict into state and economic spheres. For example, class conflict has been habituated through unions, collective bargaining, the court system, and legislative debate. In effect, the severe class strife typical of Marx's time is no longer relevant. (Tittenbrun, 2013: 120)

There have been many critics of Dahrendorf, but it was emblematic at the time of a line of argument that heralded the political possibilities of dialogue and negotiation.

INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS AS A POLITICAL SYSTEM

Broader political perspectives within political science and industrial relations have

looked at the role of national negotiation structures as key factors in shaping the nature of industrial relations. Such approaches have been dominant in relation to the debates on corporatism that are concerned with macro- and national-level negotiations between governments (and their state agencies), and employers and trade unions. Some of the more rule-based and negotiation-based systems of industrial relations consist of a significant dialogue at the national level, which frames local discussions in terms of the content of bargaining and its general spirit. The role of the state can be such that it is able to create a national framework or degree of coordination regarding how industrial relations are conducted locally: it does this by establishing initiatives on pay, training, and health and safety, for example through legislation to some extent, but it can also do it through some form of political exchange and bargaining that allows unions and employers' associations to be represented at the level of the state (Schmitter, 1974). Some of the strongest systems of employment relations in terms of the roles of unions and employers, and the extent of collective bargaining, appear to be linked to and combined with strong systems of state-level dialogue (commonly called societal corporatism) (Schmitter, 1974). Lehmbruch (1984) argued that one could detect stronger systems of such corporatist engagement in Nordic countries, but in many other cases they are weaker, with dialogue being more sporadic and associated with key crisis-related issues, as in the case of Italy. In fact, in some cases the state has created a more authoritarian form of corporatism, as in a one-party system such as China's or during the Francoist dictatorship in Spain (1939–75), where government or government agencies 'negotiate' with national employers and trade unions that are controlled politically and are not independent of the state. In such cases, industrial relations processes are contained, controlled and driven by singular political interests. Hence, order and rules will be centrally

dictated in such contexts, with serious repercussions for individuals and organisations acting outside them.

One cannot overstate the importance of this discussion at the height of the industrial relations tradition. This was the moment of the Keynesian welfare state and of an organised and relatively centralised capitalism. The direct wage in the form of wages and salaries was complemented at this time by the indirect wage in the form of social services and public services to workers and citizens. However, much of this system of regulation remained premised on a gendered nature of work and social reproduction, with women being located in secondary jobs during much of the mid to late twentieth century. The welfare state was directed at their role within the family, thus conditioning their access to the labour market even in various state-led Nordic social contexts (Rubery and Grimshaw, 2003). What is more, the corporatist moment was unable to sustain itself in the longer term due to it being located in a range of national contexts which had closed markets and economies that would become challenged by ever-increasing global competition and global economic development. This leads to the need to engage with the critical approaches to the institutionalisation of organised and centralised industrial relations.

It is partly for this reason that Marxists and other radical, critical academic strands argue that the pluralist- and institutionalist-oriented view of work and employment can sometimes ignore that there may be an inherent instability within employment relations because of the nature of power and the imbalances between actors and classes. The broad Marxist tradition highlights the role of class relations and class conflict in forcing employers to compromise in relation to worker rights. Employers and the state, it is argued, are trying continuously to limit the development of unions and worker rights, or to contain them in a variety of ways. In citing Allen (1966), Hyman argued that industrial

relations can therefore be seen as being involved in piecemeal gains that do not question power relations (see Hyman, 1975: 192). Hence, framing the agendas of trade union demands and activities is a curious and complex process.

However, these 'games' may institutionalise and bureaucratise labour organisations, and they can also give rise to tensions as workers and activists try to better their working conditions and at times circumvent these agreements. There is no state of rest in such relations, as workers and managers struggle with the limits of their institutional arrangements and competing interests. The Marxist contribution explains the instability and dynamics of industrial relations in a way that pluralists fail to grasp. In terms of corporatism, Panitch (1981) discusses the instability of the corporatist arrangements of the 1970s by referring to how such national strategies of incorporation are themselves limited. This is due to the negative responses by workplace-based activists to incomes policies and constraints in wage rises, but also to the way in which such national institutional arrangements actually politicise union action as they tie leaders into state projects at the expense of members and activists. These contradictions and outcomes are, in turn, a source of, and a focus for, responses and engagement by the state. The attempt to frame and institutionalise industrial relations is never complete and stable. Hence the state attempts to build a political shell around industrial relations, which emphasises passive and indirect democracy and representation through collective bargaining, for example: it solicits hierarchical approaches within both organisations and civil society. National interest and non-class referents are developed to counter conflict and generate a 'common interest' between workers and employers regarding workplace and employment relations, as seen in the context of corporatist discourse (although some Marxists consider such common interests as being illusory and a smokescreen that hides class conflict) (see Panitch, 1981). Moreover, just as the state

incorporates social actors, it also coerces them at certain moments in time (Hyman, 1975: 144).

Differences between national forms of industrial relations may therefore be explained in terms of the nature of these ongoing struggles between capital and labour, the balance of forces between them, and the way that the state intervenes and tries to control the rule-making processes through ideologies (for example, an emphasis on social dialogue) or through coercion (for example, the use of the police or even the armed forces). Hence, in some cases there may be strategies of incorporation into passive rule-making as trade unions are tied into a system of dialogue through material or ideological incentives, or they may be coerced through laws restricting their right to strike and even their general presence, as in extremely authoritarian cases. Thus the heritage of Marxism is not just its emphasis on the inevitable 'instability' within employment relations, but also its focus on the political, coerced and even ideologically driven nature of 'stability'.

We return to the contribution of the Marxist tradition later when discussing the politics of the workplace and the new sociology of work of the 1980s and 1990s. One of the salient features of the problems with the institutionalisation of labour and employment relations was its inability to further democratise work or engage with the worker in a more direct manner. Instead it was sustained, as Panitch (1981) pointed out, by a politics of hierarchy which did not always put new agendas and other social interests at the centre of the discussion.

VARIATION IN THE INSTITUTIONALISATION OF CAPITAL- LABOUR RELATIONS: THE NATIONAL QUESTION REVISITED

However, again we find a dilemma. Whilst we can outline the general developments and

variations in terms of the balance between consensus and coercion, union-led or employer/state-led industrial relations, and centralised (sometimes corporatist) or decentralised systems of industrial relations, there is still much more that defines differences in terms of the nature of industrial relations. There are qualitative differences in terms of what these systems regulate: supply-side or demand-side issues (as in skills or wages), the extent of worker influence on the social and economic relations of a society (welfare approaches versus more economic/wage-driven ones), and the manner in which industrial relations actors have a broader social and political role. Even within what appear to be national contexts at similar stages of development, historical factors and the nature of political development may provide different patterns of representation and regulation. A dominant stream of analysis is the 'varieties of capitalism' debate, which has been pivotal in contemporary understanding of why systems of employment relations and regulation in general vary (Hall and Soskice, 2001). This has become an important addition to the debate on comparative industrial relations and the context of various student textbooks (see Hyman, 2004; Wailes et al., 2011). The argument rests on the assumption that there are significant variations within capitalism, and that we need to be aware of the different dimensions constituting different patterns of regulation and economic management. They argue that history and the role of institutions are fundamental to the development of capitalist systems of regulation, and that the different dimensions of these systems link and relate to each other in ways that create a consistent system and pattern of development. The dimensions the model refers to are: the nature of corporate governance and its structure; the way relations between firms are generated, and how traditions of co-operation and competition have developed; the role of voice mechanisms, such as industrial relations processes, and how they fit such relations or not; the role of vocational training and education as a key

feature of the labour market's reproduction; and the nature of the workers themselves.

These have been developed and linked in two different patterns of development: the liberal market economy (LME) and the coordinated market economy (CME). The attraction of such theories is that the nature of the industrial relations regulation is sustained by – and sustains – different ways in which capitalism is coordinated: hence centralised and worker-oriented systems of industrial relations with stronger trade unions fit in with long-term, training-oriented, participative and welfare-driven economies, such as Sweden. On the other hand, liberal market economies such as the USA tend to link a profit-driven, shareholder and low-regulation culture with a more individualised and less trade-union-oriented system of industrial relations: they have a weaker state and set of regulatory structures, with an emphasis on risk-taking and a less-regulated system of firms; whilst CMEs have a greater state role and a greater degree of regulation, whether it is joint regulation with organised labour, association-based regulation in terms of employers' associations and similar bodies, and/or a greater role for public and quasi-public bodies in areas such as training. There is also a political attraction to such a model for those who question the neo-liberal and right-wing approaches which suggests that the market de-regulation and possessive individualism is the only way forward, or the only successful form of capitalism. It allows for a social capitalism and a more regulated system of worker rights to exist within a capitalist context. Hence, whilst there is a high level of attraction for many commentators, some question the relevance of the model to developing countries and tend to view it as being more relevant to developed countries. There is also concern with its institutional determinism and obsession with questions of coordination and relations (Kang, 2006). What is more, organisations such as trade unions in various developing countries may be prohibited by the economic and political context from entering into meaningful dialogues with the state

and employers based on the independence and support of worker representation. In such contexts, coordinated features of a market economy may be elitist and based on coordinated powerful elites who limit and constrain social rights and engagement.

Similar approaches have also emerged in discussions of national business systems (Whitley, 2007), which also regard relations within and across organisations and broader institutions as key. The emphasis in such an approach includes such issues as: the means of ownership, the nature of ownership integration and production chains; non-ownership relations in the form of the extent of alliances and coordination or production chains, the extent of collaboration and alliances between competitors or across sectors around common interests; and employment relations and the management of work in terms of employer–employee relations and the extent of mutual trust. These systems will vary across countries and types of capitalism, as ownership may be coordinated in some contexts, less restricted by short-term financial interests, built on a complex, mutually beneficial and sustained network of alliances and interests, engaged more fully with a dialogue with stakeholders, such as trade unions, and built on trust, as in the German case. One interesting point to note is that such observers do not merely locate industrial relations and labour regulation more generally as an important set of features within any understanding of capitalism – and economic systems – they also note the significant role of employer cultures (a proclivity towards collectivism and an acceptance of social rights and collective welfare), and the centrality of how people are trained, how significant training is within the system, and how stakeholders such as trade unions become involved in training. The argument is that more regulated systems of industrial relations have training at the heart of the system in terms of the quality and not just the cost of labour and the role of negotiation in its development. The emphasis is on the relational features and links that sustain a system, and how these developed

over time through either co-operative or competitive forms.

Finally, many debates and discussions now acknowledge that the focus cannot be solely on organisations, structures and processes, but also on ideas and general viewpoints. National systems of industrial relations vary, as we have seen above, providing a range of constraints and possibilities in terms of those who participate in the representation and management of work. However, we cannot ignore the significance of 'local' issues and how they evolve over time (see Hyman (2001) and his discussion of Ross (1981)). Hyman (2001) argues that this is a major dimension that has often been ignored by analysts. The reason why some issues are significant in one context and not another could be because political debates and national discussion or viewpoints and sensitivities arise that are particular to a national or local context (Locke and Thelen 1995). The argument we have to appreciate is that certain issues related to work and employment may be viewed and understood as a specific constraint or challenge in one context but not another. Job controls in Britain, in terms of how local trade unionists forged ways of controlling aspects of work, were seen by the right of the political spectrum to be a major obstacle to economic development (for example, the deployment of individuals at work), though trade unionists argued that they were important in allowing a more controlled and less stressful experience of work. In France, working time and debates on this link to a much broader view of how workers are meant to work and live, such that the arena of struggle has been less about job control as it is in the United Kingdom, but more focused on the limits employers can place on working time. In addition, certain reforms may be seen as 'positive' or 'negative', given their sensitivity and importance within political discourses: for example, in Spain, the question of the cost of dismissal in relation to dismissing workers has been seen by employers to be prohibitive, though trade unions have argued that such costs have

not in fact stopped employers from creating one of the highest levels of unemployment in Europe since the early 1980s (Fernandez Gonzalez and Martínez Lucio 2013). This is what Locke and Thelen (1995) labelled 'contextualised comparisons', and in discussing national systems we must be aware of these ideological issues and themes which characterise national systems of industrial relations. MacKenzie and Martínez Lucio (2005, 2014) have argued that regulation is often sustained by *cultural processes*. In the case of the United Kingdom, the Glasgow Media Group (1976) studied the way that work-related and trade union issues were covered by the media in the United Kingdom, pointing to the bias against trade unions in terms of how they were only ever represented within the media in terms of disruption and the undermining of the national economy and social order.

Hence, in understanding why systems differ, we need to work at a range of levels: economic, political, institutional and ideological when trying to explain differences in approaches to work such as participation. We need to be sensitive to the ways that systems are coordinated and how the different spheres link together. We also need to be aware of how individuals and collectives within these different national contexts understand the processes of change and tradition, and how they consider these in terms of risks and challenges. The way that interests are represented is central, and this can be done through a variety of institutional and cultural forms. What we need to be aware of is that there are, on the one hand, elements of continuity in terms of institutions and customs that provide national systems with traditional and established ways of managing and regulating issues related to work. However, there are also, on the other hand, ongoing tensions and sources of change because of the nature of the employment relations – that is, the way that workers remain dispossessed of a more organic and meaningful role and influence, and the way employers seek to drive new forms of profitability, for example.

THE QUESTION OF THE WORKPLACE AND THE GROWING INTEREST IN CONTROL AND AUTONOMY IN LIVED ENVIRONMENTS

The section will focus on questions of the political and the participative aspects of labour relations as regards the workplace. In terms of debates about participation, the issue of the extent of workplace autonomy and the freedom of workplace-based relations from the control or influence of capital is central to the discussion of work and employment-related issues. In the 1970s and 1980s attention within the study of work began to turn towards the workplace and to what is termed the labour process. These debates were concerned with Marx's notion of the transformation problem: that is to say, how bought labour could be transformed into performing labour. The initial debates in this area were influenced by the seminal work of Braverman (1998 [1974]), who argued that in the context of industrial capitalism this transformation was enacted through various processes of managerial control. His focus was the Taylorisation of work where direct forms of control derived from the separation of the conception of work from the execution of work. Increasingly, management was concerned with the continuing division and fragmentation of labour. This would not just be pertinent to manufacturing but to white collar work as well. In effect, we would see a major de-skilling of labour. How is this relevant to our discussion? The first point is that within critical traditions the motives of management are not inspired necessarily by the 'softer', or more social aspects, of management strategy such as participation. Second the objective is to de-skill the workforce and capture the knowledge of workers for the ends of capitalist development. This is what Thompson and Newsome (2004) consider the first and second wave of labour process theory (we will use and return to their metaphor of waves of labour process debate later on). However, these concerns and approaches shape many of

the later waves. Other labour process theorists, such as Burawoy (1979, 1985), argued that such negative outcomes were not simply imposed from above by management but were the outcome of 'games' played and complex interactions between workers and managers. There is a political dimension in terms of production, and there are coercive and consensus-based management approaches that can configure the quality of worker participation and limit its independent role. Friedman (1977) spoke of how managers were constantly shifting strategies between direct control and responsible autonomy: shaping and reshaping participation in relation to the balance of forces and economic needs at any specific time. In effect, the issues of participation and control by management or workers may be part of an ongoing re-establishing of boundaries and relations, within a persistent antagonism between both sides of the employment relation which may not have a final resolution, either political or economic. Managers and workers will be tussling between modes of involvement (and forms of responsible autonomy) and modes of control (direct control in various guises) across time. Participation may be a game-like readjustment within the workplace.

The big question is: to what extent this is the outcome of the socio-economic system, i.e. capitalism? According to Thompson (1990) the link between the labour process, class formation and political transformation is not always clear in terms of causal relations. This reflects the fact that struggles may be as much about resistance and being defensive in orientation as they are about transformation and offensive in orientation (although the relation between these two is usually more symbiotic and complex than at first imagined, and so such a separation of levels in the study by Thompson may be problematic). So the labour process needs to be understood as an arena in its own right, which, whilst contextualised by capitalism and its employment relation, is not determined by it. The suggestion here is that all is not lost and the space for alternative

configurations in the form of participation at work is broad. Hence, politically there may be forms of regulation which can correct the nature and extent of exploitation without transforming the nature of capitalist society. This autonomy of the labour process is important if we are to see how politics can create a basis for greater worker participation. It mirrors, theoretically, the argument by Edwards (2003) that the labour process is autonomous, even if it is fraught with tensions and antagonisms between workers and their managers. These debates have begun to contribute to a wider view and understanding of the spectrum of conflict (which we began to discuss earlier). The agenda on conflict has since the 1960s and 1970s begun to focus on more localised, informal and hidden (micro level) arenas of individual and workplace conflict as an important feature of study and of the reality of conflict (see Jermier et al., 1994 for a series of cases). Questions of conflict cover more informal and subtle levels of organisational relations through even the use of gossip and humour on the one hand and sabotage and subversion on the other (Noon and Blyton 1998; and see Ackroyd and Thompson, this volume). This has led to an interest in a more qualitative and ethnographic sensibility in our understanding of work, worker participation and regulation.

LABOUR, CAPITAL AND THE QUESTION OF REGULATORY REACH AND CHANGE: GETTING THE GENIE BACK IN THE BOTTLE?

This question of how we experience control and how we exist at the intersection of different relations has become more pressing with the greater disturbances taking place in individual workplace relations and worker existence. The increased mobility of capital and policies facilitating the range of organisational choices available to management on labour-related issues are seen by many to have been changing

the regulatory impact of the state and especially of organised labour. There is a view that to varying degrees, depending on the individual context, there is a shift away from a more organised and settled pattern of employment and work (Sennett, 2011). Whilst, many features of stability and regulation remain in the employment relation, and labour rights at work are by no means doomed, one could argue that various developments have undermined the institutionalised relations between labour and capital – especially in developed countries where they were at their most advanced.

What is more, these have been put under greater pressure in the European and North American contexts since the financial crash and subsequent crisis that started in 2008. In the weakest parts of the more organised and coordinated models, governments have been seeking ways to undermine or allow management to bypass joint regulation and labour rights. The International Monetary Fund and even the European Commission have been central to advising on policies that allow employers more discretion in restructuring their workforce and bypassing labour agreements. The crisis of organised labour has gone through a range of stages, from the undermining of industrial labour and organised working-class structures in the 1970s and 1980s through to a more qualitative challenge to control within the workplace, which we will discuss below (Gall, 2010).

This has led to an increasing concern in the ‘third wave’ of the labour process debate with the degradation of work and the fundamental undermining of the quality of working life (see Thompson and Newsome, 2004). One counter to this is that countries such as Malaysia and China have seen the growing use of new or ‘western’ management and organisational practices by many larger scale employers in the manufacturing and the service sectors. However these developments have not been able to reproduce the strong body of labour rights and organised labour relations seen in developed countries previously or even currently – and have seen forms of labouring that are based on extreme

forms of work intensification (Taylor and Bain, 1999). Be it call centres in India or the production of smart phones in China, we have seen major issues of workplace control and stress-related outcomes. The new global economy is based on constant searches for labour cost advantages leading to competition between the workforce and political institutions (including organised labour) of different countries as they bid for international capital investment (Klein, 2009).

The challenge is a spatial and economic one due to the sheer ability of capital to be more mobile. However, it is also a cultural and qualitative one. Labour relations since the 1990s have seen the emergence of a parallel and sometimes competing system of representation and control, which began through various means to displace independent worker representation. Human Resource Management (HRM) in its various forms constitutes an important dimension of the change and evolution of the identity and strategies of certain actors. When studying labour relations we need to be clear that it is not a simple tug of war between labour and capital, but a story of encroachment and challenges in relation to boundaries of authority and control. The *attempted* occupation of the space of representation by capital through management is a central feature of this shift, although it is fraught with contradictions: the increasing pressure on management and organisational systems brought about by the financialisation of the economy and the ongoing nature of organisational change (Carter et al., 2014); the pace of change and its contradictory effects on organisations by not allowing regimes of control to establish themselves; and the fundamental tensions created by organisational structures that are more fragmented and less cohesive, undermining corporate loyalty and consistent management decision-making (MacKenzie, 2002; Rubery et al., 2002). Much has been written about the ideological assault on labour and the way new management practices aim to displace the independent nature and possibility of labour organisation (Stewart et al., 2009). Union avoidance strategies and other

similar responses that undermine trade union presence are a growing challenge to workers (Dundon and Gall, 2013).

This assault – if we can call it that – on the space of representation and the symbolic dimension of labour regulation and labour is followed through with, or paralleled by, an assault on the physical and mental dimension of labour. This shift in the economic, political and social terrain of labour relations includes an encroachment into the individual body. The need to view the body and the person as an aspect of the relation between capital and labour in its own right brings a new terrain of engagement with the politics of regulation and representation. The issue here is how questions of dignity and fairness – at least in linguistic terms – have moved to the centre stage of labour and employment relations, and how their meaning is contested. The question of stress emerging from work intensification and the development of a range of practices such as lean production (Stewart et al., 2009), coupled with the changing patterns of working time and ongoing changes to temporality generally (Crary, 2013), are becoming a central point of reflection and change in academic and practitioner debates.

The question of time and of uneven working patterns has also led to increasing attention being paid to the balance between our working lives and our personal lives. That the boundaries between different parts of our social existence require political and concerted organisational policies to sustain a rational form of existence is nothing new, as the labour struggles in Victoria State, Australia in the late nineteenth century remind us, with their focus on eight hours for work, eight for social time and eight for sleep. Current debates on work–life balance are increasingly raising this question of how we manage and regulate these boundaries in a context of technological and economic change (see Gregory, Chapter 27, this volume). In trying to cope with these developments, the field of labour and employment relations is expanding and building on the increasing legislative attention provided by

the state in relation to health and safety generally, as well as to equality, where aspects of gender- and race-related rights have increasingly been the focus of the public and political gaze. This means that struggles, not only collective but also individual, are shaped around new points of reference, with the individual as an important focus of attention within these developments (see Martínez Lucio and Stewart, 1997 for a discussion of the complex interplay between the collective and the individual dimensions of work in terms of struggle and conflict).

More recently, questions of behaviour have entered the mainstream of the discussion of work from sociological and psychological perspectives. Harassment and bullying at work have become major concerns in relation to the treatment of individuals within workplaces and spaces. The regulation and control of this type of behaviour – let alone its classification and understanding – are creating new spaces of engagement for the regulatory actors of labour and employment relations. For some this represents academic heresy as it implies a further move away from the macro and the political into the sphere of the personal and the individual, and entails stepping out from the safety of institutional and conventional academic analysis. Yet the question is: how can these consequences of the changes in the global economic and social order be studied alongside capital and labour relations?

These broader sociological approaches allow us to see how the economic, political and social dimensions of the capital and labour relation develop and mutate, but there is a growing interest in the space of work and the social space of the individual – the micro level and the individual level – as points of reference with narratives that study the relation. However, to what extent these are due to the growing colonising by, and presence of capital within, the private sphere (Habermas, 1984; see Granter, 2009), or a need to configure greater social and locational sensibilities in our study of work, is another matter.

With these shifts in the focus and content of labour and employment relations, trade unions have been re-orienting their strategies and to some extent their structures. The trade union movement – and trade unionists and workplace representatives within these organisations – have steadily begun to address the question of equality and diversity since the 1970s through support for relevant legislation and supportive strategies, such as special treatment for workers from disadvantaged backgrounds, the development of specialised forums of representation within their structures, and the development of learning strategies (although how these have developed varies between national labour relations systems – see Connolly et al. (2014)). New forms of engagement and an increased focus on communication with workers through the use of social media have allowed for new issues and themes of inclusion and rights to be discussed. Needless to say, this has not always been consistently established and developed within all trade unions, yet the question of what some call trade union revitalisation is an important feature of trade union engagement with the new spaces of work.

Yet trade unions have not been passive recipients of change. Increasing awareness of health and safety issues, and the development of specialised representation, especially in the European Union, has led to policies and practices on the individual issues we have discussed. New agendas of trade unionism can be seen emerging over time on a range of issues (Martínez Lucio and Weston, 1992). Yet trade unions respond in many different ways and there is no single template for dealing with this myriad of themes and challenges: some continue to advocate an approach based on social dialogue with employers and new forms of competitive and business-based compacts and sensitivities (see Alonso (1994) for a discussion on micro-corporatism), whilst others advocate a greater emphasis on mobilising and organising campaigns to gain a foothold and presence within the firm and the sets of issues outlined above (Simms et al., 2012).

One thing is clear, though: and that is the fact that the different dimensions of globalisation and capital mobility, the changing nature of the firm, the increasing use of new forms of labour intensification and the increasing issues around the individual's social being in relation to work, are leading to a range of trade union responses which, to varying degrees, are establishing a new politics of labour relations. The challenge is to create consistency and sustainability of dialogue and progress within the spatial landscape and sheer breadth of the interplay between capital and labour, and to open the role for a democratisation of work life against marketisation.

CONCLUSION

In discussing capital and labour in relation to work and employment relations we need to be alert to the changing contours of this relationship across time. The different dimensions and levels of the relations between actors, and the ways they engage, together with the contradictions and tensions in processes of accommodation (social, political and economic), mean that to appreciate the dynamics of these processes necessitates a historical approach. The institutions and actors that organise these relationships change over time. What is more, the spaces they engage with shift as well, as we see different themes around which conflicts emerge. From a classic Marxist perspective, one could argue that there is a steady colonisation and commodification of all aspects of the human as capital seeks to gain economic advantage through ever more intensive forms of exploitation. However, some argue that what we are seeing is a breakdown of the social order and organised relations of the mid to late twentieth century and a move towards a more disorganised and decentred form of capitalism. There is a disconnected dimension to contemporary capitalism; Thompson (2013) argues that this disconnection exists within capital itself as specific fractions focused on financial imperative take the upper hand and

hence undermine any possibility of autonomy within management–worker relations. This could be a variant of the debates in Structuralist Marxism that have pointed to the importance of the tension among capitalists regarding the ways to seek both efficiency and legitimacy (Poulantzas, 1978), with the former increasingly undermining the latter – as seen in the decline in participatory and consensual processes within capitalism. Hence we see a breakdown of the organised relations of capital and labour, based on a range of factors.

Others, however, prefer to point to the way individuals cope and engage with these new challenges through acts of subversion creating mental spaces for survival (Cotton, 2012), networking around new forms of coping and information strategies (Antcliff et al., 2007), and the rethinking of economic dependency and life routines. The increasing response to this ‘unhinged’ world of work and employment has brought a greater need for an engagement with the psychological and the cultural. The importance of self-management and self-regulation has emerged in the context of a formal regulatory system, which in developed and developing countries is under extreme pressure regarding its ability to influence and humanise the terms and conditions of work. However, much may depend on the coordination of international activities between workers and their national forms of organisation and the alternative radical and democratic logic with which this is becoming increasingly infused (Waterman, 2001). These debates are important in contemporary labour and employment relations in terms of constructing narratives of renewal with respect to global dynamics. In this regard we are not at the end of a discussion of regulation, but at a new phase requiring a new politics and language of solidarity.

NOTE

The chapter brings together, in certain sections, various individual texts written by the

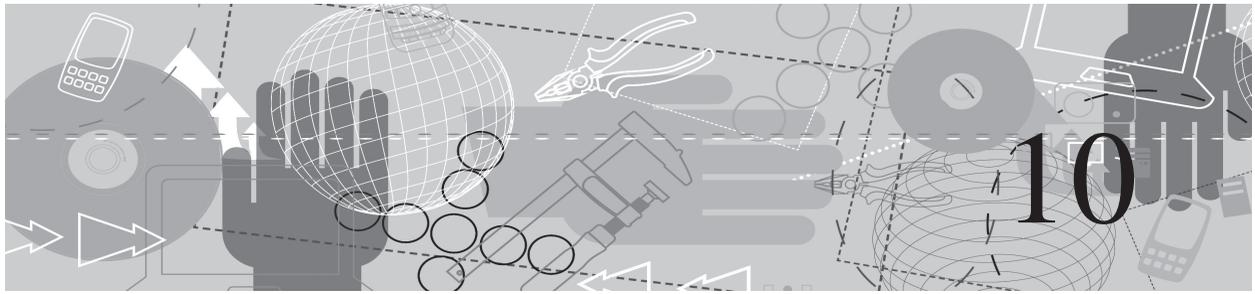
author and serves as the basis of a forthcoming textbook on labour and employment relations from a critical and historical perspective to be published by SAGE.

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From Management to Leadership

Leo McCann

INTRODUCTION

Organizational change – real or rhetorical, embraced or resisted – seems near-constant in working life. Themes of revolution and paradigm break are equally common in academic literature in the sociology of work and management and organization studies; they are even more prominent in business media and ‘management guru’ writings eager to claim the coming of a new order or to sell a new management ‘solution’. This chapter explores a particularly important ideological transition – the movement since around the late 1970s whereby ‘management’ and ‘managers’ have become to a large extent discredited and downplayed in favour of ‘leadership’ and ‘leaders’. It describes and explains this movement as concurrent with similar rhetorical transformations such as from ‘Fordism to post-Fordism’ (Amin 1994; Kumar 1995), from a second to a third ‘spirit of capitalism’ (Boltanski and Chiapello 2005), or from ‘organized’ to ‘disorganized

capitalism’ (Lash and Urry 1987). Yet it also notes that the real-world effects of these ideological transitions on management and work are far from clear; work organizations have indeed been widely restructured, but in complex ways that both confirm and reject various espoused notions of ‘best practice’ that are inscribed into these ideologies.

While the terminology of management and managers dominated ‘best practice’ for much of the twentieth century, today it is not uncommon to encounter work organizations in which nobody uses this language; where ‘management’ is criticized as bureaucratic, procedural, commonplace and unworthy of serious attention. ‘Leadership’ by comparison, refers to the more valued, more complex, more sought-after, and more prestigious work involved in running organizations (see Grey 2009: 125). An enormous literature suggests that ‘management’ is about administering and controlling organizations according to bureaucratic norms of structure, routine and well-established systems. ‘Leadership’

on the other hand, refers to more contemporary, less hands-on, approaches in which organizations are led by 'visions and values' rather than controlled by rules (Bennis 1994; Jackson and Parry 2011: 19; Zaleznik 2004 [1977]). Management is tactical whereas leadership is strategic. Management is mundane, procedural, static, structured and everyday, whereas leadership is heroic, charismatic, creative, chaotic and special. Leadership is often projected as something somehow 'superior' to management, not just in terms of its position of organizational seniority, but as a concept making claims to higher ideals than those of lowly 'management' (van Maurik 2001: 2).

To a large extent, therefore, 'management' as a form of work, as a profession, as a body of knowledge, and as a form of authority has been progressively stripped of value (Leavitt 2007: 259). From being a figure of authority, the manager – especially the middle manager – becomes a figure of weakness, even ridicule, such as the hapless manager-idiot David Brent in the early 2000s BBC TV comedy series *The Office* (Jackson and Parry 2011: 4, 118). Power, prestige and authority are invested in the 'sexier' but more amorphous concept of the 'leader' and 'leadership'. Authority is typically understood, asserted, justified and celebrated with references to these more ephemeral yet also simpler – perhaps primal – elements. One can imagine 'leaders' on a battlefield or sports field, but what team or fighting unit would want to follow a manager? One can imagine 'natural leaders' but 'natural managers'?

While powerful and pervasive, the new discourse of leadership remains contested. It has never been clear that management can be so easily disentangled from leadership (Hendry 2013: 19–23; Jackson and Parry 2011: 19–21). Management has always involved leadership and leadership will always involve management. Are the differences between 'administration', 'authority', 'governance', 'management' and 'leadership' a matter of splitting hairs? Leadership has also started to proliferate sideways and downwards in organizations;

the discourse may be over-reaching. As leadership becomes less exclusively the preserve of top executives, its claims to privileged or elite status are at risk of dilution. Leadership is constantly redefined by business gurus. New '-ships' or '-isms' continually emerge to contest leadership, to reform and update it, to try to replace it, or to ride alongside it. For all the leadership talk of 'visions', 'values', 'transformation' and 'passion', organizations continue to rely on traditional forms of control in terms of administration, paperwork, bureaucracy and performance targets. Leadership, therefore, is just one form of *managerialism* – 'the generalized ideology of management' (Parker 2002: 10) – here precisely defined by Thomas Klikauer:

Managerialism combines management knowledge and ideology to establish itself systematically in organisations and society while depriving owners, employees ... and civil society ... of all decision-making powers. (Klikauer 2013: 2)

As such, whatever the flavour of the managerial technology espoused (management or leadership), both are forms of a managerialist ideology that remains dominant and increasingly pervasive across work organizations and everyday life (Grey 2009; Locke and Spender 2011; Parker 2002).

Managerialism and management ideology have grown and adapted continuously since the earliest days of industrialization, both reflecting and helping to shape organizational practice (Anthony 1977). It is common for business historians and social theorists to delineate these changes using the simplistic yet useful device of eras or epochs. The three eras typically identified are: the Gilded Age or 'Robber-baron Phase of Capitalism' (from the 1750s to the late 1920s) when management was in its infancy; the era of 'Managerial Capitalism' (the 1930s to the mid-1970s) in which managers and management became dominant forces; and the era of 'Investor Capitalism' (the mid-1970s to today) in which notions of 'leadership' partially replace those of 'management'. Luc Boltanski and Eve Chiapello (2005)

describe these historical shifts as the first, second and third ‘spirits of capitalism’. This chapter will follow a similar logic in arguing that the rhetorical shift from management to leadership is constructed out of broad cultural, political and technological themes that circulated in the two latter periods. In order to provide context for the discussion of this move from management to leadership, the chapter firstly describes the slow and contentious rise of ‘management’ itself.

A ‘SCIENCE’ RESISTED: THE GENESIS OF MANAGEMENT IN THE FIRST SPIRIT OF CAPITALISM

The ‘Robber-baron Phase’, ‘Gilded Age’, or first spirit of capitalism was ushered in by the First Industrial Revolution (McCraw 1997), a time associated with the rise of large industrial organizations and banks which were owned and run by the entrepreneurs who originally founded them. These super-rich individuals had close ties with political elites, aristocratic families and monarchies. Chernow (2010), in his magisterial study of JP Morgan, describes a ‘baronial age’ of capitalism between the years 1838 and 1913 (Chernow 2010: 1–162), an age of European imperial powers, with the USA as the rapidly rising new pretender. Financial and industrial elites of the age, such as Carnegie in the USA or the Rothschild banking dynasty across Europe, insinuated themselves into the highest levels of political authority, often using bribes and philanthropic donations to secure favours (McCann 2014: 46–7). Owner-managed firms (often described as ‘trusts’ in the US context) were able to act almost with impunity as regards competition, cartel-building, and labour and ecological standards. By whatever means, they played a vital role in transforming the most economically-advanced nations of Europe and the USA, building railways, canals, shipping, telecommunications, and prefiguring the development of the mass-production

factory system (Chandler 1990). This system emphasized speed of production, high efficiency, economies of scale, and standardization of products for mass markets (Guillen 1994; McCraw 1997).

The growth of modern, industrial economies was prefigured and accompanied by the development of modern state apparatuses. The prime example was the Prussian civil service, which was famously Max Weber’s object of study in exploring the ‘characteristics of bureaucracy’, comprising stable and highly codified systems of offices, careers and regulations (Beck 1992). The industrial age saw the rise of dominant professional and elite groups (such as doctors, accountants and lawyers), educated at universities, enjoying high degrees of autonomy and prestige, constructing high barriers to entry and developing their own standards of practice and self-regulation (see Freidson 2001).

Management did not enjoy such ‘professional’ status, and management ideology during this time was in its infancy. It had yet to ‘establish itself’ (Klikauer 2013: 2) and deprive others of decision-making powers. Management and administration were not widely taught in universities (Spender 2005). The economy was mostly made up of small and medium-sized firms which lacked the capacity or will for large-scale adoption of the rising ideas of ‘scientific management’. Owner-managers of large firms tended to pay scant attention to questions of administration and management and early giant firms had few staff who were explicitly administrators or managers (Chandler 1977). It was widely believed that organizations are best run by ‘practical men’ with no need for formal education in administration (Barnett 1987: 671), that management can’t be taught, and that good managers are ‘born, not made’ (Wilson 1995: 116–17).

Nevertheless, several foundational management writings emerged during the first spirit of capitalism. The most famous in the anglophone world is the work of Frederick Winslow Taylor (1856–1915), such as *Shop Management* (Taylor 1903) and *Principles of*

Scientific Management (Taylor 1911). Taylor was appalled by the inefficient use of widespread ‘rule of thumb’ methods in industrial capitalism, which he believed only the disciplined application of scientific principles could eradicate. The ‘management movement’, ‘rationalization movement’ or ‘efficiency movement’ was international in nature (Brech et al. 2010: 67–72). Other contemporaneous writers included the French organizational theorist Henri Fayol (1841–1925), who developed a strong interest in abstract principles of efficient administration, and the German industrialist, statesman and author Walter Rathenau (1867–1922), who was at the forefront of efforts to ‘rationalize’ the workings of shop-floor industry. The former British Army officer Lyndall Urwick was another prominent writer of the ‘classical’ school (Brech et al. 2010). While it is almost an article of faith for many that the University of Pennsylvania’s Wharton School is the world’s oldest business school, other forms of business and management education (in nineteenth-century Germany, in fourteenth-century England, in ancient Mesopotamia) long pre-date it (Spender 2005: 1283–4).

Several of the ‘classical’ pioneers of the ‘management movement’ were funded by philanthropic associations such as the Rockefeller Foundation, and the fledgling (and ill-fated) International Management Institute, an offshoot of the League of Nations (Brech et al. 2010). The early literature is dominated by references to systems, routines, principles, and military and machine metaphors; the early thinkers attempted to develop a ‘science’ of management, a universal and politically impartial set of principles, laws and routines that should be applied to all kinds of organizations in all fields. They are early markers of the principles of managerialism; attempts to stake out the rational, efficient, professional, politically neutral, objective, progressive and essential credentials of managers and management ‘science’.

At the time these classical management theorists were writing, however, organizations were stubbornly refusing to adopt scientific

management; managers remained unconvinced of the need for change, and workers largely rejected the ‘neutral’ and ‘scientific’ claims of early management knowledge, regarding scientific management (often accurately) as simply a new way to wring more effort out of the workforce and take control away from the front line (Waring 1991). The management movement appeared to be fighting a losing battle in its efforts to systematize management knowledge into sets of widely-accepted practice in industry or administration, or into curricula for universities. Little were they to know that the ideas they were espousing were to take on much more dominant forms in the organizational age to come, as industrial societies grew and matured during the post-war growth phase of the 1950s to 1970s. This was the second spirit of capitalism (Boltanski and Chiapello 2005), when large organizations became dominated by the structures, systems and routines of centralized and ‘rational’ management.

ACCOUNTABLE, CENTRALIZED, PROFESSIONALIZED: MANAGEMENT AS SCIENTIFIC ADMINISTRATION IN THE SECOND SPIRIT OF CAPITALISM

In the wake of the Wall Street Crash (1929), and the Great Depression of the 1930s, the advanced economies of the US, Europe and Japan introduced stronger forms of regulation and government intervention, curbing the risks and excesses of large firms and the financial markets. Mass production and economies of scale were widely adopted and the rise and application of operations research and systems analysis in the Second World War were broadly mirrored in giant post-war corporations (Waring 1991). Firms became too large and too complex to be handled by owner-managers alone. This process – the separation of ownership from control (see Chandler 1977) – began in the late nineteenth century but accelerated rapidly in the post-Depression and then post-Second-World-War

era. Growing ranks of salaried, generalist, college-educated managers increasingly wrested control of the organization from the former 'hands-on' owner-managers. Companies issued securities to finance their expansion, and ownership spread across many shareholders. The result was the new paradigm of the giant, multidivisional, publically listed firm (Chandler 1977; McCraw 1997). This was the age of managerial capitalism (Chandler 1990: 51–89), organized capitalism (Lash and Urry 1987), or the second spirit of capitalism (Boltanski and Chiapello 2005), in which large organizations were dominated by ranks of 'professional' general managers.

Managers developed increasingly prestigious forms of education and certification (such as MBAs) which established barriers to entry to the occupation, created new languages in which only they were expert (such as 'operations research' or 'systems analysis': see Chwastiak 2001), and defined codes of conduct and new systems of reporting and control, including statistical analysis, batteries of tests, and reams of paperwork (Byrne 1993; Waring 1991).

As large organizations continued to expand their activities and open new lines of business (especially with the boom in conglomerates in the 1960s) they added new departments and divisions, requiring devolved administration and stimulating demand for additional levels of line management and greater numbers of 'professional' managers trained in statistical control techniques. These developments generated considerable distance between top management and the line, and long chains of agreement were required for important decisions. Militaristic concepts such as 'command and control', and 'standard operating procedures' (SOPs) came into widespread usage in public and commercial organizations. Management literature of the time emphasized standards, systems and statistics. The new middle managers often had limited or no experience of the realities of the products and services that their organizations produced, but didn't regard this as a weakness. Much like the classicists in the prior era,

they tended to view all organizations above a certain size as essentially similar. The universalist, professional, expert, teachable and generalizable vision of the classicists such as Taylor, Fayol and Urwick was finally being realized. Management was becoming a profession.

In generating a historical narrative of these trends, it is easy to forget that there was a huge range of approaches, and that not all management literature was Taylorian in nature. Other trends include the Human Relations and contingency theory 'schools' that emphasized, respectively, management based on employee consent rather than coercion, and the importance of the wider external environment (see, for example, Lawrence and Lorsch 1986; Roethlisberger and Dickson 1939; for overviews see Anthony 1977; Guillen 1994; Hassard 2012). Engineering-focused forms of statistics-driven 'quality improvement' were also highly influential, such as the work of W. Edwards Deming (1986). As management and administration become more professionalized, these writings were increasingly taught at universities, and much of the management literature became academic and esoteric; the language was often technical, abstract and schematic. One interesting element to emerge from the 'contingency' tradition appears in Woodward (1965), whose research found that among large firms there were actually few common features. For example, levels of management ranged from 2 to 12, and spans of control could be anywhere between 10 and 90 for front-line supervisors. Classical management principles were still not being consistently applied, even in successful firms (Cole 2004: 85).

Although unevenly applied, these new forms of thinking were built on and brought into practice in sophisticated ways during the managerial capitalism era. This was well demonstrated by the story of the so-called 'Whiz Kids' – professional administrators with gifted analytical minds and an obsessive focus on numerical details, who established strict control over numbers

and systems in organizations such as Ford, Litton Industries and the US Army (Byrne 1993). By far the most famous of them was Robert S. McNamara, whose remarkable career took him from the Office of Statistical Control in the US Army Air Forces in the Second World War, through the management ranks of Ford Motor Company, to the White House as Defense Secretary under Presidents Kennedy and Johnson, then President of the World Bank. His approach leaned heavily on numbers-driven control systems, clearly influenced by wartime 'operations research' (Chwastiak 2001; Waring 1991), and in general terms was a version of Peter Drucker's famous 'Management by Objectives', an archetypal concept of the managerial capitalism era (Drucker 1961). The focus was on long-range planning, robust systems, cost accounting and stability, arguably the very essence of 'management' as opposed to 'leadership' (Kotter 1988).

Critics argue that such strategic planning unnecessarily restricts organizations and people from thinking freely or changing course. Managing 'by the numbers' omitted concern for intangibles, especially 'human factors' that are clearly relevant in all manner of organizations. Systems thinking could create absurd situations where 'objective'-hitting dominates management and worker behaviour to such an extent that the actual standards of product or services becomes a secondary concern (for contemporary examples see Bevan and Hood 2006; Ordonez et al. 2009). Nevertheless, numbers-based systems with their roots in 1960s administration, such as performance targets and star-ratings, have been enduringly popular in organizations, especially the ubiquitous 'Key Performance Indicators' associated with the 'Balanced Scorecard' (Kaplan and Norton 1996).

Organizations in the second spirit became tightly structured and rule-bound in ways that Taylor and Urwick had earlier prescribed. Organizations developed tall managerial hierarchies in which around eight to ten managerial levels existed between front-line supervisors and boards of directors. Spans

of control at each managerial level were narrow at around five or six direct reports, in keeping with the viewpoints of classical writers such as V.A. Graicunas (Cole 2004: 202; Urwick 1974), who believed that the human mind could not realistically handle broader spans. White-collar workers enjoyed what were effectively 'jobs for life' with well-established benefits such as pensions and health insurance. Unions were widely recognized as legal units for blue-collar collective bargaining with senior management. Where not recognized, firms often developed paternalistic strategies at least in part as a way for senior managers and business owners to project a progressive vision of themselves as good employers to pre-empt worker organization drives (Jacoby 1997).

Broader organizational cultures reflected the strictness of managerial control. Loyalty was expected of organizational members, and 'speaking out of turn' was frowned upon (Jackall 1988). Studies during this era of what managers actually did with their time (Mintzberg 1973; Stewart 1994) suggest that managerial work was a demanding but relatively stable occupation. White-collar workers probably appreciated the stability that their posts provided, but there were always disadvantages and frustrations. The routines of managerial work in large corporations in this era could be stultifying. Middle managers often had to endure long waits for their promotion up the hierarchy, and they learned to act with deference and even obsequiousness towards superiors (Jackall 1988). Ostracism of 'difficult characters' was common (Whyte 1960), and sexism and ethnic discrimination were endemic (Kanter 1977). Critiques of these organizational cultures as deadening and de-personalizing were popular, such as Whyte's *The Organization Man* or Mills' *White Collar* (Whyte 1960; Mills 2002 [1951]). Such critiques were influenced to some extent by 'counter culture' or Frankfurt-School-style critiques of 'alienation' at work (Blauner 1964; Yuill 2011). It was not uncommon for both front-line workers (Chinoy 1992) and mid-level administrators

and managers (Mills 2002 [1951]) to regard themselves as ‘just a number’.

Although always controversial, the micro-managing ‘second spirit of capitalism’ started to come under sustained attack from the 1980s onwards. Critics claimed that not only was the system stultifying but that it was also no longer providing the means for success in an increasingly competitive global marketplace. Management methods were widely seen to be causing more problems than they were designed to fix. Famously, the USA was ‘managing [its] way to industrial decline’ (Hayes and Abernathy 1980). The generalism and remoteness of systems analysis made it unpopular with government and public administration professionals (Hoos 1972). The Vietnam War was a disaster for the US, ‘managed’ by McNamara and his Whiz Kids who were swamped with dysfunctional metrics (Byrne 1993; Daddis 2012). Firms and public bureaucracies were regarded as over-managed. Highly-trained and well-paid managers with overly academic backgrounds had diverted the attention of corporations away from their ‘real business’ by binding them to restrictive systems and ‘bean counting’. Firms had been seduced by a ‘managerial mystique’ (Locke, 1996; Zaleznik 1989) of numbers, systems and impenetrable language that had led large corporations and government agencies to ruin. By the 1980s the fashion was to ditch ‘management’ and get ‘back to leadership’.

DELAYERING, OUTSOURCING, ‘VISIONING’: LEADERSHIP IN THE THIRD SPIRIT OF CAPITALISM

The third spirit of capitalism (Boltanski and Chiapello 2005) or the era of investor capitalism (McCann 2014: 60–68; Useem 1996) is characterized by quite different forms of managerial ideology from the post-war model of ‘business administration’. Arguably fuelled by 1960s counter culture in the US and Western Europe – especially as a

reaction to the atrocities of the Vietnam War – management literature started to espouse a release from standard operating procedures, and command and control, and a rejection of ‘objective’ scientific/numeric management (Boltanski and Chiapello 2005; Sennett 2007: 1–2; Styhre 2014: ix). Management literature of the 1980s increasingly emphasized ‘liberation’ from control and the effacement of ‘bureaucracy’ (Peters and Waterman 1982).

Management and managers were damned by their association with bureaucratic systems, and business ideology prescribed their replacement with leadership and leaders. Leadership was cast as a purer, more direct, more primal form of operating. This sense of slimming down and simplifying organizations connected with the desire of investors to strip out costs from the businesses they owned (Hassard et al. 2009). Business gurus such as Tom Peters aimed their barbs at old-style managers such as McNamara (Peters 2001: 83; see also Zaleznik 1989: 102–4), blaming them not only for America’s foreign policy disasters but also for allowing its corporations to fall behind those of new economic giants such as Germany and Japan that seemed to operate perfectly well with fewer managers and better-trained front-line staff who understood the products that their corporations built.

This change in ideology both reflected and encouraged real-world changes in the nature of business and finance. Firms were experiencing new pressures in the form of increased international competition, and the rise of ‘shareholder value logic’ in which the demands of capital markets forced corporations to control costs and convince the investor community that they had become lean, slimmed down and focused (Lazonick and O’Sullivan 2000; Useem 1996). Organizational power shifted from internal managers (managerial capitalism) to outsiders (investor capitalism), as markets for corporate control became established and takeovers and leveraged buyouts reset the rules of the game. New leaders were installed in corporations after takeovers, often with

'visions' to make sweeping changes to 'turn-around' poor performers or 'change the culture' of moribund organizations (Khurana 2004). Old-style insider-dominated corporations were attacked by the investor community as sleepy and wasteful, artificially burdened by excessive ranks of over-protected and non-value-adding bureaucrats and middle managers. Public sector organizations also increasingly became subjected to radical reforms, including deregulation, outsourcing, privatization, and corporate style re-engineering as neoliberal politicians repeated a mantra of 'value for money for tax-payers', 'flexibility' and 'increased accountability' (Osborne and Gaebler 1992). Leadership rhetoric and managerialist discourse deeply infiltrated what used to be relatively stable, self-policed bureaucracies, including government and the professions (Anthony 1977: 264).

Time horizons shrank drastically across work organizations as globalization, shareholder value and demands for external accountability drove up competition and the costs of failure. Organizations became unwilling and unable to offer long-term employment to their staff (Sennett 1998). Anything not 'value-adding' had to be removed urgently from corporations and public sector organizations in order to control costs. Traditionally well-paid and protected white-collar middle managers become obvious targets for layoffs (Hassard et al. 2009). The imperatives of shareholder value made it difficult for companies to plan for long-time horizons (Lazonick and O'Sullivan 2000). Top management fixated on quarterly returns and the performance of the share price over consecutive quarters became the main metric by which to evaluate top managers' performance (Golding 2003; Khurana 2004).

Leadership, with its liberal use of 'visions' and 'shared values', became the order of the day. The new managerialist ideology was enthralled by speed, emphasizing the rapid launching of new 'killer' products and snap decision-making without having to consult armies of middle managers or sit

through stultifying committees. Leadership is an action-oriented ideology – of business stripped back to its raw essence. With the demise of strategic planning and extended time horizons there seemed less demand for management (emphasizing continuity and control) and more demand for leadership (emphasizing vision and change) (Kotter 1988). True leaders were 'transformational' rather than 'transactional' (Bass 1990).

Investor capitalism also changed the ways in which workers are employed and rewarded. The jobs for life, holiday pay and employee 'entitlement' traditions of managerial capitalism gave way to short-term employment contracts and 'portfolio careers'. Pensions shifted from defined benefit (DB) to much less generous defined contribution (DC) offerings (Monk 2009). Trade union membership nosedived and traditional forms of 'personnel management' were replaced by a 'human resource management' of 'shared visions', 'dress-down Fridays', and 'just be yourself' forms of employee motivation (Fleming 2009). 'Funky business' had arrived (Nordström and Ridderstråle 2007).

Rhetorically, at least, control is loosened, although the importance of cultural control and even 'employee branding' is increasingly emphasized by management (Brannan et al. 2011). 'Living the brand' needn't be a chore for workers. The 'leadership style' of celebrity CEOs is supposedly about 'coaching' staff towards voluntarily embracing corporate cultures and 'visions' rather than setting out standard operating procedures and micromanaging performance against them. In keeping with long-term trends (see Anthony, 1977) the authority structure wants to be more than a numerical 'system' for 'managing effectiveness'. It wants to cultivate a higher purpose for itself, to be something bigger – nobler – than business and profit-making, and readily transferrable into non-commercial pursuits. For example, 'Our Mission' at Harvard Medical School is to 'create and nurture a diverse community of the best people committed to leadership in alleviating human suffering caused by disease' (as quoted in

Lessig 2011: 16). Leadership's appeal or 'justification' (Boltanski and Chiapello 2005) is sophisticated, drawing not only on its own claims to higher efficiency than 'management' but on higher ideals, including appeals not only to liberation, change, passion, excellence and fun, but also to ethics and virtues. Leadership writers widely mobilize themes of heroism and selflessness, of leaders showing courage under fire, coping with extreme crises and contexts such as accidents, warfare and mountaineering (Useem 1999), leading not just from the front or back, but 'from everywhere' (Allen 2010). Some have even discussed a 'spiritual leadership' (Fernando et al. 2009). Poor old 'management' is left huffing and blowing behind, tied up in paperwork and stumbling through its flow charts.

And yet, remember it is *rhetoric and ideology* that we are discussing here (Anthony 1977). In the messiness of the real world, organizations, of course, continue to employ all kinds of systems and legacies derived from old-school bureaucratic managerial blueprints, and 'spiritual leadership' is often nowhere to be seen. Research in the sociology of work continues to point to strict usage of monitoring, calculation and control alongside the more contemporary and 'on-message' forms of visionary and cultural control. Although superficially updated and rebooted to match the 'spirit' of leaderism, employees at all levels are still measured by batteries of Key Performance Indicators and similar metrics which have their roots in the 'omniscient operating system' of post-war numerical analysis (Starkey and McKinlay 1994: 980). The much-vaunted Toyota Production System or simply 'lean' – so strongly marketed by management gurus such as Womack et al. (2007 [1990]) – also relies heavily on standardization, routinization and work intensification. Many have suggested that it is simply a much more advanced form of Taylorism (Tamura 2006). Process improvement methodologies in wide usage such as Six Sigma (Hassard et al. 2009) are dominated by standards, numbers and protocols, with worker performance tightly

measured against 'benchmarks'. Miss your targets and you fail your appraisal, even when the numbers used to measure your performance are dubious and contested (McCann 2013). Organizations (especially in the public sector) are continually required to produce numbers that tell a story of 'compliance' with 'quality assurance' and various other forms of the 'audit society' (Power 1999). Amidst the rise of 'leadership', numbers, systems, control and 'management' remain essential elements of managerialist discourse and everyday organizational practice.

Moreover, just as HR departments buy into the leadership language of shared visions and a reduction of micro-management, they also introduce highly inegalitarian 'talent management' programmes, sometimes modelled after the 'forced ranking' systems popularized by the arch celebrity CEO Jack Welch, among others. These include the infamous '20-70-10' or 'rank and yank' policy where the 20 is the top 20 per cent of staff who form the 'talent' to be incentivized with bonuses, the 70 is the adequately performing staff with little or no bonus entitlement and thereby typically accounted for as a cost to be managed, and the 10 is the 'watch list' of poor-performing staff who will be 'managed out' by year's end. Annual 'Oscars-style' awards ceremonies are increasingly popular elements of HR 'best practice', where staff receiving 'outstanding' performance appraisals are nominated into categories such as 'best team player' and 'best marketer' (McCann 2013).

The investor capitalism era is associated with a huge proliferation of new managerial ideologies. Often described as 'fads and fashions' (Abrahamson 1991; Keiser 1997), new managerial ideas have become increasingly high-profile, with managers and 'leaders' directly drawing attention to how they themselves have utilized, developed and applied these management concepts, usually with great success (Furusten 1999). Celebrity CEOs and business gurus are lionized by the investor community and business media, and their memoirs sell in huge numbers. Welch's memoir, *Jack – Straight from*

the Gut, sold millions of copies, and former Ford and Chrysler executive Lee Iacocca was supposedly ‘mobbed’ by Japanese fans while visiting the Far East (Collins 2001: 29). A huge industry has sprung up for coaching, executive training and ‘how-to’ leadership manuals (Parker 2002). The managerial literature of the era is, therefore, far less ‘scientific’ in orientation than the older ideas, such as those of Urwick and Fayol, much less academic than the 1960s writings of Drucker or Lawrence and Lorsch, and more commercial, ‘sexed-up’, and easier to digest. Urwick and the older generation look dowdy and boring. The literature is also more obviously developed for its own commercial ends – there is a veritable explosion of literature, consulting and training, much of it overlapping in content, with many of the guru authors having their own consulting firms and amassing considerable personal fortunes (Cullen 2009; Furusten 1999). Clearly there are *some* ideas of value in managerial ideology amid the cacophony of competing voices and prescriptions. But much of the ‘guru’ literature is effectively a form of ‘pop culture’ written to further the authors’ consulting interests, such as the infantile and widely spoofed *Who Moved My Cheese* (Johnson 1999).

The third spirit of capitalism mobilizes the idea that the age of bureaucracy, paternalism and extended time horizons is over, and that this change, rather than being frightening for employees and managers, should be personally liberating. Rather than being controlled by the strictness of organizational hierarchy and culture, employees are (supposedly) encouraged to question established practice and embrace change. This message has been strongly reflected in key managerialist texts since the early 1990s, such as Peters’ *Liberation Management* (1992), Kanter’s *When Giants Learn to Dance* (1989) or Jeffers’ *Feel the Fear and Do it Anyway* (1991). Not all of this literature is American; third spirit managerial ideology has been widely produced elsewhere, such as the massive-selling memoir of Jan Carlzon,

former CEO of Scandinavian Airlines System (SAS Group). Published in 1985, the book’s Swedish title is *Riv Pyramiderna* which translates as *Tear the Pyramids Down*. (It was eventually translated into English with the somewhat evangelical title *Moments of Truth* (Carlzon 1987).) There is even some Japanese literature in this mould. One popular business text turns the ultra-strict Japanese version of the second-spirit ideology upside down. Referring to the Japanese saying ‘the nail that sticks up will be hammered down’ Terao’s text (which perhaps loses something in translation) is entitled ‘The Nail that Doesn’t Stick up Might be Thrown Away’ (see Matanle 2004: 107). Employees are instructed to take responsibility for their own careers and ‘employability’, and to enjoy the freedom, creativity and spontaneity of organizational life freed from the rigid hierarchies of managerial capitalism.

The third spirit reflects, therefore, a more flexible but also more ruthless form of organizing. A positive interpretation suggests that third-spirit organizations are more open and transparent, with greater gender and ethnic diversity, as the insider-dominated and cliquey management associated with the second spirit of capitalism withers away. Managerial work under investor capitalism becomes more interesting and rewarding, and less routine and rule-bound as authority is devolved downwards and spans of control broadened (Hassard et al. 2009). Careers become less of a straightjacket, and there is less of a stigma attached to staff deciding to seek pastures new. Under managerial capitalism, or the second spirit, company paternalism could be restrictive and overbearing.

All of these changes are constituent parts of a ‘new organizational ideology’ (Hassard et al. 2009: 13; McCann et al. 2004) that both reflects and prescribes moves beyond scientific management, rationalism, strategic planning and management by objectives, and portrays and prescribes flatter, less hierarchical organizations, with fewer rungs of middle management, shorter job tenures, and much

wider and more demanding work roles for managers/leaders. Companies and public service bureaucrats cannot be dominated by self-serving and complacent insiders; work organizations have to orient themselves to the demands of customers, shareholders and end-users. Such third-spirit type literature is also highly critical of established professional privileges such as those of the civil service, physicians, or engineers. According to critics like Peters, these entrenched hierarchical groups have always sought to serve their own 'bureaucratic' interests, rather than those of customers or shareholders. (For an interesting defence of bureaucracy that reclaims its Weberian sense of fairness, stability and professionalism, see du Gay (2000).) Discarding entrenched practice is a key theme of the 1980s' and 1990s' fashion for 'business process re-engineering' (Hammer and Champy 1993), 'culture change' programmes (Kanter 1989), and lean operations (Womack et al. 2007 [1990]), in which corporations have to radically change their organizational shape and the ways in which they confront market imperatives. To use the words of a senior leader at a US automotive company interviewed in Hassard et al.'s study of contemporary corporate restructuring, the challenge means 'rolling the triangle', a process that sounds easier said than done (Hassard et al. 2009: 99).

Yet amid the prescribed changes, dark clouds continue to hang over the downsized, re-engineered, and re-visioned organization of the leadership age. Flattening or 'delayering' a hierarchy and throwing the SOPs on the bonfire might appear as steps towards democratization and liberation for organizations and workers (Sennett 2007). But it also typically means downsizing the organization, removing managerial jobs and radically expanding middle managers' spans of control. As the intermediate ranks are removed or merged, managers become responsible for 10, 20, even 50 direct reports – a span of control far wider than the classicists would have thought humanly manageable. Field research on changes to managerial work

almost universally suggests huge increases in workload for managers at all levels of the hierarchy (Hassard et al. 2009; McCann et al. 2008; Tengblad 2006). Organizational 'silos' are eliminated and managers are expected to work in ad hoc teams that operate across all lines of business. Work groups are put together and pulled apart with dizzying rapidity. Once solid, stable, monolithic workplaces now totter on shifting sands. The 'management speak' of visions, world class, 'good to great' and leadership 'empathy' is often inauthentic, as top management sits in an 'echo chamber' of its own making, refusing to listen to employee concerns (McCann 2013; Parker 2014). 'Leaders', like so many 'managers' in earlier times, are in danger of becoming arrogant, remote and detached. Some leadership writers, such as Zaleznik (2004 [1977]: 77, 79), argue that leaders 'react to mundane work as to an affliction', and that leaders 'may work in organizations, but they never belong to them'. Such an elitist orientation can mean that 'leaders' become indifferent, careless of detail and remote from reality; pretty much the same failures that old-line 'management' was so often accused of.

For example, the 'Force Transformation' policies of former US Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld were about redesigning the Pentagon away from doctrines of overwhelming force of numbers and making US armed forces 'leaner and more lethal' (Gordon and Trainor 2006: 3). This involved 'doing more with less' and outsourcing large areas of expertise to private contractors. War was downsized (Malkasian and Weston 2012). A 'revolution in military affairs' was promised (Godfrey et al. 2014), yet the results have been disastrous: counter-insurgency 'quagmires' in Iraq and Afghanistan, and brutal humanitarian scandals such as Abu Ghraib and Nisour Square. Just as McNamara in the 1960s was excoriated as a failed 'manager', Rumsfeld the archetypal 'leader' was similarly reviled in the 2000s. Both were 'brilliant but fatally arrogant' (Diamond 2007: xiii).

With the limitations of managerialism so obvious, there is a large literature that is deeply critical of its 'fads and fashions' (Abrahamson 1991; Keiser 1997), asking, for example, 'Has Tom Peters lost the plot?' (Collins 2008). Cullen (2009) provides a highly critical dissection of Steven Covey's *7 Habits of Highly Effective People* and Boje and Rhodes (2006) ironically suggest that Ronald McDonald is the perfect example of a 'transformational leader'. Criticism is also levelled at the gurus from more conventional areas, such as two articles in the mainstream management journal *Academy of Management Perspectives* which demolish the shaky methodologies employed by Jim Collins (2001) in *Good to Great* (Neindorf and Beck 2008; Resnick and Smunt 2008). It is also important to bear in mind that there are many different strands of managerialist literature and that key authors regularly critique one other. Collins is a major leadership guru but is highly critical of celebrity CEOs, dislikes faddism and suggests that genuinely successful firms do not indulge in radical restructuring. In his view, long-term sustainable success comes from steadily doing things correctly and genuinely, and that top leaders should be quiet, self-effacing, disciplined characters – almost a traditional second-spirit strategy, not dissimilar from Japanese practice. One of the most powerful prescriptions made in Peters and Waterman's *In Search of Excellence* (1982) was 'stick to your knitting', an idea that somewhat contradicts Peters' later writings which emphasize nimbleness and radical change.

Contradiction, verbiage and hyperbole in leadership are overwhelming, encouraging some observers to pine for a return to managerial capitalism, or the second spirit (Sennett 2007). Even if it was boring, mundane and slow, at least it appeared to have Deming's 'constancy of purpose'. If the 'management' of the Drucker era was just 'a mystique' then so too is 'leadership' today. Both are forms of managerialism that require careful observation from a critical distance.

CONCLUSION

We have come full circle, returning to the issue of management and leadership as contested and uncertain concepts. For many critics, leadership is just a new word to describe management. Despite the 'selling' of managerialist ideologies as indispensable practical technologies, leadership 'best practice' is often difficult to find in the real world and is increasingly difficult to meaningfully adopt. Managerial ideology may be becoming increasingly 'fictionalized' (Gantman 2005) as it becomes ever more commercial and ubiquitous. Perhaps the superficiality and fiction of leadership is part of its attraction as a fad – prescribed notions of 'authenticity', 'spirituality' and 'emotional intelligence' are deliberately vague and slippery so as to allow easy and superficial 'adoption' (Benders and van Veen 2001).

As this chapter has tried to demonstrate, managerial ideology clearly reflects the 'spirit' of the various historical eras. Yet throughout the three periods sketched above certain core themes remain essentially the same. Establishing and maintaining control and influence over human behaviour in organizations can be profoundly difficult. What are the most appropriate and effective forms of control? How much of it should be used? Where, on whom, and at what times? How is 'performance' to be measured? Although the tone and feel changes with the times, there are some problems that seem irresolvable, and managerial ideology often cannot make convincing claims as to its practical usefulness (Furusten 1999: 43; Gantman 2005: 4; Grey 2009; Perrow 1986: 52). The models of the gurus are simplistic and attractive but basically unfit for purpose. Managerial ideas and concepts can be highly ambiguous in nature, despite managerialism's claims to remove ambiguity and replace it with certainty, accountability, and quality 'assurance'. Take, for example, Kaplan and Norton's Balanced Scorecard (1996: 76). While this model is simple and easy on the

eye, the arrows, boxes and slogans are just as abstract and ambiguous as Urwick's a generation earlier, raising questions about how far we've really come. While this chapter is built around a simplified chronological structure of 'management to leadership', it is important to note that leadership is not a radically new concept, with classic leadership works published from the middle of the twentieth century onwards, such as Selznick (1957) and Burns (1978). Management fashions can be cyclical in nature. Inevitably, some are now writing of *The End of Leadership* (Kellerman 2012).

Many have, therefore, suggested that managerial ideology is not to be taken seriously at face value as a set of solutions or toolkits, or as a science perfected over time (Grey 2009). Instead its purpose is legitimization: to offer justificatory rhetoric and to reinforce the prestigious position of managers and 'leaders' in society (Anthony 1977; Gantman 2005). There is little or no evidence to suggest that organizational problems have actually been increasingly resolved by the evolution of managerial thought, unlike, arguably, medicine (such as the near-eradication of polio in developed societies), or the discoveries of nuclear physics (Gantman 2005; Grey 2009: 134). While there may be some useful elements in the theories of, for example, lean and process improvement, these are often drowned out by the language games and rhetorical devices used in 'selling' management ideas, in the multi billion-dollar industry it has become. We have moved from *Shop Management* (Taylor 1903) to *The Practice of Management* (Drucker 1961). *Thriving on Chaos* (Peters 1988), *Moments of Truth* (Carlzon 1987) along the way. We've been leaned, re-engineered and culture changed. We've even learned the *Leadership Secrets of Attila the Hun* (Roberts 1989). But to what effect?

It appears that we're still looking for an answer as to the difference between management and leadership. Such is the extent of the dethroning of 'management' that a manager can now be a sub-routine in

an operating system or software package, such as Microsoft Windows' 'Local Session Manager'. Anyone, even *anything*, can be a manager – that's easy. Being a leader appears to be considerably harder. But even this is unclear. In recent years, the language of the leader has also been cheapened and downgraded. One reads of a perceived need to build 'middle leaders' in organizations (Martin and Waring 2013) and develop 'distributed leadership' (Gronn 2002). It is not just organizations as wholes that need leaders; lower sections and other bits of organizations (such as middle ranks and temporary projects) now have 'leads'. Public servants such as emergency responders or social workers enact 'street-level leadership' (Vinzant and Crothers 1998). Fast food chains hire 'team leaders' rather than supervisors.

Amid the boosterism around spiritual, creative, authentic, charismatic, distributed, transcendental, transformational, or extreme leadership – not to mention our indispensable 'toolkits' of emotional intelligence, leadership development and 360-degree feedback – we are also increasingly seeing attacks on the discourse of leadership and leaders. Although the mainstream leadership discourse has long praised leaders for their special abilities to work with empathy and to 'excite people' (Zaleznik 2004 [1977]: 77), recent scholarship has increasingly characterized these 'special' personality traits as pathologies rather than virtues. A large literature now discusses 'toxic leadership' (Reed 2004), corporate psychopaths (Boddy 2011; Byrne 1999) and narcissism (Stein 2003). Scandals, failure, hubris, authoritarianism, bullying and other forms of malpractice continue to haunt organizations (Lemmergaard and Muhr 2013; Locke and Spender 2011). Former Sunbeam CEO Al Dunlap – nicknamed 'Chainsaw' – was especially notorious. In the words of a financial analyst interviewed in Byrne's biography: 'Al was like morphine ... He was a drug. ... Al didn't just cut costs. He pulled out the fat and the muscle, the tissue, the plasma, the neurons, and even the skeletal structure out of organizations' (as quoted in

Byrne, 1999: 341). How's that for 'extreme' leadership?

None of this critique, however, has dislodged the privileged position of management and leadership (Gantman 2005; Parker 2002). Managerialism is so 'established' in everyday life (Klikauer 2013: 2), it seems unlikely that either 'management' or 'leadership' are going to disappear or radically change. There will always be attempts to redefine and reboot the academic and popular business literature. Future research into the adaptation and evolution of managerialist ideas and language will likely have to grapple with the complex tasks involved with trying to understand both how managerialist ideology is developed, framed, adapted and promoted as discursive constructs, and also how these products (such as the various 'leadership' offerings described above) filter into organizations; how they are experienced, translated, adapted, questioned, and sometimes rejected, by managers, staff, and customers and service users. There is fertile ground for further sociological inquiry into the impact of these discourses at workplace level. For example, ambitious efforts are being made in certain circles to recast leadership as 'a science', often using psychological notions such as 'emotional intelligence', or even turning to neuroscience and genetics for answers to the age-old problem of whether leaders are born or made, as they promote various configurations of 'best practice' leadership as solutions to workplace problems (see Jackson and Perry 2011: 140). However, recent and ongoing in-depth sociological and organizational research, including into so-called world class, or best practice workplaces, continues to find incompetence, wastage, toxic behaviours, heavy workloads, stressed employees, problematic metrics and target-chasing, and deep cynicism about the value of 'management speak' (see, for example, Hassard et al. 2009; Leavitt 2007). Is leadership discourse part of a solution to these problems or does it help create them? Interestingly, mainstream cultural discourse – novels, movies, news media – is often highly

critical of managerialism (Parker 2002: 135). Widespread questioning and critique, however, does not seem to have slowed the progressive spread of managerialist ideology into ever-wider social, political, cultural and organizational fields. Quite why managerialism seems to retain such strong ideological power and longevity is also a timely question for further inquiry.

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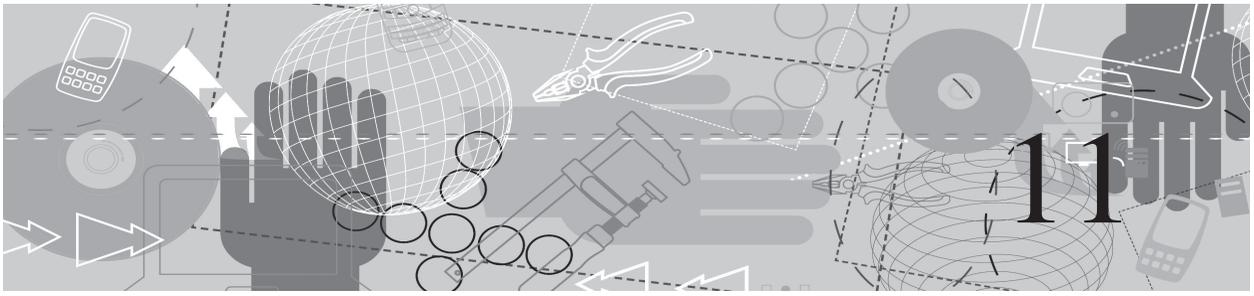
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Unruly Subjects: Misbehaviour in the Workplace

Stephen Ackroyd and Paul Thompson

You have found out something:

The hand that knows his business won't be told

To work better or faster – those two things. (Frost, 1955: 67)

NOW YOU SEE IT, NOW YOU DON'T

There is little that more graphically indicates the normative character of much social science than its handling of misbehaviour. There is a great deal of evidence, particularly gathered from ethnographic research, indicating that misbehaviour at work is prevalent at all levels and amongst all types of employment (Fleming and Spicer, 2007). Research has revealed tendencies to misbehave – and especially for employees to innovate non-sanctioned ways of responding to work and of evading attempts to control what they do. Yet, at the same time, there are also tendencies amongst social scientists and others to

overlook such behaviour or to minimize its importance.

Perhaps the most glaring example of selective myopia is the way that, when it is noticed at all, it is the misbehaviour of ordinary employees that is the main subject of concern. This is despite the abundant indications of professional and managerial misbehaviour, as well as that relating to ordinary employees. In recent decades there have been constant scandals and revelations regarding the conduct of executives, ranging from the award of unprecedentedly high remuneration packages for them, to high-profile examples of corporate miss-selling, adoption of highly risky policies, financial malfeasance and the routine use of tax avoidance practices. Managerial misbehaviour, of course, often gives rise to costs that dwarf what ordinary employees do. Yet, the misbehaviour of executives and managers has been, with some honourable exceptions (Punch, 1996; Jackall, 2010) almost entirely ignored by contemporary social science. Indeed there

are some indications that managerial misbehaviour is becoming more rather than less prevalent (Sayles and Smith, 2005; Prechel and Morris, 2010). Despite this, research-based and especially ethnographic work in these areas is limited and, in practice, there is little possibility of treating misbehaviour by all levels of employees in the same depth and with comparable rigour. Thus, reluctantly, and for reasons of expediency much more than of principle, as with many before us, we shall discuss the misbehaviour of ordinary employees almost exclusively in this chapter. The difference in this treatment is that the reasons why the consideration of misbehaviour by social scientists is partial or absent are also examined.

One of our key points is that the willingness to notice workplace misbehaviour has varied considerably, and there are some surprising contrasts of viewpoint. Only now and then are social scientists disposed to acknowledge misbehaviour at all. True, it is in the early stages of industrialism, when modern methods of production are first imposed, that work limitation practices are most obvious. They are an obvious response of employees to industrial discipline everywhere. Such practices as going slow and pretending to work, and, where feasible, employees interfering with productive machinery were evident and commonplace. There are several ideas concerning the origin of the term sabotage, but the leading candidate is the practice of sixteenth-century French and Belgian weavers, who reportedly placed their clogs (sabots) in the works of their looms to disable them. In the early decades of industrialization in many locations similar practices were noted. But what we also want to draw attention to here, however, are the marked differences in the understanding of – and the publicity given to – such behaviour. Some early unionists, most notably syndicalists and anarcho-syndicalists, made much of this misbehaviour, seeing it as evidence for fundamental resistance of workers to capitalism and the growing point for more extensive and concerted opposition (Dubois, 1979; Billington, 1980).

Similarly, almost all the early consultancy-based research into industrial behaviour, from that by Fredrick Taylor in the very early twentieth century to the Hawthorne research popularized by Elton Mayo concluded in 1940s, was focused on conceptualizing, measuring and attempting to control non-conforming behaviour amongst workers (Brown, 1977). By contrast with these responses to misbehaviour which have drawn attention to it, we can compare the outlook of other trade unionists and many academics. Perhaps because they have some interest in convincing employers that employees are basically willing to work and well disposed towards employment, little is actually heard of misbehaviour from many commentators.

For a long period after the Second World War, for example, in the period when industrial sociology and organizational behaviour were first identified as subjects and were first being taught, it was widely asserted that there was little misbehaviour to bother about. According to many authors and researchers, if there was misbehaviour, then it could be safely attributable to the odd ‘bad apple’ employee. At the worst such things were the product of heavy-handed and unenlightened management. Luthans’ opinion is typical of the prevailing mood: ‘Virtually all available evidence indicates that actual work behaviour is orderly and purposeful, and appears to support the goals of the organization’ (1972: 287). And yet, this post-war period was the very time when ethnographic research was showing, not for the first time, that misbehaviour in the workplace is widespread. The misbehaviour that was painstakingly uncovered by researchers in the post-war period was distinctive and exhibited some common patterns, as we shall see. However, in many cases and in many places, misbehaviour at work involved testing the limits of rules set up to govern conduct. Typically any rules introduced would be difficult to enforce and/or yet more activities would be innovated to evade them. In short, preventative measures and their avoidance become subject to continuous negotiation and re-negotiation.

The significance of this misbehaviour was also considered. It was found to lie between concerted and formally organized resistance to managerial direction on the one hand, and complete acquiescence to direction on the other. The latter was much more apparent than real. Be that as it may, it is the character and potential for change in misbehaviour that makes it interesting and important to study. Thus we argue here that research has shown – and continues to show – that misbehaviour is an incipient tendency everywhere at work. Further, although there are semi-institutionalized forms of misbehaviour, it is by its nature potentially volatile.

Today, in academic circles, the problem is not so much that misbehaviour is not seen, but that there are recurrent tendencies to misunderstand it, and in particular to minimize its actual and potential importance. Many contemporary commentators veer between saying misbehaviour is everywhere, and almost everything people do at work may be considered to be misbehaviour, and saying that it is largely devoid of significance. Many relapse into pessimism about the possibilities and meaning of misbehaviour, which seems to them to be obviously without importance. We argue that these tendencies are indicative of a ‘calibration problem’ in which, as a consequence of the assumptions brought to the analysis, it is impossible for many to estimate the significance of different examples of misbehaviour. Studies of misbehaviour today include examples that are frankly trivial alongside those that are of much more significance (cf. Fleming and Spicer, 2007), but have an inability to discriminate between them. This failure is a product of the perspectives brought to bear on this subject which do not allow appropriate assessments to be made. We argue that this is because of a neglect of analysis of the context in which misbehaviour occurs. Lacking this, there is not much hope of contemporary analysts making much sense of it.

This chapter is divided into three major parts. The first, ‘Now You See It’, traces the initial discovery of workplace misbehaviour

in the post-war period. As we argue, this was an extended process; but the section concludes by setting out the comprehensive understanding of misbehaviour that was established. The second part of the chapter, ‘Now You Don’t Again’, suggests why and how the well-established understanding of misbehaviour became occluded and compromised. This we argue was because misbehaviour came to be viewed through post-structuralist lenses, and the context, which was not given enough emphasis in these perspectives, had in fact substantially changed. In the third section of the paper, ‘Rediscovering Misbehaviour’, we conclude by suggesting a way of looking at misbehaviour now which rescues the contemporary understanding of misbehaviour from relativism and reconstructs our knowledge of this important subject.

NOW YOU SEE IT

There are two traditions of analysis which were influential and which brought misbehaviour in the workplace sharply into focus. These were anthropology applied to industrial work, and labour process analysis. Both were key sources of insight into industrial behaviour and of ‘seeing beneath the surface of formal organization and the apparent consent of employees in the capitalist employment relationship’ (Ackroyd and Thompson, 1999: 31).

Through the use of sustained and direct observation of work groups, researchers in Britain (Lupton, 1963; Cunnison, 1964) and the USA (Roy, 1952, 1953, 1954) showed that what was thought of as abnormal behaviour was actually a rational type of behaviour accommodating employees to managerial control systems. Out of such studies, combined with the analytical work of Behrend (1957) and Baldamus (1963), came the idea that a contested ‘effort bargain’ was at the heart of the employment relationship. This idea later became important to several disciplines, notably industrial sociology

and industrial relations. As Lupton (1963) observed, practical behaviour at work aimed at adjusting wage-effort exchanges was a collective and knowledgeable activity. The various forms of work limitation were described by workers as 'the fiddle', by which working effort and earnings under piecework were adjusted. By this means, there was some practical regulation of the impact of work controls.

Sufficient evidence soon accumulated to begin to see the existence of an industrial subculture connecting the range of workplaces (Turner, 1971). During the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s a range of research projects expanded the coverage of industrial anthropology both empirically and theoretically. To the realization that partial non-compliance was a permanent feature of informal work organization was added the understanding that it was not restricted to soldiering or the sphere of the wage-effort bargain, but that there was a wide range of related practices. Noteworthy contributions here, amongst many others, were: Ditton (1977; who studied bakery workers and bread salesmen), Mars (1973; hotel workers: 1982a; dock workers) and Analoui (1992; bar staff). Some of these studies were associated with a focus on 'deviancy' in workplace settings, which was invaluable in highlighting the extensive under-life of institutions, and in particular the discovery of the use of time indiscipline, pilferage and theft, and sabotage and destructiveness. The latter had a wide appeal as it spoke to a growing 'revolt against work' or, more precisely, work discipline associated with mass production that could be observed across industrial systems by the end of the 1960s. Though rising militancy manifested in wildcat strikes and other forms of unofficial action caught the headlines, others took an interest in 'sabotage' in the widest sense, linked to 'counter-planning on the shop floor' in US car factories (Watson, 1972). Such action could be linked to historic examples from labour history such as the slogan from the Wobblies (or Industrial Workers of the World) of 'good pay or bum work'. This unearthing of the

past thus became linked to the discovery of contemporary recalcitrance.

By the early 1970s a new generation of radical industrial sociologists emerged in the UK whose work perceptively linked unofficial action on pay and conditions, the strengthening of the shop stewards' movement and dissatisfaction with alienating work. The classic study of this period was Huw Beynon's *Working for Ford* (1975). The vivid ethnographic account of working life and worker organization at the Ford Halewood plant provides a link between the older applied anthropology tradition and our second influence, to which we now turn.

The sort of work we have now reviewed received support from a more radical approach to industrial behaviour which emerged on both sides of the Atlantic in the 1970s and 1980s in the form of Labour Process Theory (LPT). Chiming with the renewed conditions for recalcitrance, LPT also provided a set of conceptual understandings, the heart of which was a re-conceptualization of the employment relationship and effort bargain by drawing on Marxian ideas of work as a labour process in which value is extracted from work (Braverman, 1974). In this approach, this is not only an unequal exchange, but one whose dynamic is rooted in the broader political economy of capital accumulation as well as the immediate work and organizational setting. This approach developed conceptual sophistication and empirical range over the following two decades. What is now described as second wave LPT (see Thompson and Newsome, 2004) is associated with the development of a control and resistance model. In essence, these forces are considered to be dialectic of mutual influence, driving forward workplace change at micro and macro level. This was demonstrated in different ways by two large-scale historical accounts of the development of US (Edwards, 1979) and UK (Friedman, 1977) industry respectively.

The best-known empirical illustrations of the control-resistance paradigm are provided by the works of Richard Edwards (1979) and

Andrew Friedman (1977). New controls generate their own contradictions and conditions for resistance. For example, technical controls such as the assembly line tended to create a common and degraded status for a mass of semi-skilled workers. Somewhat oddly, these studies generated better accounts of managerial strategies (technical and bureaucratic controls from Edwards; direct control and responsible autonomy from Friedman) than of types of resistance. Nevertheless, worker resistance was not only put on the conceptual map, but resistance was linked explicitly to informal shop-floor organization and action, as well as to trade unions and strikes: 'In part those organizations were based on the shop stewards. But in part the organizations were even more informal, based on the small work groups themselves...' (Friedman, 1977: 233). The third major second-wave contribution, from Burawoy (1979), focused, in contrast, on consent. Though attempting to answer a different question – why don't workers resist more than they do? – Burawoy's arguments kept to the theme of worker agency by focusing on consent as produced by workers' own practices in the effort bargain rather than externally-imposed ideology. It testified to the growing sophistication of LPT, which sought to integrate conflict and consent within the same typology, and always recognized the limitations under which capital could sustainably solve its control problems (Hyman, 1989).

LPT gave rise to (and provided a shelter for) an extraordinary amount of original research and scholarship in the 1980s and 1990s. Many studies continued the control and resistance theme in manufacturing settings (e.g. Thompson and Bannon, 1985). Perhaps the most comprehensive and conceptually inclusive account was provided by Edwards and Scullion (1982). Through numerous detailed examples, the case studies show both how workers adapt their actions such as absence, labour turnover, the use of sanctions and sabotage to particular modes of control over work or payment, and how management develop policies and practices on the

provision of overtime or as a means of transacting with powerful shop-floor controls. But the scope of issues was also widened. In the early 1980s, for example, there was a rush of studies undertaken by women looking at the gendered character of the labour process. Using LPT combined with feminist-inspired analysis of gender relations, researchers such as Cavendish (*Women on the Line*; 1982), Pollert (*Girls, Wives, Factory Lives*; 1981), Westwood (*All Day Every Day*; 1984) and Cockburn (*Brothers*; 1983) used LPT to reveal the reality of working life from the point of view of women workers. Because these were often not the conventional well-organized male workers, such studies were able to illustrate more complex issues of recalcitrance and dissent. What almost all studies had in common was a preference for ethnography or qualitative case-study work that could better capture employee voice and incidentally, provide some level of continuity with the earlier traditions.

Finally, it is worth noting that second wave LPT was not prescriptive about the character or direction of worker action. In other words workplace resistance was seen as a distinctive phenomenon in its own right, with any connections to wider trade union or class struggle contingent and complex. Resistance is held to have a different object – a regime of managerial controls over the labour process – which was narrower than the class relations of capitalism identified by Marxists and broader than the simple wage-effort bargain. The notion of a structured antagonism between capital and labour as workplace actors, but with a variety of outcomes from compliance, to consent and conflict, thus became part of a new 'core' LPT (Edwards, 1986; Thompson, 1990; Thompson and Smith, 2010).

Exploring the Territory of Misbehaviour

Many research studies produced by the applied anthropologists and labour process analysts revealed widespread misbehaviour

	Appropriation of Time	Appropriation of Work	Appropriation of Product
Commitment Engagement	Time perks	Trust	Perks (payment in kind)
Collaboration	High attention to work	High working effort	High concern output and quality
Compliance	Conventional levels of attention to work	Conventional levels of working effort	Conventional concern for product quality
	Lack of attention	Effort reduction	Lack of concern for product quality
	Systematic time-wasting, chronic absenteeism	Systematic work limitation, utilitarian sabotage	Systematic fiddling and pilferage
Withdrawal	Chronic absence	Work refusal/ downing tools	Sabotage of products
Denial/ Hostility	Turnover	Destructiveness	Extreme sabotage and theft

Figure 11.1 Dimensions and forms of misbehaviour (classic forms of misbehaviour highlighted)

not only in industry, but in many other kinds of organization as well. These were brought together and considered as related phenomena in a number of research studies produced in several countries, but most notably Britain and the USA (Vardi and Wiener, 1996; Ackroyd and Thompson, 1999; Buchanan and Badham, 1999). Although in some ways notable, the developing knowledge in this new field must now be seen to be more limited than it was assumed to be.

The concept of misbehaviour was developed in a paper (Thompson and Ackroyd, 1995) and later a book (Ackroyd and Thompson, 1999). It had a dual purpose. First, to link the two traditions discussed in the previous section, illustrating the vitality of labour recalcitrance. Second, to counter

the growing pessimism associated with discourses around the ‘forward march of labour halted’ and the apparent success of new technical and cultural managerial controls (see the next section). Summarizing the Ackroyd and Thompson argument, Bélanger and Thuderoz note that, ‘Besides establishing how forms of resistance have been reinvented in the current world of work, this book provides an analytical framework for studying oppositional practices, conceived as ‘dimensions of misbehaviour’ (2010, 137).

Figure 11.1 summarizes that framework, building on a great deal of the findings from post-war studies of workplace (mis)behaviour. There are recognized to be three areas over which employers and employees may contend in the employment relationship – represented

here in the vertical columns in the diagram. The central one of these concerns the amount of work done, the second (to the left) concerns the amount of time spent in work performance, whilst the third (to the right) concerns the use made of the products of work, and whether employees should have any access to them. Together these map out three key areas of potential misbehaviour: work performance itself, the time spent working and access to the products of work. The classic forms of misbehaviour associated with these three are highlighted in the figure: work limitation (or soldiering as Frederick Taylor called it) and utilitarian sabotage; absenteeism and forms of time-wasting at work; and systematic pilferage (and fiddling where employees handle money). The diagram recognizes the possibility of different degrees of compliance with expectations and rules at work, from collaboration through compliance to withdrawal or even out-and-out hostility. What is interesting is that the classic forms of misbehaviour – absenteeism, soldiering, fiddling, etc. – are located between compliance and withdrawal. Thus, at the opposite end to dutiful attendance is not occasional absence from work but the permanent withdrawal of the worker from the workplace – called ‘turnover’ in management language, or unemployment or redeployment in the vernacular. At the opposite end of the work activity scale there is the possibility of employees stopping the work process and preventing the appropriation of the products of work by temporarily disabling machinery, for example.

The notion of ‘appropriation’ is, in part, a nod to the contested terrain idea prominent in LPT, given that each set of activities can be the site of negotiation and struggle. However, there is also recognition that there are usually some elements of accommodation, toleration and complicity over the definition and perceived dynamics of these events, leading to the conclusion that misbehaviour is a co-production between the parties to the employment relationship. The kinds of misbehaviour described here were frequently supported by a developed degree of work-group

self-organization that we dubbed ‘irresponsible autonomy’. It has to be said that, although this subculture was, in distinctive ways, oppositional to the values and beliefs officially sanctioned, it was not necessarily egalitarian. Thus, a clear feature of the industrial sub-culture (Turner, 1971; Collinson, 1992) was an informal hierarchy in which norms of conduct would be imposed on subordinate members, and especially juniors and newcomers (Ackroyd and Thompson, 1999: 63–67).

Yet the book *Organizational Misbehaviour* in particular also sought to develop a framework that could capture the variety of motives, context and content, including but not exclusive to, resistance to control. For example, sabotage may be part of the struggle over the frontier of control, but equally it may be employed to relieve boredom and have fun. Clearly, managerial control or other forms of authority exist outside of those classic effort-bargain relations, and therefore so does non-compliance with them. Of course, customary forms of allowed misbehaviour in industrial sub-cultures provide group members with a location and identity. Hence, symbolic as well as material resources are a terrain of informal action and misbehaviour, though they are not specifically designated in Figure 11.1. However, it was argued that something new and contested was also happening, so that the matter of identity at work was becoming more rather than less important. The most obvious contemporary development was the oft-observed enhanced managerial interest in changing organizational cultures and normative controls. At the same time, employees were becoming more aware of their social and workplace identities and their capacity to sustain them at work. An example is sexual misbehaviour, in which employees disrupt workplace order or appropriate time in pursuit of romance or conquest.

Taking into account new interpretations and practices, misbehaviour is considered not as an alternative to or a new generic term to *replace* resistance or recalcitrance, but as a different kind of oppositional practice.

It is important primarily for what it is rather than what it isn't. And though it is interesting to consider the question of what it could be, this is not the main point. A parallel was drawn with the way in which LPT distinguished resistance as a distinctive empirical object.

Our essential purpose has been to take this kind of argument (i.e. LPT) and ratchet it down one notch further. In other words, whereas a second generation of labour process writers developed a concept of worker resistance that was to be treated as a phenomenon in its own right rather than a conceptual and practical derivation of class struggle, we are asking readers to accept that there is another realm of workplace behaviour that should not be understood merely as a form of or step to what has become identified with the term resistance. Therefore, rather than trying to replace existing accounts, we have been trying to fill a gap, adding a dimension and vocabulary to get people to think differently about workplace behaviour. (Ackroyd and Thompson, 1999: 165)

NOW YOU DON'T SEE IT (AGAIN)

By the early 1990s, Foucauldian and post-structuralist ideas had become highly influential amongst organizational and workplace researchers. Two main themes emerged identifying convergent sources of (self-)disciplinary power. For a range of commentators (e.g. Deetz, 1992; Sewell and Wilkinson, 1992; Willmott, 1993; Casey, 1995) the strengthening and sometimes the combination of new management practices, including electronic monitoring of work performance, delegation of responsibility to teams and pervasiveness of 'soft' cultural controls, made the old distinction between direct control and responsible autonomy largely irrelevant. Whilst reference was frequently made in passing to the death or dearth of collective action such as strikes and union organization, the main emphasis was on the marginalizing or even eliminating of informal work organization and worker counter-controls of the kind we discussed earlier in this chapter. The language used in such

studies is telling – employees are described as willing, docile, individuated or self-disciplining subjects. As one otherwise sympathetic observer noted, 'In each case we find a tendential determinism in which the "self" at work appears to be subsumed under ever-increasing forms of discipline and surveillance' (May, 1999: 773). Furthermore, oppositional practices were often presented as largely futile given that power and resistance are inseparable, and 'discipline can grow stronger knowing where its next efforts must be directed' (Burrell, 1988: 228).

The misbehaviour thesis as discussed in the last section effectively countered these arguments by challenging the extent and effectiveness of the empirical claims and the removal of labour agency contained within the underpinning concepts. Of equal importance, it challenged the idea that the decline of some forms of formal, collective action meant the disappearance of all others. By focusing on and updating issues of time, work, product and identity appropriation by actors in the employment relationship, the thesis expanded the repertoire of how we discuss and understand oppositional practices. In doing so, it appears to have been reasonably successful, or at the very least reinforced doubts that were emerging within and about the Foucauldian framework. Increased attention paid in *Organizational Misbehaviour* to conflicts and concerns around identity, particularly with reference to sexual misbehaviour, acted as a bridge to post-structuralist and feminist scholarship (for example, Pringle, 1988). As two leading theorists within that camp noted:

By the mid-1990s, the concept of resistance had made a dramatic reappearance ... According to Thompson and Ackroyd, resistance was always there, be it in the form of organized action, or subtle subversion around identity and self, with humour, sexuality and scepticism being key examples. Others soon chimed in ... (Fleming and Spicer, 2007: 2)

This trend was reinforced by studies informed by LPT that showed evidence of

resistance and misbehaviour in the ostensibly surveillance-intensive environment of call centres (Callaghan and Thompson, 2002; Taylor and Bain, 2003). Nor was this merely a local dispute, as Bélanger and Thuderoz's (2010) excellent account of parallel French debates indicates. Space constraints compel us to focus on how the main 'end of resistance' debate then unfolded. What is of interest for the purposes of this chapter and our own thinking is the subsequent turn of events amongst Foucauldian and post-structuralist commentators. There was a sharp turnaround, to the extent that, by the early 2000s, the dominant view had shifted towards a 'resistance is everywhere' position. Whilst this is not a single trend, we can identify a number of themes. The most significant involve a reworking of the previous Foucauldian framework to largely discard the panopticon and surveillance, creating space for an emphasis on discursive struggle and a micro-politics of resistance. As perhaps the most influential study put it, there is a 'constant process of adaptation, subversion and reinscription of dominant discourses', which takes place as 'individuals confront, and reflect on, their own identity performance, recognizing contradictions and tensions and, in so doing, pervert and subtly shift meanings and understandings' (Thomas and Davies, 2005: 687). These competing narratives are framed in terms of manoeuvring within the contradictions and gaps in subject positions or dialogical dynamics. Such manoeuvring, however, is not necessarily confined to the discursive. Drawing broadly on Mumby's (2005) notion of dialectical relations, participants' everyday interactions can also be forms of micro-organizational politics and identity work, where agents – managers, entrepreneurs, academics themselves – explore interpretive possibilities and meanings.

An examination of recent case studies and other papers¹ indicates that one consequence of the micro-resistance turn has been the mainstreaming of such themes, so employee 'resistance' to change can be productive of

or an asset to organizational innovation, thus reframing conventional resistance to change discourses (Thomas et al., 2011). The other main theme to emerge was the enhanced significance attributed to the 'discursive tropes' (Mumby, 2005: 36) of irony, ambivalence, bitching, gossip and cynicism as covert or hidden forms of resistance (see for example, Sotirin and Gottfried, 1999). Keeping with the discourse theme, cynicism (see Fleming and Spicer, 2003) can be seen as a response to identity-based control, as a distancing device that can 'nourish communal vocabularies of critique' (Ashcraft, 2008: 383). Such practices pick up on the arguments used in *Organizational Misbehaviour* (Ackroyd and Thompson, 1999) concerning humour used as a weapon against cultural interventions by management, but broaden the scope. They also tend to be more pessimistic. Gabriel argues that though cynicism and other means of contesting managerial discourses such as whistleblowing create 'unmanaged spaces', '[u]nlike traditional forms of resistance they tend to be individualistic, ephemeral and disorganised' (2007: 11).

As indicated above, these are not homogeneous approaches and the 'everything is resistance' or micro-resistance positions came under internal attack from more radical scholars within this camp. As Newton observes, agency can get lost in discourse: 'it is hard to get a sense of how active agential selves "make a difference" through "playing" with discursive practices' (1998: 425–6). Others argue that resistance seems to have become mired in the micro, with relatively trivial and self-centred agential practices that threaten or hurt nobody receiving prominence at the expense of broader, collective threats and struggles inside and outside the workplace. This critique has been best captured in Contu's (2008) dismissive swipe at 'de-caf resistance'. In what, then, would full-strength resistance consist? The answer appears to be actions and goals that cannot be recuperated or incorporated in liberal capitalism: 'What is now being labelled resistance is advocated in the latest management

rhetoric and practice ... the real question is what kinds of resistance could not be incorporated ...' (Fleming and Spicer, 2007: 3–4). We are now on difficult territory given that, short of revolution, any demand or recalcitrant behaviour can be absorbed or incorporated. As a result, such writers struggle to define 'real' acts of resistance, with Contu referring to 'outrageous breaks with all that seems reasonable and acceptable in our liberal postmodern world' (2008: 14). Actual examples of the outrageous and 'impossible' prove stubbornly absent.

What can we learn from this journey of resistance from zero to hero, and back to zero again? Post-structuralist scholars deserve credit for seeking new ways to locate and understand 'resistance'. The work of Fleming and Spicer in particular, with its focus on cynicism and detachment is picking up on an important trend with links to the growth of dissent (see later). However, there are a number of significant problems and limitations; the greatest of these is that why much, or indeed any, of such micro-behaviour is appropriately identified as resistance is never entirely clear. The capacity of these new discursively-oriented frameworks to include almost anything is enhanced further by the view that resisting need not be conscious or active (Dick, 2008: 339). Such perspectives have been rightly criticized by the likes of Fleming and Spicer, but they also share some common roots and positions. The most important of these is that resistance dynamics are explicitly counterposed to the capital-labour 'dichotomy' (Fleming and Spicer, 2007), or the 'negative paradigm' of labour process perspectives that 'conceptualises resistance as the outcome of structural relations of antagonism between capital and labour' (Thomas and Davies, 2005: 685). However, without some structural basis for resistance or other kinds of oppositional practices, i.e. opposed interests, a focus on the interdependence or inseparability of power and resistance obscures the character and persistence of competing groups and their practices in the employment relationship.

One outcome is the virtual disappearance within this framework of any research on labour as a specific category and of the effort bargain experiences of routine workers.

This is reinforced by another argument, associated particularly with Fleming and Spicer, who try to open up the idea of 'struggle' as a 'multidimensional dynamic that animates the interface between power and resistance' (2007: 306) of any kind, between any actors. Whilst this has the merit of being able to discuss more dimensions of conflict – for example those pursued by social movements – resistance becomes a generic category, floating free of a specific empirical context or cause such as managerial regime. As Mumby (2005: 21) observes, 'in doing so "struggle" seems without motive or direction and I am not sure where the "difference" arises that creates the struggle'. It is a recurrent characteristic of papers produced in this theoretical space that they are stripped of any context. Where context does rear its head it tends to repeat the familiar but flawed contention of 'the decline of modernist forms of work resistance, notably strikes and whole area of organized and class conscious recalcitrance' (Gabriel, 2007: 10). Some of the necessary correctives to these approaches are definitional and conceptual. It is important first of all to dispense with resistance as a generic catch-all and to remake the conceptual boundaries within and between 'repertoires of opposition' at work (Bélanger and Thuderoz, 2010), distinguishing between resistance and misbehaviour. Resistance should be considered as an intentional, active, upwardly-directed response to threats to interests or identities (see Karlsson (2012) for more discussion of definitions and differentiation). Much of the remaining, largely informal and covert actions of work limitation, time-wasting and dissent are better conceptualized as misbehaviour.

The second and more substantive corrective is to put context back in. Whatever the flaws of the control and resistance model, it had some sense of how changes in capitalist political economy and managerial regimes were being shaped by and shaping

worker behaviour. In the next section, we briefly sketch some of the key contemporary changes that are making a difference (Ackroyd, 2012).

REDISCOVERING MISBEHAVIOUR

Because the context in which work behaviour (and misbehaviour) occurs has changed significantly, the traditional forms of misbehaviour that preoccupied managers in the post-war period have been made more difficult. Drawing on our existing work (Ackroyd and Murphy, 2013; Thompson, 2013), we can identify a number of overlapping contextual changes.

The Re-configuration of Corporate Structures and Workplace Regimes

The general transformation of corporate structures now widely observable was itself prompted by a move to the dominance of the finance capital in the economy. Under financialized accumulation, capital markets drive both the growth regime and firm reorganization. At the level of the firm every asset tends to be evaluated in terms of the extent of the capital employed and market expectations of an acceptable return on it. Governance structures increasingly strengthen corporate powers and weaken other stakeholder claims, tying executive management into speculative short-term practices through rewards such as stock options. The source of profits is increasingly through the active management of corporate assets, for example through downsizing and divestment when returns are deemed insufficient (Blackburn, 2006). The constituent elements of the corporation and of course any associated labour are disposable.

From the 1970s a long-term decline in the size of organizations has been observable, denoting a paring down as far as possible of the resources devoted to activities in any one place. In the UK and the USA, ownership

remains highly concentrated, but large organizations are now constituted by very large numbers of smaller constituent parts. In terms of corporate structures, very large, often conglomerate, firms concentrate ownership, but lack detailed centralized control (Harrison, 1994; Prechel, 1997; Ackroyd, 2002, 2007; Prechel and Morris, 2010). Large firms dominate decentred, 'directed' networks and retain significant strategic power capacity at the centre, using sophisticated IT systems to coordinate activities with financial controls as opposed to detailed bureaucratic direction. Large firms have externalized the labour market and the resulting fragmentation in employment systems increases precarious and insecure work and employment in many sectors. Restructuring at the level of employment transfers risk outside the workplace. Weakened employment protection and unions help to account for rising subjective fears of insecurity (Burchell et al., 2002).

Market and Moral Discipline

Key changes in management regimes affecting employees follow from the above structural changes. Rather than normative controls and self-policing (emphasized in post-structuralist accounts) being fundamental, managerial controls usually concentrate on performance management and rest firmly on the increased effectiveness of market discipline arising from employment insecurity. The characteristic mechanism features general corporate-wide policies of cost limitation and then cascading down of profit, and other targets set from the centre. Performance metrics, i.e. KPIs, are set at every level, and facilitated in many cases by electronic monitoring (Taylor, 2013). These are the bedrock, and the effects of the new financially-driven priorities are felt at every level. At the corporate periphery, amongst the ordinary employees, output targets are often combined with continuous monitoring of performance. In professional work settings, particularly in the public sector,

enhanced audit and accountability practices perform parallel functions (McGovern et al., 2007). In such regimes, with their emphasis on direction of work and monitoring of performance, as opposed to reliance on discretionary effort and responsible autonomy, nominal compliance is more likely as a basic response than commitment. Nevertheless, and partly in recognition of this likely response, employers are also placing increasing emphasis on the desirability of overt employee commitment and utilizing combinations of performance demands, together with attempts to engender employee commitment. This is, as is easy to see, a potentially contradictory combination (see also Thompson, 2003, 2013).

Though often framed in the language of values, managerial attention is usually focused on conduct and behavioural descriptors manifested in performance (Taylor 2013: 46–47). Thus we have the near universal use of quasi-bureaucratic behavioural metrics in performance reviews, often combined with more qualitative requirements, such as the use of emotional and aesthetic labour scripts in locations involving interactive services. There is also what is called ‘employee branding’ and values-led normative interventions. Thus it is common to find the extension of the regulation of employee conduct into areas that were previously regarded as private or partly protected. This extension includes codes of conduct concerning dress and appearance, harassment, health and the use of social media.

New Spaces for Misbehaviour

Performance cultures, with enhanced surveillance and monitoring, do generally lead to greater work intensity and provide less opportunity for self-regulated work effort and so for time ‘wasting’ and work limitation in many, though not all, workplaces. However, reconfigured workplace controls are being contested in new ways, even in intensely monitored service settings.

Sustained qualitative – and especially ethnographic – research has invariably found that there are spaces for the evasion of control even in the most strongly monitored, high-surveillance work systems. In such spaces it is possible to modify the impact of (or even to evade) work norms.

Research suggests that the spread of leaner working practices and the widespread use of performance metrics have undoubtedly reduced the scope for traditional forms of misbehaviour, including especially short-term unexcused absences from work; on the other hand, the revision of payment systems and legislative reforms have allowed the growth of new forms of longer-term absenteeism, usually legitimated by sickness. Attempts to crack down on sickness absences are indicative of a new ‘big area of contestation’ (UK civil service union representative, quoted in Carter et al. (2013: 17)). Indeed, sickness absences and time indiscipline are the focal point for increased cases of formal discipline by employers (not to mention commensurate rises in the numbers of formal employee grievances) arising at work. The ‘war on sickies’, as named by Main and Taylor (2011), may also create forms of dysfunctional behaviour involving employees coming into work when sick, a phenomenon known by personnel managers as ‘presenteeism’.

Similarly, employees subjected to controls of their emotional labour are found to use the multi-faceted nature of emotional work to deflect or depart from employer demands (Bolton, 2005). Baines (2011) uses the example of employees in social services in Canada and Australia who utilize the gap between espoused, professional or peer values and financialized managerial policies to bend rules and offer emotions as gifts as a form of struggle and social connectedness. Finally, although employers are using ICT such as smartphones and email as means of extending work demands and monitoring, this is also happening in reverse. Use of workplace computers or personal devices for ‘cyberloafing’ or accessing social media

in work time (Paulsen, 2014) is leading employers to complain of theft, misconduct or an abuse of resources (McDonald and Thompson, 2015).

Traditional industrial sub-cultures that have underpinned workplace recalcitrance have been in long-term decline, but there are reasons for thinking – not to mention much evidence – that new forms of web-mediated online communities are emerging which are an important new space for developing critical ideas and providing a forum to those disposed towards misbehaviour. Here, for example, employees can and do give voice to dissent and foster occupational or other solidarities (Schoneboom, 2011; Richards and Kosmala, 2013). But before considering this further, it is necessary to look at some general developments that can be considered the bedrock on which new forms of misbehaviour are based.

The Rise of Employee Disengagement

Not unsurprisingly given the character of contemporary workplace regimes, along with a low level of compliance, there is accumulating evidence of widespread employee disengagement from the employing organization and its concerns and priorities. Disengagement feeds on disconnects between employer demands for high performance and commitment in the work sphere and the frequent absence of supports for such practices in the employment and corporate domains. Sources as varied as the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development and many academic papers chart a downward spiral of commitment and trust, or a crisis of attachment (Rayton et al., 2012). McCann's (2014) account of disconnections that are leading to a growing 'crisis of attachment' amongst IT workers affected by outsourcing is indicative. The *Daily Telegraph* recently reported a survey which found that nearly 50 per cent of employees would sell their work IT password for £5. More generally, *Harvard*

Business Review reports survey results in which 'a mere 13% of employees worldwide are engaged with their work, with twice as many disengaged or hostile' (Caulkin, 2014).

One interesting example of how disengagement may develop is indicated by some ethnographic research in a large IT firm in Ireland (Cushen and Thompson, 2012; Cushen, 2010). This shows how top management and HR managers at the company (given the name Avatar by the researchers) expressed the strategic importance of having a normatively aligned workforce that was 'committed' to the organization and happily 'engaged' in their work. The company had been named as a 'great place to work', but was experiencing low and declining employee engagement as measured by the company's own surveys. Employees explicitly and extensively picked up on the contradiction between the values espoused in the 'Employment Deal' and actual employment practices:

It's very hard to swallow, extremely hard, they're telling you one day how important you are to them and the next day they're making more redundant ... It's just hypocrisy after hypocrisy; they don't eat their own dog food basically. (Employee quoted in Cushen and Thompson, 2012: 88)

Employees also engaged in more overt forms of work-related misbehaviour. Employee performance was measured against service-level agreements, and employees' knowledge of how such workflow systems operated meant they could manipulate the reports in their favour. One employee described the manner in which their team reported performance against the service-level agreement:

The statistics are taken from the trouble ticketing system. But you can put in any criteria you like, it's the same technology. You can put in a certain list of rules. 'This is what I want from these statistics and all I want is such and such, say only priority A faults'. You'd pick out the best ones and they're the ones you use. We would clear high priority faults within a couple of hours whereas all the normal ones would takes weeks and weeks and they wouldn't show up on any end of year results

anyway. It's all a game, seriously. (Employee quoted in Cushen, 2010)

From this and other studies it appears that there are different varieties of disengagement. Disengagement does not have to be purely latent or passive, as the term can be taken to imply. There are, on the contrary, different forms of disengagement which involve different levels of participation, some entail both intellectual and practical action.

Passive and Active Forms of Disengagement

Disengagement as a condition is not very deeply considered by management theorists and human resource analysts. It is usually assumed to be merely the opposite of engagement, the absence of the condition of engagement, which is the response to work they seek and wish to foster. But simple passive disengagement – presumably accompanied by receptivity to re-engagement – is only one possibility. Disengagement may also be deep and implacable, as a result of past experiences, and so be rather unlikely to lead directly back to engagement with only a little encouragement. Interestingly, in this connection Greenberg (2010) suggests that some discretionary behaviour in the contemporary workplace, such as incivility and unhelpfulness may be seen as insidious, by which they mean, amongst other things, destructive, recurrent and organizationally targeted. Rather than propose new forms of misbehaviour, these writers suggest that behaviour which has previously been if not common then largely unremarkable in organizations, has been transformed by active use into something qualitatively different. Whereas such things as incivility, misrepresentation and honesty about company policies have all occurred in the past, they should now be considered as having taken persistent, motivated (in a word, insidious) forms. Although admittedly of low severity, that this behaviour should have become virulent suggests that

disengagement can lead to discretionary actions which indicate an active lack of support for – or identification with – their employers' interests. In their introduction to this collection of research reports, little in the way of convincing explanation for the rise of insidious workplace behaviour at present is put forward. However, clearly, these changes do make sense in the context of widespread employee disengagement, and may indicate the development of what can be called active disengagement. Figure 11.2 offers an analysis of the different forms of disengagement we envisage.

Probably most disengagement has a developed intellectual component. People become disengaged for a reason, a point indicating it may not in fact be easy to find a way back from an initial disengagement. One form of intellectually active disengagement which has been widely noticed is cynicism. Cynicism is a form of disengagement from employment that has been found to be widespread, but which is sometimes criticized because it is largely ineffective in motivating action. The point to note here is that cynicism allows a person to occupy the moral high ground of critical detachment, whilst at the same time doing nothing about it. Indeed, cynicism may be, and often is, combined with relatively high levels of work performance. Cynicism does suggest a lack of accord with the objectives and policies of an employing organization, but, clearly, may arise from a high level of commitment to other values (such as vocation or community welfare), which are seen to be compromised by corporate actions.

At the other end of the scale from cynicism, there is another type of disengaged behaviour (also having an intellectual component), which is both more active and more implacable. This we identify here as dissent. Dissent suggests a more active form of disengagement, in which the reasons for detachment are given some explicit articulation involving expressions of disagreement. Dissent is, by contrast with cynicism a more self-conscious and oppositional voice that can underpin active resistance.

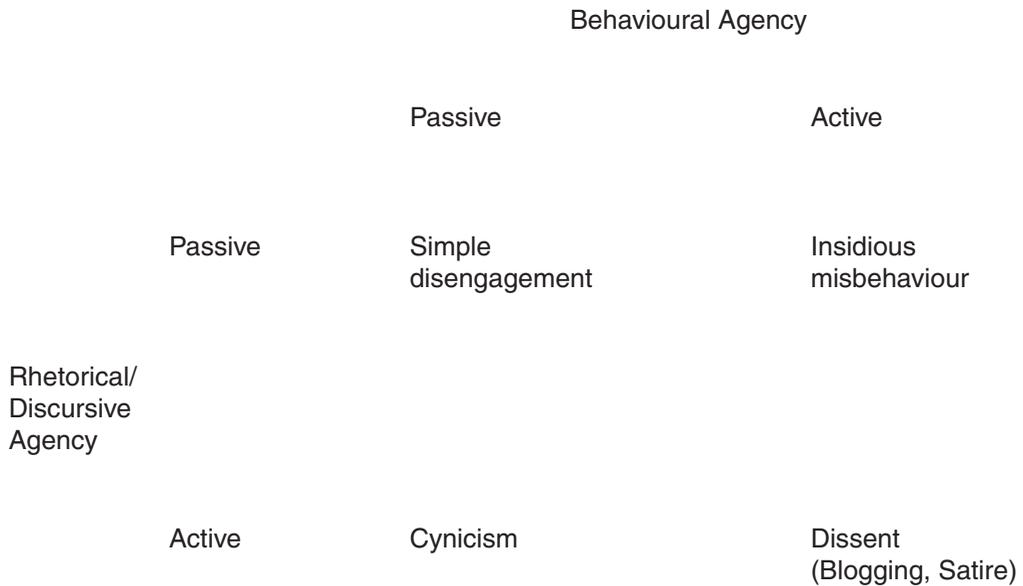


Figure 11.2 Modalities of disengagement

Both cynicism and dissent are forms of misbehaviour defined by employees distancing themselves from commitment to the organization and its policies. Both are difficult to sanction as they involve reasoned responses to company actions and policies.

Finally, however, it is not necessary to think of disengagement being fixed in one form or another, either consistently passive or taking more articulate shape. It is perfectly possible that passive employee disengagement may modulate into cynicism or dissent, and for dissent, as seen in the above example, to motivate subversive action. Studies of employees using social media, online forums and especially blogging, to comment on and challenge corporate discourses nicely indicate the possibilities here. As Richards and Kosmala argue, blogging etc. can go beyond the kind of passive and unplanned cynicism referred to by Fleming and Spicer (2003). Based on their study of forums and blogs, they say that, 'What emerges is a rich picture of how cynicism can lead to the employee developing a deeply held sense of detachment from corporate culture initiatives and a closer connection within their

own occupational or professional community' (Richards and Kosmala, 2013: 75). In response, employers suggest there is a threat to their interests and take disciplinary action for employees 'bringing the organization into disrepute; attacking the integrity of management; or challenging management prerogative' (McDonald and Thompson, 2015). It is important to grasp that online forums and blogs go beyond individual commentary to potentially act as a focal point for collective discussion and dissent with respect to work, organizations and careers. Amongst the many examples that illustrate the potential links between such discussions, collective action and union organization are the blogs and forums developed by groups of workers. For example those forums organized by airline stewards and stewardesses during their dispute with BA in 2013 (see Taylor and Moore, 2015) clearly supported collective action. Blogs by the spouses of workers in the games industry have also acted as a form of whistleblowing and critique of extreme working conditions in circumstances where employee resistance is problematic (Granter et al., 2015).

CONCLUSION

The conditions for the creation of the classic forms of misbehaviour analysed in the initial sections of this chapter largely no longer apply, and so it is no surprise that, except in some residual enclaves, these distinctive forms can no longer be found. In the explanation of the classic forms, both the actions of employees and the management practices deployed to control them, which include those of the organization itself as well as the business context, were invoked. These were seen to be necessary to the creation of distinctive forms of misbehaviour. As we have now argued, the tendency to misbehave has not changed, but there have been radical shifts in managerial regimes and organizational structures. These changes explain why it is that observable misbehaviour has changed. We have shown that attention to the recent research record shows both a growth in the diversity of observed misbehaving acts, and probably an increase in their scale as well. Except for the various forms of disengagement discussed, however, the employee's response has not crystallized out into distinctive, semi-institutionalized forms, as was the case before.

It is a key point for us that there is much experimentation on both sides of industry in the current context, and there are widespread mismatches between managerial priorities and perceived opportunities and employee innovations. New kinds of misbehaviour are being innovated, but are often not recognized and/or not effectively managed. Before the different registers of opposition can be brought into focus, it is necessary to understand the changing shape of managerial regimes and to remap the shifting political economy which forms their context. These are necessary analytical steps. Our tentative conclusion is that we are unlikely to see the end of misbehaviour any time soon. What we must envisage, indeed, are many opportunities for collective organization and action. As the boundaries within and between life

and work change, so we can expect a diversity of new forms of misbehaviour, some of which are already discernible and many more of which remain just below the current horizon of our perception. For the social scientist the task in hand is to remake conceptual boundaries so that the new 'repertoires of opposition' at work (Bélanger and Thuderoz, 2010) can be more clearly seen for what they are.

NOTE

- 1 In assessing the trends discussed in this section we have reviewed 116 abstracts for papers delivered at 9th Organization Studies Workshop, 'Resistance, Resisting and Resisters in and Around Organizations', May 2014, Corfu, Greece.

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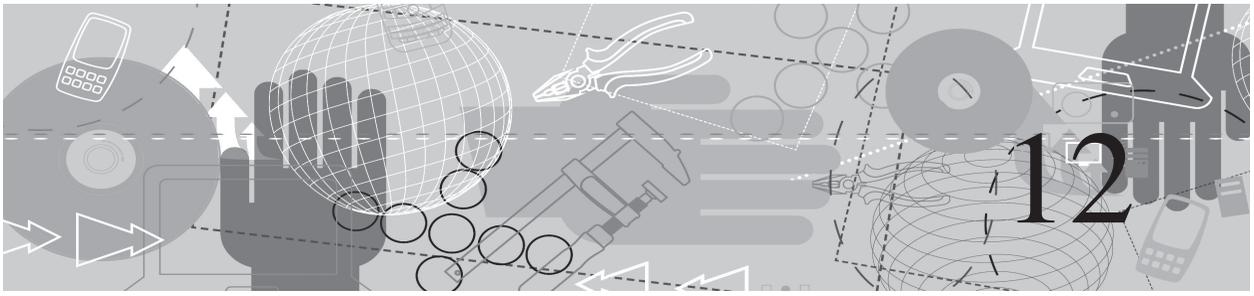
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Rediscovery of the Labour Process

Chris Smith

Despite the fact that the labor process is a conception of work devised by Marx in the nineteenth century it was not used very much for studies of work until taken up by left activists in twentieth century. It was subsequently developed for use by radicalised academics in Britain and the USA by the early nineteen seventies. Thus, LPT had actually reached a high level of intellectual development well before it was used in research and findings based on it were given any exposure to academic audiences. (Ackroyd, 2009: 264)

While Labour Process Analysis has Marxist origins, it has evolved, since its emergence in the latter half of the 1970s, into a tradition that now encompasses Marxist, post-Marxist, neo-Weberian, and other materialist-pluralist perspectives on the capitalist labour process. (Brook, 2013: 334)

INTRODUCTION

This chapter will examine what a labour process is; what a labour process perspective is; and how labour process theory developed, especially from the publication of Harry

Braverman's *Labor and Monopoly Capital* (1974)(*LMC*), which had a dynamic and global influence on researching work. It will examine how labour process theory developed into what Ackroyd (2009) has called 'normal science', a community of scholars and researchers sharing an agreed set of ideas. It will show how this community is developing (growing and fragmenting), and how ideas as to what constitutes labour process theory are also evolving – drawing in new theories, tightening the definition of what labour process theory is (Thompson, 1990) and looking at what a focus on the production process can and cannot do by way of explaining trends in capitalism at a global level (Thompson, 2003, 2013).

I should declare an interest. I engaged with *LMC* as a sociology undergraduate in the 1970s and critically examined what Braverman had to say about skills and white-collar workers for my PhD thesis (Smith, 1987), with a supervisor closely linked to Marxist studies of work and the writings

of Braverman, Theo Nichols – see Nichols and Armstrong (1976), Nichols and Beynon (1977) and Nichols (1980). I have used labour process theory (LPT) to explore the development of mass production in the UK confectionary industry (Smith et al., 1990), the transfer of Japanese work organisation to the UK and elsewhere (Elger and Smith, 1994, 2005), the development of factories for global production in China (Smith, 2003; Ngai and Smith, 2007), and the development of new categories of white-collar (Smith et al., 1991) and creative workers (McKinlay and Smith, 2009). Together with Paul Thompson, author of *The Nature of Work*, a book that has attracted almost 900 citations, I have produced several evaluations of labour process theory. From our long friendship and intellectual and practical commitment to the annual International Labour Process Conference (ILPC), we have been part of the debate on the application of labour process ideas to contemporary developments in work within globalised capitalism (Smith and Thompson, 1992, 1998; Thompson and Smith, 2000, 2009, 2010). I have attended all but one of the 32 ILPCs and have been active in organising and publishing from the conference from its early days. I have produced overviews on the labour process (Smith, 1996a) and Braverman (Smith 1996b), which I will refer to in this chapter. Therefore I come to this chapter with a certain standpoint.

THE LABOUR PROCESS

The concept of the labour process is taken from Marx's political economy and refers to purposeful activity in which a natural object or raw material is transformed into a useful product which satisfies a human need. The labour process is a transformation process – a conversion movement whereby the labour power of the worker enters a production process in which labour is realised to produce a concrete commodity or service that contains a use and exchange value (and surplus value

that the employer or capitalist takes as reward). What Marx (1976: 284) called the 'simple elements of the labour process' consist of human labour, the object on which work is performed, instruments or tools, and a purpose or goal.

All political economies or modes of production have labour processes – feudalism, slavery and capitalism for example. Different modes of production create different labour processes, involving distinct ways of combining human producers, instruments, raw materials and purposes. Tools and raw materials can be owned in common or privately; producers can be free to move from employer to employer or enslaved and coerced; they can be skilled or dedicated to one process in a complex production system. The purpose of production can be cooperative, to create useful goods for a whole group or society to share. It can equally be personal, producing for family subsistence. Or, as in the case of capitalism, it can be organised for private need, to satisfy the owner of the instruments of production, raw materials and finished product. Marx was primarily concerned with analysing the capitalist labour process. Most attention is addressed to the mode of production currently dominant in the world, the capitalist production system. There are many forms of capitalist labour processes – and with the expansion of commodity production to all forms of human need, labour processes, such as sex work, body adornment and other personal services, are becoming subject to market discipline and accumulation pressures as well as becoming more standardised as labour processes (Wolkowitz, 2006; Wolkowitz et al., 2013).

In capitalism the continual expansion of production (driven by the motive of making profit) takes the form of the accumulation of capital – challenging limits or boundaries, and political or economic controls, in a blind, restless and endless search for expansion on an ever-extending scale. The labour process is the production process and is one moment, but a critical moment, in a cycle of capital accumulation. Without a transformation process

which produces commodities, the capitalist firm would have no goods or services to sell in the marketplace and no basis for further capital accumulation.

The capitalist seeks to get a financial return on investments and generate more value from workers than is returned in the form of wages. The main method to increase the amount of labour going to capital is to extend workers' time at work or to increase or intensify their productivity within the same time, by using machinery, applying science to production, or using organisational strategies to change the balance of returns on the labour process. A detailed division of labour appeared with the movement of workers into factories and out of the putting-out or cottage system, where the labour process was under the direct control of producers. In Marx's time the factory system brought workers and the labour process under the direct control of the industrial capitalist, and facilitated a more rapid accumulation of capital, by permitting a systematic, self-conscious or scientific analysis of the labour process and ways and means of enhancing labour productivity for capital. It allowed the reconstitution of handicrafts into detailed discrete tasks, co-ordinated and controlled by the capitalist, not the craft worker. The worker became 'a mere living appendage' to the machine (Marx, 1976: 548).

While the movement from cottage industry to factory production was a productivity and control transformation for industrial capitalism, it would be wrong to consider this a historical movement. Today having workers at home (or anywhere with internet access connection) has been part of a cost reduction strategy of today's capitalists, where contemporary technologies, especially ICTs, can put-out or disaggregate production and producers into new cottage systems, and draw in competitive labour production from across borders and temporal zones, thus ensuring continuous production, often in civil society and from workers on the move, at a higher productive performance than in fixed centres like a factory or office (Felstead and Jewson,

2000, 2012). In developing countries 'factories in the living room' are common (Hsiung, 1996). The cottage industry or putting-out system has also been revitalised with the internet, as distributive service work can create virtual factories composed of workers who only meet online, and employers that contract labour services without building a bureaucracy or firm, as was common to many industries in the last century (Arvidsson and Peitersen, 2013).

Control is the major theme in the labour process literature. Whether through a catalogue of the various 'means' of management control or the historical evolution of employers' control strategies (Edwards, 1979; Storey, 1985), it is argued that management is synonymous with labour control. Taylorism had as its *raison d'être* managerial control over workers' movements, thoughts and skills. Fordism, through the assembly line, introduces a technology aimed at pacing and controlling the action of workers. Control in the labour process directs attention to working environments in which there is low trust, coercion, limited worker responsibility and a generally directed and regulated working environment. Braverman assumed this was the primary arena of social relations within all societies in the era of monopoly capitalism. However, post-Braverman labour process writing focused both on the themes of compliance and consent, suggesting that employers may more productively use labour power by engaging with it rather than controlling it. Groups of relatively autonomous workers, who are increasing as manual labour declines in certain parts of the world economy, cannot, will not or do not need to be tightly controlled. Indeed rigid control is expensive and can be counter-productive. This does not mean the end of managerial control as some claim (Raelin, 2011). Rather, appeals to professional values, creativity, career, goodwill or trust are deemed more suitable methods of translating the capacity of skilled and professional workers into labour effort and value.

Box 12.1 Main concepts in labour process analysis

- 1 Labour Power – a special commodity being part of the whole person of the worker and what is sold – a worker's labour time;
- 2 Control imperative – due to the absence of consensus on how much labour is extracted from workers through the labour process, the purchaser of labour power must seek the means to control this process – which can only ever be partially accomplished, as control is not absolute. The means of control can be through institutional norms of joint interests, technological controls, bureaucratic rules or self-management. Whatever the means, there is always a 'control imperative' in the labour process.
- 3 The labour process is one moment in the cycle of commodity production. Before entering production, labour power must be reproduced and hired; a commodity is produced and circulated and exchanged, before the money earned can re-enter the cycle of commodity production. Kelly (1985) looked at the labour process in relation to product and money cycles.
- 4 Technology/tools – instruments of labour can be hand-held, powered or automated; technology is 'fixed capital' and it can be owned by the capitalist firm or society and concentrated in special places – factories or offices for example – or distributed throughout society through 'mobile technologies' such as smart phones, tablets and computers.
- 5 Purpose of production – there is always a reason for bringing labour processes together, and these purposes are the drivers of production, whether the ends are collective, public, or for the private accumulation of wealth.
- 6 Spatial divisions of labour – largely absent from the discussions of Marx and Braverman on the labour process was the spatial distribution of production and elements of the labour process – including workers. Increased geographical movement of labour and capital can create what Harvey (1982) called a 'spatial fix', which capital can utilise in bargaining with governments and employees, that is, moving production or the threat of closing workplaces in one country or locality can be used to bargain with states and workers' representatives, with such threats often extracting concessions on working conditions and wages. These threats are only possible because of the spread of the capitalist system geographically and the opening up of new territories for expansion and re-location. At a macro level countries compete for Foreign Direct Investment and this can mobilise the distribution of 'human resources' by institutions like local authorities and schools to serve the demands of new entrants (see Smith and Chan, 2014). 'Space' is therefore an important element of management control and a factor of production – see also Harvey (1982), Massey (1995), Peck (1996) and McGrath-Champ et al. (2010), who elaborate on the implications for the labour process of a more fluid understanding of space as a resource for capital, and mobility as a resource for labour. All explore how labour markets develop alongside social and political institutions.
- 7 Conflict is at the centre of the relations between employers and employees as a structured interest antagonism: in other words something not contingent upon the subjective attitudes of either side. Marx forces us to consider the fundamental power imbalance between labour and capital – capital needs labour to expand, but labour needs capital to survive, and starvation and fear can be the whip that keeps waged labour at work. The collective power of labour, both structural and associative (Wright, 2000), is different for capital, which can move through different forms and store itself (in money) in different places (in housing property which is never used but held as exchange value in cities like London, for example). As noted below, labour power is embodied and cannot be transformed in the same way as capital, which is an object, not a subject. Although Marx, following Adam Smith, saw labour power as 'variable capital' (see below), it is important to note the substantive structural differences between both labour and capital. As a recent discussion by Hodgson (2014) notes, capital is money or a deposit external to the individual, and in this sense "human capital" can only be collateral if the humans involved are slaves. "Social capital" can never be used as collateral and it is not even owned'. This strict definition of capital does miss its symbolic, emotional and status elements, which are part of the way it is represented beyond material form. But labour power cannot be stored or transformed – at least not in the short-run – while moving within and outside one's country to work is always a possibility, controls on labour flows are greater than on capitals flows (Sassen, 1988) and migrant and illegal workers are always more vulnerable to super-exploitation (Anderson, 2010; 1013).
- 8 Capitalism – forms, trends, transitions and dynamics. Capitalism is historically the most dynamic production system, but it is difficult to plot a linear trend to the development of the labour process in capitalist societies. Edwards (1979) saw control cycles evolving through contradictions of conflicts between labour and capital, but more recently control has not been conceived in zero-sum or replacement terms, but as coexisting and multiple forms (Thompson and Hartley, 2007). As new countries are pulled into global capitalism, 'old forms' can be revised, or new technologies can allow the renewal of old systems. Informalisation and the expansion of

self-employment during the recession means a decline in waged labour formally managed/controlled through the firm's bureaucratic hierarchy, and the rise of contractors, self-policing and control:

... developing economies are marked by the existence of an overwhelmingly large volume of economic activities that fall within what is described as the informal sector. It is an economic space in which workers engage in economic activities in ways that are very different from the capitalist organisation of production. In particular, the prevalent form of labour in the informal sector is self-employment, which is different from the usual wage-based employment resting on the alienation of labour from capital. (Sanyal and Bhattacharyya, 2009: 35)

Informal working is now being researched more thoroughly in developed economies (Williams and Nadin, 2012).

- 9 Labour process and labour markets. Radical labour economists saw the labour market possessing divided, dual or segmented forms (Peck, 1996), and explored how different social categories of labour relate to these differentiated positions in the labour process and labour market (Friedman, 1977; Gordon et al., 1982). Writers continue to explore the connection between the labour market, social networks and labour process, examining the development of new informalities and old labour forms (Kalleberg, 2009), for example the return of gang labour in the UK (Strauss, 2013b) or the growth of third parties, such as employment agencies, in employment relationships (Enright, 2013; Fudge and Strauss, 2013).

LABOUR POWER AND LABOUR MOBILITY

Thompson and Smith (2009) in a review of the field of industrial sociology stressed the centrality of the concept of 'labour power' to labour process theory. Workers in capitalist society sell labour power for a wage. But the commodity 'labour power', which the individual owns and sells, has some unusual characteristics. Labour power is what Polanyi (1944) called a *fictive commodity*. It is not produced for the market or originated through a production process. Its expansion and quality, therefore, cannot be adjusted quickly in response to market pressures or even related to a market mechanism (Offe, 1985). Waged labour appeared when producers in other production systems – peasants and artisans – were dispossessed and expelled from their means of production, and were compelled to sell their labour power as their only means to trade. Capitalism interacted with feudalism, slavery and colonialism – there was not a simple transformation, but a long coexistence (Rockman, 2010) – and it absorbed the labour from these systems, either as a core or surplus reserve army, ready to move into production in times of expansion or conflict. Capitalism continues to expand around the globe, and billions of

reserves of potential labour power have been created to join the global system in new and shocking forms of labour process control (such as the dormitory labour regime in China (Smith, 2003) or the labour compound system in Africa (Bezuidenhout and Buhlungu, 2011)), but not all are absorbed – millions of people exist in states of penury, subsistence and starvation, desperate to enter the formal exploitation that waged labour offers (Sanyal, 2007).

While other commodities typically have a single use value, labour power possesses flexibility and plasticity, which Marx called 'variable capital': the use value of labour power varies enormously through a division of labour across the class of workers, diversity within one worker's working lifetime and, critically, variability within working time when hired by the employer. The worker needs a use value in order to enter the labour process; the capitalist hires a skill, talent or expertise from the worker in exchange for wages, and from which the capitalist aims to produce surplus value to accumulate more capital and ensure the expansion and reproduction of their business, and capitalism as a system – although the relationship between the individual capitalist and the whole system is contradictory.

Although Marx sometimes noted that labour power is the 'property' of the worker – as noted

above – it is different from capital (which has objective multiple identities independent of the capitalist) because labour power is part of ‘the person of the worker’. In other words, labour power possesses what can be called *embodiment* and as such workers or sellers of labour power come in different bodies – marked by gender, age, nationality, ethnicity, skill, region, etc. – and this differentiation makes uniting labour power into collectives harder, and the management of labour more particular and problematic.

Another significant feature of labour power is its capacity to generate more value than the costs of its reproduction. Labour power enters the labour process embodied, as a capacity of human beings, and must be extracted (alienated and objectified) through a work system with a variety of managerial control tropes which are ever evolving as capitalism ages and expands globally (Thompson, 2010, 2013). The costs of reproduction can vary historically and cross-nationally – Marx noted these contingencies and how they affect the price of labour power.

Labour power is human and therefore has volition and a social history, gender, attitude, personality and other standpoint signifiers. The purchasing of labour power is also different from buying machines (fixed capital) or other goods bought through a simple sales contract. An employment contract by which labour power is introduced into the labour process is open-ended in the terms of exchange, although wages are normally agreed in advance, but the work to be performed is kept variable and subject to the discretion/authority of the capitalist or equivalent, within common norms of fairness. Marx understood the creation of free wage labour as a transformational capitalist process of labour commodification – whereby workers who are historically created through class struggle are doubly free: free to sell their labour power to the capitalist of their choice (they are not slaves), but also free from other forms of ownership (of the means of production or other systems or assets of production, such as land); therefore, to avoid destitution

they are compelled as a class of workers to put their labour power onto the labour market and into a labour process in order for it to be realised and value to be generated to give a wage return.

Conflict is part of capitalism because of the problem of labour power whereby the employer cannot access the commodity purchased, labour power in the form of labour time, without going through the person of the worker. This is the basis of conflict, especially because there is no stable agreement between worker and employer over the quantity and quality of labour power that can be expended in a given period – this is a constantly changing equation given: competition between capitals; competition between workers as owners of labour power; the representatives of employers and workers; and the conflict between dead and living labour (technology and people). In capitalism there is a dynamic and constant striving after new ways of extracting extra labour power through different types of employers’ strategies (deskilling, upskilling, automation, movement of capital, substitution of labour, industrial engineering, ideological or hegemonic struggles over identity/culture/values and many other means). There is within this conflict a requirement for consent, as formally capitalism requires free exchange between workers and capitalists, where formal freedom to quit, protest and resist are often legally enshrined in rules of exchange. But this does not mean coercion, domination and oppressive relations do not continue to be part of capitalism, or that politics is not involved in this economic exchange.

Struggles between labour and capital can be around use values of workers – the skills required to produce surplus value – and higher skills can mean higher productivity, but also higher costs; workers’ levels of skills (the use values workers possess and sell) are important for both workers and employers. While Braverman judged capitalism to possess a ‘degradation imperative’, whereby high-value skills are replaced by low-value ones, in practice this is one tendency, among

several, more contingent than absolute. Struggles over working time have long been part of the narrative of employer–worker engagement, with societal and political struggles part of this story, from the 10-hour movement in the nineteenth century, to the introduction of the 35-hour week in France, to zero-hours contracts in the UK, and annualised hours increasingly part of the debate around time in work. In abstract, workers are selling their time – they are ‘merchants of time’ – and there will always be debates around how this time is used (the intensity of labour) and for how long (the extensiveness of labour). In annualised hours, there is abstraction of working hours, from the standard punctuation of everyday time – by days, weeks and months – into a more remote yearly cycle. This is part of the abstraction of working time from the regular intervals of social life (Heyes, 1997; Rubery et al., 2005; Arrowsmith, 2007). Struggles around rewards – the terms of exchange – in wages that workers get for their ‘effort bargain’ with employers is central to workers’ interests and interest group representation on both sides of the collective bargaining relationship. Struggles occur around the content of work – what is to be done, how workers are directed and the scope for autonomy and self-management. Struggles around the body (Wolkowitz 2006; Wolkowitz and Warhurst, 2010), the inclusion and exclusion of certain ‘body types’ (for the aesthetics of labour see Warhurst et al. (2000) and on the strength of gender see Cockburn (1983) on the issue of masculinity and technical change in the printing industry) and the race of bodies (see Roediger and Esch (2012) for a history of race and work in US management) for example, mean that although the capitalist purchases ‘labour power’ this always comes *embodied*, and there is a valuation placed on certain bodies by the employer or customer.

Control and consent run through this employment relationship or exchange relations, but with great historical, cyclical and societal variations (see Jacoby (1998) for the US story). Economic interests of workers

and employers are structured in terms of conflict and cooperation. Wider collective, non-economic interests attach themselves to the employment relation to regulate supply and demand of labour, as well as the terms and conditions of exchange. The evolution of capitalism as a system has witnessed the creation of powerful trade unions, employers’ associations, political parties, welfare states and civil society agencies representing the interests of the different parties. Education, in the form of vocational training, has expanded and grown independently, from company-centred training to delivering benefits of skilled labour as a public good, with an economic return to society, the trained worker and the employer. Education, especially when vocationally orientated, straddles worker, employer and state interests. Both workers and employers seek to manage the labour power that is sold and hired.

Thus within capitalism, the market, or competition between capitals and between workers, acts to distribute labour to capital and capital to labour. In neo-classical economic theory, the market functions without the need for the state. In practice, both labour and capital appeal to the state to expand their ‘realm of freedom’ – controls over the mobility power of labour and controls over the mobility power of capital. Given that labour power is not a commodity, but does face external pressures of commodification, there is always a societal or social dimension to the reproduction and circulation of labour power.

HARRY BRAVERMAN AND LABOR AND MONOPOLY CAPITAL

Harry Braverman (1920–76) is widely regarded as developing interest in the labour process through what became known as the ‘deskilling thesis’ in his classic work *Labor and Monopoly Capital* (1974). It is forty years since the publication of *LMC*, which has not been out of print during that time. Since publication it has attracted 12,000

citations (Google Scholar) and continues to gain 400 plus citations per year, remaining Monthly Review Press's biggest seller. *LMC* has sold over 150,000 copies in English, the bulk of sales occurring in 1976–1980, but average sales in English remain around 2,000 per annum. It has been translated into many languages, including Italian, Chinese, Spanish, Japanese, Portuguese, French, Swedish, German, Dutch, Greek, Norwegian and Serbo-Croatian among others.

Building on Marx's writing about the 'labour process' in Volume 1 of *Capital*, Braverman set out to critically analyse the degrading effects of technology and scientific management on the nature of work in the twentieth century. Principally, he suggested that the drive for efficient production is also a drive for the control of workers by management. Managerial control is achieved through monopolising judgement, knowledge and the conceptual side of work, and concomitantly excluding workers from control and ownership of knowledge and skill acquisition. For Braverman, the expansion of capitalist work in the twentieth century was one of work *degradation* – as knowledge is systematically removed from direct producers and concentrated in the hands of management and their agents. This leads to the impoverishment and debasement of the quality and experience of labour, both for manual and mental workers, who are condemned to execute only the routine and conceptually depleted tasks in the service of capital. Expressed simply, Braverman said:

The ideal organization toward which the capitalist strives is one in which the worker possess no basic skill upon which the enterprise is dependent and no historical knowledge of the past of the enterprise to serve as a fund from which to draw on in daily work, but rather where everything is codified in rules of performance or laid down in lists that may be consulted (by machines or computers, for instance), so that the worker really becomes an interchangeable part and may be exchanged for another worker with little disruption. (Braverman, 1994: 24–25)

It can be argued that 'Braverman ... single-handedly caused a major upset by insisting

on viewing work as a labor process, so placing the fact that work contributes centrally to processes of accumulation that are specifically capitalist back at the center of attention' (Ackroyd, 2009: 265). Braverman is linked with revitalising and expanding Marxist analysis of work. He proposed a radically different interpretation of the history of management thought on work organisation from that offered in contemporary organisation behaviour or management textbooks. In both, management thought evolves as a progressive revelation of more enlightened forms, from Taylorism to Human Relations to work enrichment, job re-design and knowledge management. Braverman considered management to be animated by a single logic – the desire to control work and the worker by reducing the autonomy that flows from a worker's possession of skills and knowledge. Management, for Braverman, is primarily considered negatively, as an agent for controlling the worker.

The Scholarly Impact of Labour and Monopoly Capital

Braverman's death in 1976, two years after the appearance of *LMC*, gave the debate around the labour process a slightly unreal inflection. Because Braverman was not around to either respond to critics or apply the ideas within *LMC* to new circumstances as work in capitalism changed, *LMC* became artificially frozen as text, providing a target that couldn't answer back and an icon for the faithful to venerate. *LMC* was rapidly codified into a few catchphrases, such as the 'deskilling thesis' (a term Braverman never used), for an army of PhD students to examine. In the UK, for example, there have been around 120 PhDs on the topic of the labour process since the publication of *LMC* (<http://ethos.bl.uk/Home.do?sessionId=9B7F1D3F55CC7235D5C7EFFFFF8C1087>).

Across North America, Europe, Japan and Australia many hundreds of students studied Braverman and the labour process debate that developed, especially from the 1980s on.

Initially writers responded to Braverman's agenda. This agenda was broad, including: the expansion of capitalism and growth of waged labour in the US; the expansion of white-collar workers; and the role of the state in capitalist society; and the reserve army of labour. Many of these themes were lost as the debate on the labour process developed post-*LMC*. The main themes that were taken forward were management control, deskilling and Taylorism – in other words a narrow set of concerns, isolated from monopoly capitalism, the giant firm, the labour market and the state.

We can also classify reactions to *LMC* in terms of those stressing how Braverman neglected certain themes, i.e.: subjectivity (see chapters in Knights and Willmott (1990) and Thompson and Smith (2010) for a review); consciousness and agency (Burawoy, 1979); resistance (Edwards, 1986, 2010); gender (see chapters in Wood 1982, 1989; Thompson, 1989; Thompson and Smith, 2010); managerial strategy and national diversity within capitalism (Littler, 1982; Burawoy, 1985; Smith and Meiksins, 1995); and later the ideas of national institutions, the employment relationship and the geography of capitalism as the global economic system expanded.

LMC, Institutions and Capitalism

Comparatively, Braverman's message of 'work degradation' fitted some capitalist societies better than others – the UK and US especially had greater 'deskilling tendencies'. But even in countries with intrinsic craft apprenticeship systems and an abundance of skilled labour, such as German-speaking countries, writers have confirmed parts of Braverman's thesis of 'skill polarisation' or bifurcation, and uncovered within the firm, managers committed to rationalising work through skill substitution as well as skill upgrading (Altmann et al., 1992). In a recent review Gallie highlights strong survey evidence of upskilling, but notes '... that the assumption that rising skills would necessarily

lead to greater employee influence at work is incorrect' (Gallie, 2013: 339). In other words, skills do not equate with job control. It appears national institutional arrangements mediate any such effect – such that one cannot read off common outcomes from generic tendencies in the labour process without factoring in institutional elements. Therefore the lack of a general fit between the degradation of work thesis and particular societies reveals one important limitation of Braverman's thesis, namely coupling to capitalism a universal division of labour which is more properly anchored to particular institutions – occupational and training systems. There was one reference to Japan in *LMC*. Yet in the 1980s and 1990s, the Japanese workplace was seen to typify a major contrast with the US; greater employment security for workers (especially male ones) working in large companies was exchanged for high utilisation and managerial control over the deployment of labour power (Elger and Smith, 1994, 2005). The place of national institutions was underdeveloped by Braverman, but, as Elger and Smith (2005), show that it is possible to combine a labour process and institutional perspective for analysing workplace relations and the function that 'nationality' of capital plays in shaping labour process practices.

Braverman was challenged by feminist writers who argued the gendered identity (of craft workers) was missing in his work. Craft and skilled labour is highly gendered, as was demonstrated by Pollert (1981) in her book on tobacco workers, Cavendish (1982) in her book on assembly workers and Cynthia Cockburn (1983) in her book on print workers. Rubery (1978) was one of the early feminist writers examining the shortcomings of *LMC*. Coming from a radical economist background, she used Braverman to extend dual labour market theory and institutional economics to develop a theory of labour market segmentation. Like Burawoy, who emphasised the agency of labour, Rubery argued that labour markets are structured not just by the actions of capitalists, but by

the ability of workers 'to maintain, develop, extend and reshape their organisation and bargaining power' (1978: 34). In this, gender was an important way in which male workers could maintain controls over work and structure labour markets into non-competing segments, an idea close to Weber's ideas of 'occupational closure' – rather than the Marxist notion of the reserve army of labour found in Braverman. Feminist writers have produced more dynamic explanations of the lived experience of discrimination on the shop or office floor (see for example Gottfried, 1994), as well as theorisation of the interactions between gender 'structures', such as patriarchy and economic structures, and capitalism and class (Gottfried, 1998).

The late Craig Littler (1982) made an important contribution to the labour process arguments on control by blending Marxist analysis of control and capitalism with the Weberian concepts of bureaucracy and legitimation. He developed a framework for analysing the labour process using independent levels – proposing a three-level framework consisting of employment relationships, the structure of control and job design. The labour process sits within this nest of levels, and his 1982 book provided a historical analysis of the spread of Taylorist job design into the UK, as well as a useful comparative portrait of work in Japan – drawing from scholars of Japan such as Cole (1971) and Dore (1973) who, while not using labour process ideas explicitly, did thorough work on the sociology of work and industry in Japan.

The most significant Marxist sociologist of the labour process – an influential theorist and ethnographic researcher – has been Michael Burawoy. His *Manufacturing Consent*, which appeared in 1979, was based on his PhD on the ethnography of life inside a Chicago machine shop – the same company which the famous industrial sociologist Donald Roy had researched 30 years earlier. Roy had produced an analysis of the rationality of workers' shop-floor behaviour that destroyed the patronising view of workers in the Human Relations approach which

assumed workers restricted output for emotional or irrational reasons. *Manufacturing Consent* is partly a dialogue with Roy, but principally with Marx, Braverman, and other theorists of labour markets and labour processes. It is in the best traditions of single case studies – theoretically embedded and creative – seeking analytical interrogations of the shortcomings of both Marx's (and Braverman's) understanding of life inside the large, modern, unionised corporation, with strong internal labour markets and a labour process where winning workers' consent not managing through coercion was required.

Michael Burawoy's other key text on the labour process was from the same era. *The Politics of Production* was published in 1985, but was already flagged as forthcoming in his 1979 *Manufacturing Consent* book, and therefore needs to read as coming from the same period of thinking about and researching production relations. *The Politics of Production* looks at the conditions under which consent and coercion are produced. Consent was strong at firms like Geer/Allied (his case-study company for *Manufacturing Consent*) because these were unionised factories with strong internal labour markets, collective bargaining and an 'internal state' of consent and compromise between labour and capital in a wider American economy of dominant monopoly capital. Such conditions created 'hegemonic production politics' or 'factory regimes' – evident at Geer – with workers' activity producing through shop-floor games the conditions for their continued economic oppression. This was contrasted to despotic regimes, where welfare, unions and internal labour markets were absent, thus increasing workers' dependence on wages, which were difficult to stabilise due to competitive labour markets.

In broad terms, Michael Burawoy opened access to the micro-level of shop-floor practices where workers are active agents in the resistance and reproduction of capitalist social relations, as well as more macro comparative labour process research, and the linkages between factory regimes and societal

and market conditions. In *The Politics of Production* he could draw from his earlier empirical work in Zambian mining, and in later work he worked on the shop floor in Hungary to gain insight into labour processes in what was then a command economy.

Paul Edwards (1986) argued to move labour process theory away from Marxism, towards materialism which has no transformation agency: 'Marxism must propose some logic of social development such that exploitation will be transcended, whereas materialism makes no such claim' (1986: 89). Edwards is sympathetic towards labour, but there is no expectation that class conflict will necessarily lead to social transformation or even that the common class situation of labour will result in shared subjective interests. As noted above, labour as a commodity in capitalism possesses exchange and use values, but Edwards has placed the emphasis on use value, especially the utility and pride of work for workers. He has also contributed to the comparative approach (not only cross-nationally) and highlighted the diversity and 'relative autonomy' of the labour process within capitalism, which does not inevitably produce one dominant control regime, but neither are there an infinite variety of control regimes, as suggested by contingency theory. Like both Littler and Thompson (see below), Edwards stresses the importance of examining the workplace in capitalism at a series of levels of analysis.

Paul Thompson has been strongly identified with labour process theory building in the UK, being closely associated with the International Labour Process Conference. Through publications such as *The Nature of Work* (1983), *Work Organisations* (Thompson and McHugh, 1990, 2009), *Workplaces of the Future* (Thompson and Warhurst, 1998) and *Organizational Misbehaviour* (Ackroyd and Thompson, 1999), as well as many articles on such themes and critiques of post-modernism, Foucault, surveillance, the knowledge economy, discourse analysis and HRM and ethics, he has consolidated and developed labour process analysis. Paul Thompson and Chris

Smith have produced a series of papers and edited books that have offered a critique of the post-modernist abandonment of employment relations and core elements of capitalism as real political economy. Smith and Thompson also published an early political economy book on the transition of labour and the labour process with the end of state socialism in Russia, Eastern Europe and China (1992).

Thompson (2009) has been especially critical of post-structuralist writing on the labour process, best represented by Damian O'Doherty (2001, 2008) – see the debate between Thompson and O'Doherty in the *Handbook of Critical Management Studies (HCMS)*. O'Doherty, a student of Hugh Willmott, wrote a PhD against labour process theory and in his 2009 chapter for *HCMS*, he sought to construct a 'Manchester School' of work that had as its intellectual tools existentialism and post-structuralism, and developed the analysis of work relations in workplaces and organisations as constituted as power hierarchies. Like Willmott the concern is with 'human subjectivity' and being, not labour power in a Marxist sense, and the approach is constructionist rather than 'realist'. Fellow travellers have engaged in empirical work (Collinson; Knights and McCabe; Willmott and Worthington; Ezzamel and Worthington) but on the whole there is a strong tendency to examine or deconstruct 'texts', Burawoy (1979) for example, without any sense of the development of the academics behind such writing: in other words texts are frozen. Their work is more about organisation studies than labour-process studies – attention is focused on individuals within organisational settings. Labour processes are about the transformation process of moving labour capacity into labour, and how individuals realise labour power through labour processes that can be very diverse, but capitalism imposes structural limits to variety.

In summaries of the history of labour process debates Thompson has created 'periodisations', with the first wave containing writing following the immediate reactions

to Braverman's *LMC*, and earlier labour process theory from French and Italian Marxists. The second wave included writers such as Edwards, Burawoy and Freidman – who have all developing 'typologies' of 'workplace regimes' around a 'control–resistance–consent' dialectic, whereby managerial controls produce resistances from workers that then lead on to new control regimes in a cyclical manner. The third wave contained new developments of 'alternative paradigms' to Taylorism and Fordism, such as 'flexible specialisation' (Piore and Sabel, 1984), 'lean production' (Womack et al., 1990), and 'innovation-mediated production' (Kenney and Florida, 1993). Many of these new paradigms derived from new players, such as Japan, who entered the debate on how to organise work as Japanese firms moved abroad and Japanese products and production processes appeared superior to Western ones. These Thompson called the 'paradigm wars', but in many ways they fitted within the cycles of controls found in the second wave – for a review see Smith (1989, 1994). Thompson's work here was an important mapping exercise, but it did not involve much theoretical innovation.

However, Thompson (1990) developed the idea of a 'core' set of labour process ideas in the face of attempts to expand labour process writing beyond labour-capital relations in workplaces, with interest from post-structuralist writers (such as Willmott and Knights) focusing on subjectivity and the human condition, thus stretching the boundaries of what constituted labour process analysis. He took labour process theory back to a core set of elements in which labour process analysis was about the 'transformation' of labour power by different management workplace regimes: some of which gave workers greater autonomy, but none of which suppressed structural antagonisms of conflict and interests, and the 'imperative of control' that was a core characteristic of capitalism, given the need to extract labour-power from the body of the worker. Reinforcing the work of Edwards, Thompson emphasised the

relative autonomy of the labour process, the centrality of the employment relationship, and the importance of political economy as a wider conditioner to labour process practice.

Core theory was an essential checklist, but Thompson's recent work has tried to develop a more analytical framework. In Thompson (2003: 474) '... it was argued that political economy, firm governance, employment relations and the labour process should be treated as 'distinctive spheres' and patterns of connection and disconnection within their different trajectories be sought out'. In an update and expansion to this paper, Thompson (2013) makes a major move towards contingency theory, in that he proposes four distinct institutional domains: (1) accumulation – with no overall logic, but structure of separation, competition and coordination between capitals and 'elites'; (2) the corporate level, which is the domain of firm action by managers and workers; (3) the work level or traditional labour process domain featuring a technical and social division of labour and labour process; and finally (4) the employment level, consisting of employment relations and industrial relations. This model was applied to what Thompson sees as the dominant feature of capitalism today, namely financialisation or new shareholder capitalism, in which there is greater work intensity and increased employment insecurity within a capitalism where finance rules production, and workplaces are degraded and downgraded by the pressures of abstract exchange value. But not all societies function under such a model. As Vidal and Hauptmeier (2014: 15) note '... Thompson (2003, 2013) argued that employment regimes (employment security, wage setting and voice systems) are more diverse across countries than labour processes (systems of skill, control and coordination) because the former are more influenced by national institutions'. In criticism of this multi-level contingency analysis, one could say that Thompson misses problems with the Varieties of Capitalism approach he alludes to, such as the myth of nationally integrated business models, and that the focus

on financialised capitalism may be more about Anglo-Saxon capitalism and not other parts of the world economy, especially Asia.

My own work has made conceptual contributions to comparative theory and the labour process with the development of the system, society and dominance (SSD) framework and applications to occupations and transfer of work practices between countries (Smith and Meiksins, 1995; Elger and Smith, 2005). The SSD framework emphasises the importance of national institutional boundaries and rules, but additionally the centrality of systemic and dominant models, which create common and best practices, such as HRM, lean production and total quality management, that are imposed across societies. Other of my contributions have been understanding of the organisation of the labour process in China, with the concept of the 'dormitory labour regime' (Smith, 2003; Ngai and Smith, 2007). This builds upon the work of Burawoy, but explores the interaction between the reproduction of labour power and the production process. It has been picked up as a way of characterising workplace regimes in export-factories in China.

In a more explicit attempt to develop labour process theory, I wanted to incorporate the importance of 'mobility power' into labour power in what I called a 'double indeterminacy' framework (Smith, 2006). I suggested that labour power possessed two components or indeterminacies: mobility power and effort power. The first indeterminacy emerges from the distinction between labour and labour power made by Marx, reflecting the decentralisation of the authority over the disposal of labour power to the individual worker who has the burden and freedom (constraint and choice) as to where and to which employer the he or she sells his or her labour services. This can be called mobility power, which is indeterminate in the sense that the decision on which employer the worker sells his or her labour power to is given to the individual and therefore remains an uncertainty for the employing firm in calculating whether or not workers will remain with them. It is also an

uncertainty for the worker as to whether or not the employing firm will continue to buy his or her labour services. Around the issue of mobility power, both capital and labour strategise, plan and mobilise resources of a collective and individual kind as rational-strategic actors (Alberti, 2014).

The second indeterminacy is around labour effort and the wage-work bargain in production (Baldamus, 1961). How much effort is required for a particular wage to support the basic level of reproduction of labour has been the primary subject of labour process theory that has focused on management strategies to control labour and realise the returns from labour once hired (Smith, 2010). Similarly, how workers develop formal and informal work rules to limit effort and contain managerial claims on their time and body have also been widely discussed (Burawoy, 1979; Edwards, 1990). We therefore have mobility and effort power as indeterminacies for capital and labour, forming the basis for labour and management strategies, and tactics and policies to direct the exchange process within the capitalist employment relationship.

Mobility power has a strong political dimension – with employers seeking to limit the freedom of workers and to move employment at will, through contracts that stipulate length of service, notice periods for mutual separation, and limitations on labour supply and mobility (Jacoby, 1997). Within the firm, the uncertainties over mobility create what Mann (1973) calls a 'mutual dependency' obligation, in which workers reduce job searching in favour of internal promotion opportunities, and employers give up seeking external labour, through focusing on the utilisation of existing labour. In some economies (Japan and Korea, for example), and in some companies, a paternalist practice is widely espoused that reinforces mutual obligations beyond the naked cash nexus (Smith, 2003, 2006).

More recently I expanded this framework into what I call a 'flow approach' towards labour power, which combines the importance of mobility and movement in new

Box 12.2 New trends

Smith (2010) summarises developments in the labour process in terms of nine themes:

- 1 Decentring work from the workplace – new mobile technologies, homeworking and working ‘on-the-move’.
- 2 Mobility of capital – and extended value and commodity chains.
- 3 Internationalisation and ‘globalisation’ – more labour (emergence of a world labour market for the first time) and more mobility of labour; challenges to national institutional settlements.
- 4 New forms of labour – creative, aesthetic, personal service etc.; labour process of old and new forms of labour.
- 5 Separation of work relations and employment relations – de-bureaucratisation, different contracts within the workplace.
- 6 Separation of ownership from management – disappearing bosses and principle employers, problems with legal work contracts, and the disappearance of owners (‘who is and where is my boss?’).
- 7 Difficulties entering waged work – internships, employability, transfer of risk to the worker.
- 8 Taking the state out – value/commodity chains; international employment agencies; hedge fund capital.
- 9 New labour movement forms – community, the internet, direct action, NGOs, etc.

capitalism (Smith, 2010). A flow perspective on the labour process runs against human capital and resource-based views of the firm, and versions of HRM which advocate a ‘high commitment workplace’ perspective, as well as ‘organisation-centric models of capitalism’. All these approaches represent labour power as fixed, centred and located, rather than moving and dynamic – with mobility-capability as a core characteristic. They represent the employer’s perspective on containing labour mobility as something positive both for workers (guaranteeing access to work) and employers (securing access to labour). A ‘flow approach’ brings in the nature of labour power, mobility, turnover, migration and employment contracts, and challenges the orthodoxy of labour as fixed commodity. Labour power can be ‘stored’ socially through: *occupations* (professions with exclusionary rules); *organisations* (large firms with strong ILMs); *social networks* (family, kin and place networks for migrant labour, for example); *industrial districts/communities* (mining, company towns, industrial towns, etc.); *social institutions* – workers’ store of collective identity and organisations, e.g. trade unions (craft/work rules of job boundaries, even transfers of jobs through father-to-son dynasties, as with London printers before computerisation). Such stores

are, however, partially ‘fictive’ and vulnerable because labour power is not property, like capital, and the need to animate labour power through the labour process in order to secure exchange/realisation (in the form of wages) forever requires labour power to seek out capital. Stores are vulnerable to change as a result of class struggle between labour and capital around the double indeterminacy of labour (both effort power and mobility power). They are vulnerable to technological and market change that can overturn established patterns.

CONCLUSION

Braverman drew on his own experience and the work of others, but did not engage in empirical fieldwork in the conventional sense. Many reactions to his work have applied standard methodological ‘tests’ through surveys, but most especially case studies, to examine whether or not skills are declining and work is degraded by new technology and managerial control. Reactions have also challenged the theoretical basis of Braverman’s work – his determinism in judging Scientific Management the ‘one best way’ of capitalist practice and his historical

chronology – in the transition from contracting relations to employment relations and Taylorism (see Zimbalist, 1979; Clawson, 1980; Littler, 1982; Burawoy, 1985; Knights and Willmott, 1990). In terms of the empirical shortcomings of his work, writers have explored it historically, sectorally, occupationally and cross-nationally to test whether skill polarisation has occurred as a universal tendency or a more contingent movement (for a review of the evidence on deskilling see Grugulis and Lloyd, 2010; Fitzgerald et al., 2013).

In Braverman there is a more definite chronological system shift from private, small-scale capital under craft worker control to large-scale, monopoly capital under Scientific Management as the pinnacle of labour process control. Post-Braverman writers have stressed post-Taylorist stages or phases of the labour process, and highlighted two things: firstly, the continued evolution of labour process organisation within capitalism beyond the possibilities for accumulation afforded by classical Scientific Management. Control through culture, values and various neo-human relations policies seek to engage, not simply coerce, the worker. And secondly, there is the role of new national and regional centres of accumulation, which offer a synthesis of classical Scientific Management within different cultural contexts and class accords that allow for post-Taylorist practices to be embedded in unique ways. The organisation of the labour process in Japan and the transfer of the Japanese system to the West is central here (see Elger and Smith (1994, 2005) for an overview), as well as the emergence of China and India as new international players (Ngai, 2005; Lüthje et al., 2013; De Neve, 2014). However, the European, especially the German experience of post- and neo-Taylorism also remains important (see Altmann et al., 1992; Eichhorst and Tobsch, 2013; Eichhorst, 2014).

Marx's analysis of the nature of the capitalist labour process uses England as its historical laboratory. England, the most economically advanced and dominant capitalist

economy, represented the future that all other societies would mirror. Braverman wrote through the experience of the US as the dominant capitalist economy of the twentieth century, the originator of Scientific Management and therefore the common model for all other societies. In fact both were wrong to associate the most advanced with a single future. If we interject country differences into this picture, as cross-national studies of labour process organisation have done, then we see that the norm is for there to be both national pluralism to work organisation as well as pressures to find a 'one best way'. National differences are not infinite, and dominant economies remain important sources of 'best practice' which are used in many societies.

With the systemic growth of different categories of worker on different contracts and the growth of employment agencies to source labour globally, there has been a massive transfer of employment risk from the employer to the worker. Old certainties – and very basic features of being a worker, such as consistent hours of work, continuity of work and regularity of wages – have now become uncertainties in employment terms such as 'zero-hours' contracts. There has been a shortening of the length of employment stay within one organisation, although rates of tenure vary between say Europe and the US, and within different branches of capital. While flexible or precarious work has been much debated in the US and Europe, contract changes have been more dramatic in East Asian societies (Nichols et al., 2004; Friedman and Lee, 2010). Organisation dependency, which characterised the large firms that Braverman (and Burawoy, 1979) had used to characterise good jobs (high wage and high security) in what was a hegemonic, welfarist employment pattern of monopoly capitalism, constructed throughout the twentieth century (Gospel, 1992; Montgomery, 1979, 1995; Jacoby, 1997), now looks increasingly untenable.

There has been a continual *renewal* of labour process writing, along with the development of new concepts such as *emotional*

labour (Hochschild, 1983; Bolton and Boyd, 2003; Bolton, 2009, 2010; Brook et al., 2013) or *aesthetic labour* (Warhurst et al., 2000; Warhurst and Nickson, 2009; Wolkowitz and Warhurst, 2010). There has also been application of labour process ideas to new sectors, such as the creative industries (Smith and McKinlay, 2009) and new organisational forms, such as the extensive literature on call centres. We have also seen labour process theory being linked to new areas, such as institutional theory (Elger and Smith, 2005) or critical realism (Thompson and Vincent, 2010). The prospects for labour process writing to continue to develop are good, and the annual International Labour Process Conference and associated book publishing (<http://www.palgrave.com/series/critical-perspectives-on-work-and-employment/CPWE/>) is likely to maintain the domain, as the evolution of forms of control and the continued globalisation of capitalism creates a demand for critical writing which engages micro and macro levels of analysis in a coherent fashion. This is something that labour process analysis in the 40 years since the publication of *Labor and Monopoly Capital* has consistently aimed to do.

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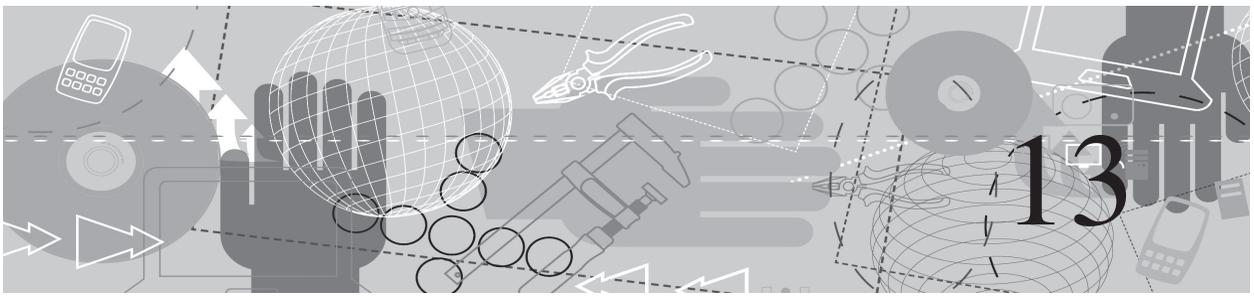
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The Skill Debate: Concepts, Measures and Evidence

Alan Felstead

INTRODUCTION

Subjects within the remit of the sociology of work and employment rarely attract the attention of the political and policy-making establishment. However, the skill debate is one of these rarities, making it a politically hot topic and subject to heated debate across the world. This is because high-skilled jobs can bring benefits to a number of parties. These include workers who prefer to be engaged in intellectually and financially rewarding jobs, employers who – given available resources, human or otherwise – decide in which product markets to compete and therefore what type of jobs to offer, and governments whose tax take is increased the higher the added value (i.e. embodied skills) of the goods and services produced. While this can be a virtuous circle, it can be a vicious one too. Governments, for example, may not resource and/or guide the educational system well enough in skilling workers appropriately. Even when they do, employers may not design jobs which make the most effective

use of skills workers have or be able to recruit workers with the skills they want. Pockets of skills under-utilisation and skill shortages may, therefore, emerge (Green, 2013).

For national governments the outcome of these processes is highly significant since international competition, so the argument goes, is fought on the basis of the skills of a nation's workers and the skills quality of the jobs carried out on its soil. Unlike international sport, such as the Olympics or the Football World Cup, more than national pride is at stake since skills can drive up relative living standards as well as drive them down. There is even a Skill Olympics. It is held every two years and has been running for over sixty years. It aims to promote and celebrate vocational skills – such as bricklaying, carpentry, floristry and cooking. The best young people from a variety of trades across the world compete against one another for international recognition of their skills. In 2013 the event attracted competitors from 68 countries. However, the event – possibly because of the lowly status given to vocational

skills – receives relatively little coverage (e.g. *The Guardian*, 2012).

Whatever the reasons, more publicity and attention is focused on the results of international surveys, such as those carried out by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), since they rank countries according to performance across a wider range of skills. For example, every three years since 2000 the reading, mathematical and scientific skills of 15-year-olds across participating countries are tested. No country likes to be towards the bottom of the league, with all aiming to move upwards rather than downwards every time the survey is carried out. The most recent results of PISA (Programme for International Student Assessment) were published in 2013. They show that Asian countries outperformed the rest of the world by a wide margin (OECD, 2013b).

The inaugural results from the OECD's Survey of Adult Skills were also published around the same time. This is the adult equivalent of PISA. It tests the literacy, numeracy and problem-solving skills of adult workers as well as questioning them about the skills they use at work. It is based on around 5,000 respondents in 24 countries and is intended to be carried out on a regular basis (OECD, 2013a). Like PISA, the results of the adult survey attracted considerable publicity across the world. In some countries – such as Japan and Canada (*The Japan Times*, 2013; *Toronto Star*, 2013) – there were celebrations as adults performed well in the tests and were using those skills at work, while in other countries – such as the United States and Ireland – there was alarm that adults were lagging behind their counterparts in terms of both the skills they possessed as well as the skills they used at work (*The New York Times*, 2013; *The Irish Times*, 2013).

The aim of this chapter is to provide a state-of-the-art account of the skill debate, as well as highlighting what aspects of the debate this type of evidence foregrounds and what aspects are either thinly covered or even ignored. In particular, the chapter considers the historic theoretical and conceptual debates which lay behind – or are hidden

by – contemporary evidence of this sort, and how these debates have developed in recent times. The chapter is organised around three levels of analytical inquiry. The second section examines skills from the perspective of the job itself. It therefore reviews debates which define the skill of a job in terms of the discretion job-holders exercise in carrying out the work, as well as those which conceptualise skill in terms of the complexity of the tasks involved in the job. The section argues that while the two conceptualisations are related, they are not – nor would we expect them to be – perfectly aligned. The third section goes on to examine the skill debate from the perspective of the individual. Here, human capital theory is briefly critiqued and accounts of the gendering of skills are examined. The fourth section focuses on the interaction between the demand for and the supply of skills and, in particular, the misalignments which may occur and take the form of skills shortages and skills under-use. The fifth section ends with a summary of the chapter's main analytical messages.

WHAT SKILLS DO JOBS REQUIRE?

In the early part of the twentieth century, those who studied the sociology of work focused most of their attention on what factors increased the productivity of workers, rather than studying the content of the job itself and what it involved. Based on a series of experiments in the 1920s, it was found that small changes to the working arrangements of a group of six telephone relay assembly workers – such as altering rest-break periods, working hours or even lighting levels – led to increases in productivity. These became known as the Hawthorne Experiments given that they were carried out at Western Electric's Hawthorne site just outside of Chicago. It was argued that productivity rose because the workers studied felt special and liked the attention they received. These feelings came about for a number of reasons. Two of the workers, for example, were invited to

choose who else to include in the group. During the study, which lasted five years, the group was put in a separate room away from the rest of the factory and, importantly, they were consulted about each of the changes made to their work arrangements. Out of this the Human Relations school was born. Put simply, this approach advocates involving workers in decision-making so that they feel valued at work and are therefore more productive (Mayo, 1945). Such an approach has been criticised as ‘cow sociology’ because of its instrumentalism in helping managers achieve their goals and its failure to examine social relations of production as a whole and, in particular, the structural position of workers in a capitalist system (Bell, 1947: 88).

The publication of *Labor and Monopoly Capital* in 1974 by Harry Braverman provided a much needed antidote to such sociological enquiries; that is, those funded by employers with the intention of raising worker effort, hence providing factory owners with ‘the maintenance crew for the human machinery’ (Braverman, 1974: 87). The book’s publication was a watershed moment in the history of the sociology of work and as such it figures in several chapters in this *Handbook* (see Chapters 12, 16 and 17, in particular). The focus of this chapter is the relevance of what became known as the labour process theory for ‘skill’ as played out in the contemporary skill debate.

Braverman’s (1974) central argument is that there is a tendency for work to be ‘deskilled’ as a result of the development and growing sophistication of capitalist management. Prior to the development of capitalism, most work was performed by individual craft workers who saw the projects they were working on through from start to finish – they had control over the entire work process. Crafts such as tailoring, carpentry and shoemaking took a long time to perfect, and when they were they became a great source of individual pride and personal accomplishment. Craft production, therefore, relied on workers’ accumulated knowledge of materials and the processes needed to produce the desired outputs. Under this mode of production, the worker both conceives the outcome

of the work process and executes each of the steps involved. In this respect, the human species is markedly different from other animals, as Marx so vividly illustrated in the following justly famous analogy:

A spider conducts operations that resemble those of a weaver, and a bee puts to shame many an architect in the construction of her cells. But what distinguishes the worst architect from the best bees is this, that the architect raises his structure in his imagination before he erects it in reality. At the end of every labour-process, we get a result that already existed in the imagination of the labourer at its commencement. (Marx quoted in Braverman, 1974: 45–46)

As a rule, there is no division of labour in craft production. So, while tailors, carpenters and shoemakers may be habitually concerned with making the same type of product, they do not divide up the separate operations involved in the making of each product and carry out only one part of the production process. Rather, the conception and execution of the work process remains unified and embodied in the craft worker.

Not only did the factory system impose specialisation on individual workers, but it also removed control of the labour process from craft workers and transferred it to management. The cost of production was lowered in two ways. The first way was to eliminate the time spent finishing off one part of the production process before setting up and completing the next, a process repeated right through to completion of the final product. Specialisation on particular tasks also prompted the development of shortcuts or aids, which only became evident and worthwhile as workers carried out the same tasks time and time again. Adam Smith used the example of pin manufacturing to demonstrate how greater specialisation increases productivity in this way.

However, it would have been technologically possible to reap these economies without individualised specialisation. A working family – husband, wife and their children – could proceed from task to task, first drawing out enough wire for hundreds or thousands of pins, then straightening it,

cutting it, and so on, with all of the 18 operations involved in order to produce pins ready for sale. Organising the production process in this way, a family could realise the advantages of dividing up the production process into separate tasks by eliminating downtime and developing aids to speed up production (Marglin, 1974). However, capitalist production used the division of the work process to assign different workers to different operations and to vary pay rates according to the difficulty of the task. This was the second way in which the cost of production could be lowered. Since workers could now only produce intermediate components of the finished product, their control over the final product was lost. Management instead assumed responsibility for analysing and directing the labour process, thereby divorcing conceiving how to work from its execution. Without such separation it is impossible 'to enforce upon them [workers] either the methodological efficiency [of Adam Smith's pin factory] or the working pace desired by capital. The capitalist therefore learns ... to break the unity of the labor process' (Braverman, 1974: 113–114). This meant that control over the work process, when and how much to work no longer resided with the worker, but was transferred to those who paid workers' wages and directed how that time was spent.

Crucially for the skill debate, a labour-process-inspired definition of skill continues to be couched in terms of the unification of conception and execution of the work process epitomised by the craft worker. The process which Braverman identified was the declining prevalence of craft-based production and a process of 'deskilling'; that is, a tendency for worker autonomy in carrying out work activities to decline (Felstead et al., 2009; Grugulis and Lloyd, 2010). As a result, some authors take a reductionist view of skill which focuses on control of the labour process alone. So, if workers do not decide on what tools or methods to use to accomplish a task, and if they cannot schedule what they do and when, they lack control over the labour process and therefore the job has little or no skill.

Other classic sociological studies of work are also worthy of note since they continue to have a bearing on the contemporary skill debate. Alan Fox's *Beyond Contract* (1974), for example, traces the conceptual contours of worker discretion in capitalist economies. He distinguishes the 'task range' of jobs from the 'discretionary content' of the tasks involved (Fox, 1974: Chapter 1). Some jobs may be limited in both senses, such as an assembly line worker confined to the repetition of one simple and undemanding task with little scope to alter the way it is carried out. Other jobs carry more freedom. Managing directors and chief executives, for example, exercise discretion over a wide range of issues and can set about the tasks involved in whatever way and at whatever pace they decide. Of course, this conceptualisation also allows for some jobs to be narrowly specified, while offering high levels of freedom. Plastic surgeons who specialise in breast implants fit this description; whereas other jobs span a broad range of tasks, but each of the tasks allows minimal discretion. For example, the proverbial 'white van man' who offers a range of services such as decorating, fencing, carpentry, building decking and laying patios falls into this category. Such individuals are colloquially referred to as 'a Jack of all trades, but a master of none'. This sums up their breadth of knowledge, but can equally be applied to their range of tasks and their levels of task discretion.

Echoes of these ideas can be found in many surveys which try to track discretion levels at work. For those in the labour process tradition, this is also taken to indicate the trajectory of skill. Typically, surveys carry questions which ask individual workers about the levels of influence they have over the tasks they carry out. So, the fifth European Social Survey (ESS) – carried out in 2010 across 27 European countries – asked worker respondents to what extent 'the management at your work allows you: (a) to decide how your daily work is organised; and (b) to choose or change your pace of work'. Respondents were presented with a scale ranging from 0, which was labelled 'I have no influence', to 10, which

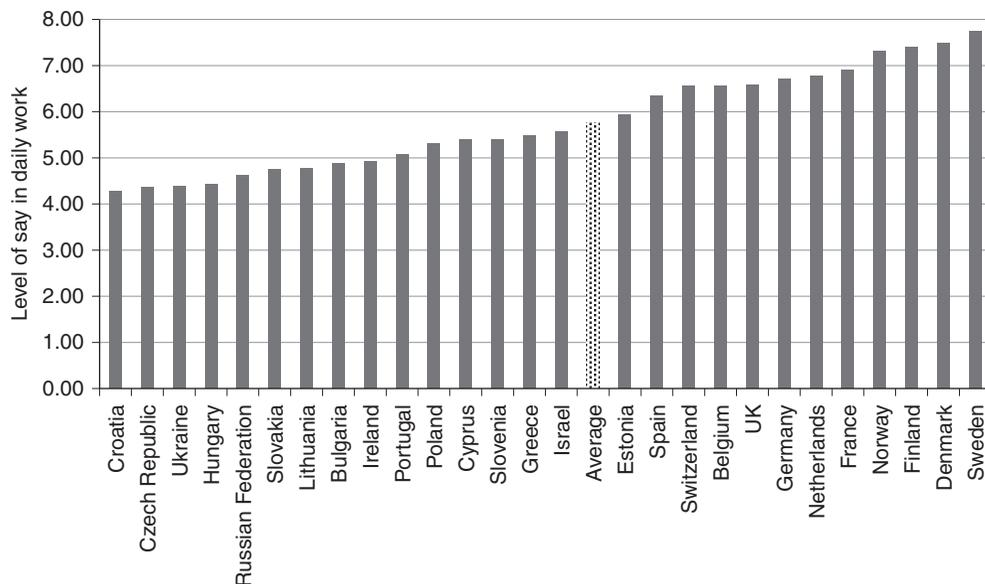


Figure 13.1 Level of influence over the day-to-day organisation of work, Europe, 2010

Source: European Social Survey (2010) and author's own analysis.

was labelled 'I have complete control'. So, an average score against each question can be calculated (as in Figures 13.1 and 13.2).

There are marked variations between countries, which have remained more or less stable since these questions were first asked

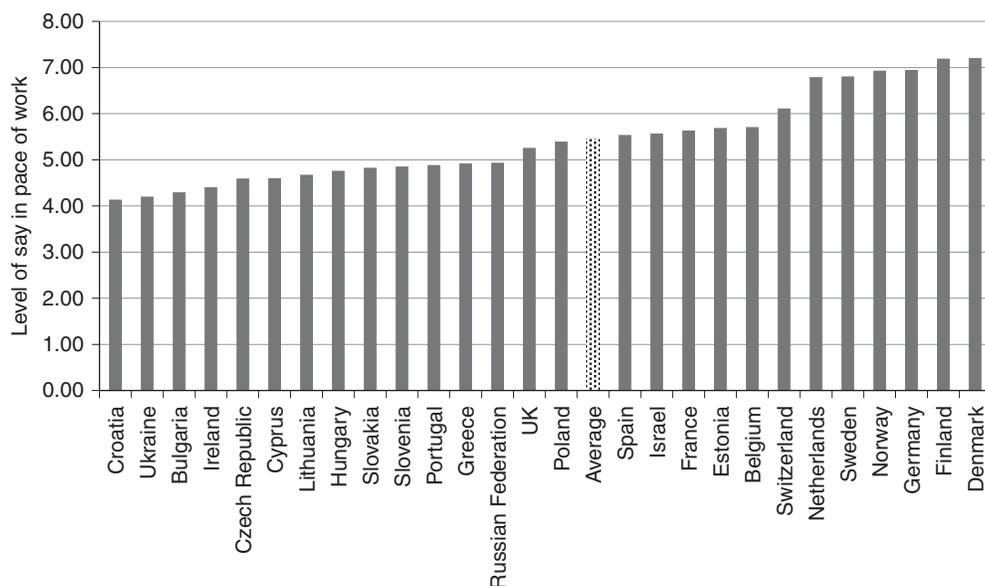


Figure 13.2 Level of influence over the pace of work, Europe, 2010

Source: European Social Survey (2010) and author's own analysis.

by the ESS in 2004 (Gallie and Zhou, 2013). Job control is highest in the Nordic countries of Sweden, Denmark, Finland and Norway on both of these indicators, while it is mostly below average among Eastern European countries such as Croatia, the Czech Republic and Ukraine (see Figures 13.1 and 13.2). This kind of data also shows that job control varies steeply by occupational class, with a marked change between those in lower service jobs – particularly those in skilled manual and routine positions – and those in higher occupational groups.

Some data are also collected on the wider issue of employee involvement, such as the level of say workers have over how the organisation is run and over what issues they can have a say. The British Skills and Employment Survey (SES), for example, tracks the degree to which workers are consulted and over what matters. These range from operational issues such as working practices to strategic ones such as the financial position of the business and its investment plans. The results show that in Britain between 2001 and 2012 employee involvement grew and that consultation extended to matters of strategic importance (Inanc et al., 2013).

However, rather less evidence is collected on the second part of Fox's (1974) conceptualisation of discretion, namely the range of tasks jobs involved, but such a research agenda might have traction. By examining whether the range of tasks and their importance has narrowed or widened over time such a programme of work could resurrect this largely forgotten feature of the debate. Notably, this kind of data is collected by some survey series – such as SES and the OECD survey referred to earlier – but such analysis is yet to be undertaken.

Labour process theory has another legacy for the contemporary skill debate. This stems from the emphasis Braverman (1974) placed on technological change as a further means of deskilling the worker. He argued that while Taylorism is the organisational means of wresting control of the labour process from the (craft) worker to management,

technological change can be used to similar effect. The three principles of Taylorist management – removal of 'brain work' from the shopfloor, analysis of the work process by management alone, and telling workers what is to be done, how and at what speed – can be incorporated into technological devices used at work.

This insight sparked a reassessment of the introduction of technological changes to production methods in industries such as cotton spinning, engineering, steel production and printing (Elbaum and Wilkinson, 1979; Griffin, 1984; Lazonick, 1979; Zeitlin, 1979). Using historical analysis to build their case, these authors made an additional point. While arguing that separation of conception and execution of tasks was a capitalist tendency – often built into the design of new technologies (see Noble, 1977) – they also argued that it was not a done deal. In fact, they demonstrated that the final outcome was dependent on a number of factors. Notably, workers' resistance could, and did, shape how new technology was introduced. In printing, for example, the typesetting machine was introduced in the late nineteenth century in the UK without printers ceding control of the labour process. That battle was to come almost a century later. In the 1980s the balance of power had swung decisively in favour of printing employers and, faced with another bout of technological change, they decided to break workers' grip on the labour process. Industrial unrest was the outcome in the late 1980s, with the eventual removal of craft traditions from large swathes of the printing industry in the UK (Felstead, 1988). In the US and Australia, however, print workers' grip on the labour process was weakened much earlier because of the relative strength of employers (Griffin, 1984).

Divisions within employers and/or workers can affect the balance of power between capital and labour and therefore have an impact on the eventual outcome. Competition between employers may lead them to introduce technological change on their own terms in the pursuit of increased market share,

forcing other employers to emulate their strategy by undercutting employers who fail to challenge craft control. In other cases, employers may seek to avoid confrontation in fear that other employers will break ranks. Similarly, divisions within the workforce may generate differential outcomes. In the UK engineering industry and the US steel industry at the end of the nineteenth century, for example, the workforce was divided at a time when employers were united in wanting to introduce semi-automatic lathes in engineering and new methods of production in steel (Elbaum and Wilkinson, 1979; Zeitlin, 1979). Both technologies were less reliant on craft labour and employers were unified in their desire to push through these changes. Non-craft labourers sided with the employers and the change was made, and with it craft control of production was weakened. At about the same time in the British cotton spinning and steel industries, on the other hand, craft workers sided with employers (Lazonick, 1979). In so doing they passed some of the costs of declining piece rates onto those to whom they subcontracted some of the work – mostly children and young people. So, for a period these workers were able to retain their craft status.

It is notable – as indicated by the preceding discussion – that these examples draw heavily from manufacturing and they have a particular focus on the deskilling of the craft worker. That said, it was also realised that the same principles were being applied to the service sector and were reaching further up the occupational hierarchy. Current debates on the commercialisation of emotional labour, for example, can be interpreted in a labour process tradition with employers schooling the behaviour, language, attitude and demeanour of front-line customer service workers such as hotel and restaurant workers (Hochschild, 1983). Scripting the dialogues used by call centre workers has a similar intent of stripping workers of their autonomy. Monitoring call lengths as well as listening in, promotes conformity, standardisation and limits discretionary content (Taylor and Bain, 1999). For

some businesses image is so important that workers are taught how to tailor their look accordingly, such as aerobics instructors who deliver ready-made group exercise-to-music classes (Felstead et al., 2007a; Warhurst and Nickson, 2007). There is also evidence that deskilling has extended up the occupational hierarchy to include more and more white-collar workers such as branch bank managers whose judgements are no longer needed (Brown et al., 2011: 72–82). These are all new elements of the labour process or different parts of the workforce which have become subject to more regulation and control by senior management. These developments are akin to the removal of craft control over the labour process in manufacturing in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and underline the continued analytical value of labour process-style deskilling in the twenty-first century.

However, what constitutes a skilled job in everyday speech is different to what labour process theorists would regard as a skilled job. In common parlance, it requires special abilities to perform such a job. So, that those carrying them out are said to have a particular ‘knack’, ‘aptitude’ or ‘talent’. By extension, then, ‘upskilling’ refers to the process by which jobs require higher level abilities for effective performance, while ‘deskilling’ refers to the process whereby ability levels to do the job fall.

This lays bare an important analytical distinction between skill as the complexity of the job and skill as in the discretion job-holders exercise in carrying out the tasks involved (Spenner, 1990). The complexity of jobs refers to the abilities and techniques required, the intricacies of the steps involved, and the knowledge of equipment, products and processes needed for competent performance. This means that however rule-bound a job, some level of ability will still be required by the worker carrying out the tasks involved. For some jobs these ability levels will vary according to the difficulty of the individual tasks. Taken for granted abilities to read and write, for example, may be needed for even

the most routinised of jobs. Even in the most scripted call centres, for example, operators will need to be able to read scripts, have good keyboard skills and be able to use computerised systems of data capture. As Attewell (1990: 443) puts it 'rules – however authoritarian and detailed – provide little more than a schematic for work, a guide into which employees insert their abilities in classifying, choosing, interacting, persuading, and so on'.

It is on measuring these kinds of abilities that significant advances have been made and it is on this kind of data that much of the contemporary skill debate is based. To analyse the complexity of jobs, for example, the US Department of Labor reviews the job content of around 1,000 occupational job titles on a five-year rolling basis. Known as the Occupational Information Network (O*NET), it analyses jobs against 239 descriptors. These are hierarchical measures which are grouped into six domains which describe the day-to-day aspects of the job and the qualifications of the typical worker. Descriptors are grouped into domains according to how the data are collected. The skills jobs require, for example, are assessed by job analysts according to the importance and level of 35 activities such as communication, use of technology, reading, writing and critical thinking. The data for other domains comes from self-reported assessments by job incumbents in response to standardised survey questions. The sample sizes are not easy to identify from the publicly released data, but one estimate suggests that the data are based on 40 respondents per descriptor for each occupation (Tippin and Hilton, 2010). It is also important to remember that O*NET provides information on job characteristics only at the level of occupations and not at the level of the worker (Autor and Handel, 2009).

On a smaller scale, a survey series in Britain has been developed over the last three decades, but with questions directed at individual workers. The series began in 1986 with the Social Change and Economic Life Initiative (SCELI) and then a similar survey – known as Employment in Britain (EIB) – was

carried out in 1992 (Gallie et al., 1998; Penn et al., 1994). Building on the skills questions asked of respondents to these employment-focused surveys, the Skills Surveys were launched in 1997 with a specific focus on collecting more skills data than had hitherto been collected in Britain. The survey was repeated in 2001 and 2006 with an enlarged sample size of 7,787 workers aged 20–65 years old. The survey was broadened out slightly in 2012, with more emphasis on the quality of work, although the collection of skills data remains at its core (Ashton et al., 1999; Felstead et al., 2002, 2007b, 2013, 2015).

By consistently asking job-holders about what they actually do in the course of their work, a picture of skill change has been produced. These surveys focus on what qualifications respondents would need to get their current job, what length of training is needed, how long it takes to learn to do the job and what activities are important to the job. It is known as the 'job requirements approach' and is in the tradition of measuring the complexity of jobs rather than the degree to which job-holders are given autonomy (Felstead et al., 2013).

The results of the data series show that the qualification requirements of jobs in Britain have moved upwards since 1986 (see Figure 13.3). However, the upward movement became more pronounced between 2006 and 2012. Jobs requiring no qualifications on entry fell from 28 per cent in 2006 to 23 per cent in 2012, while jobs requiring degrees or higher rose from a fifth (20 per cent) in 2006 to around a quarter (26 per cent) in 2012. At no time in the 1986–2012 period have falls and rises of these magnitudes been recorded.

The data also showed that while the use of generic skills was on the rise between 1992 and 2006, they barely changed between 2006 and 2012. Among 10 generic skills, the changes have been modest, with just two moving significantly upwards and one downwards. Figure 13.4 illustrates the movement of four generic skills. Of these, numerical skills rose significantly between 2006 and 2012, problem-solving skills declined

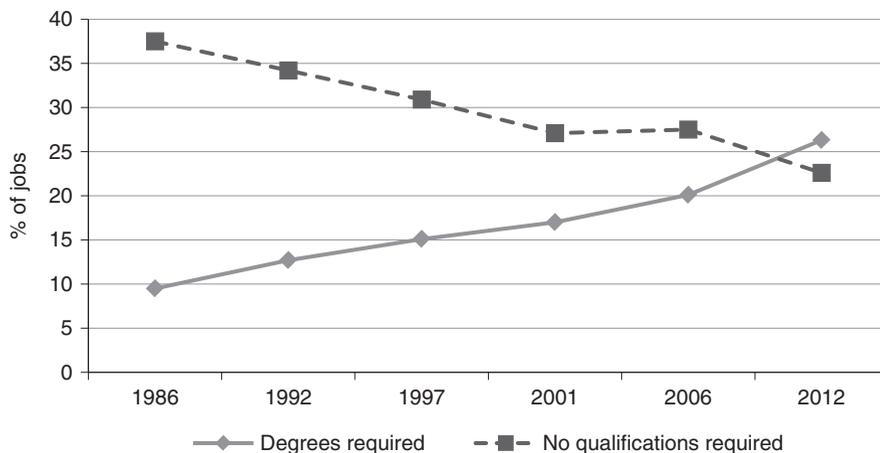


Figure 13.3 Qualification required trends, Britain, 1986–2012

Source: Felstead et al. (2013).

significantly and professional communication skills remained unchanged. Computer skills requirements continued to rise, but much more slowly than before. Around nine percentage points were added to the proportion of respondents regarding computing skills as ‘essential’ to their daily work activities at each data point between 1997 and 2006, but between 2006 and 2012 just over three

percentage points were added. Jobs requiring sophisticated computer use also slowed down. There was a substantial upward movement in sophisticated computer use between 1997 and 2001 and then again between 2001 and 2006; subsequently, however, there was no statistically significant change.

International comparisons are also possible with the publication of the initial results

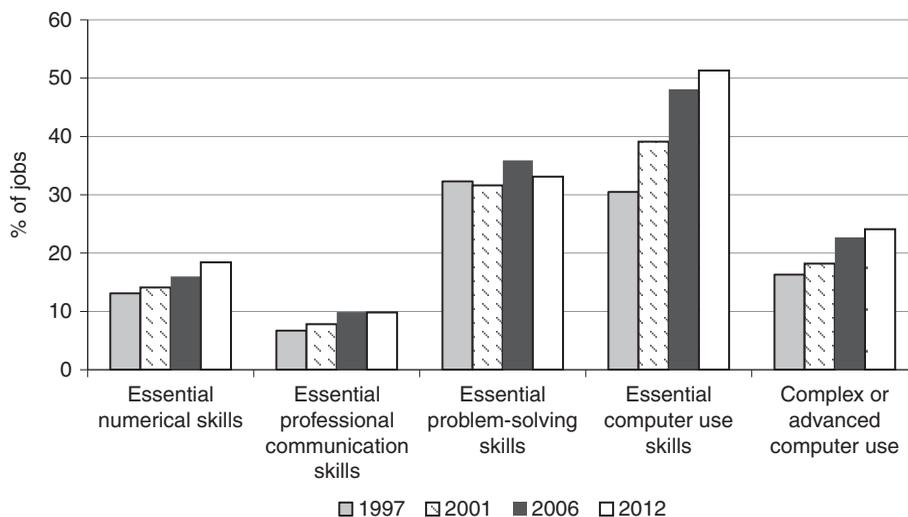


Figure 13.4 Generic skill change, Britain, 1997–2012

Source: Felstead et al. (2013).

from the OECD’s first Survey of Adult Skills carried out in 2011/12. Like the British Skills and Employment Survey, it focuses on what tasks need to be undertaken in the jobs respondents currently occupy. It does so by asking about the frequency with which respondents perform specific tasks. So, to measure problem-solving skills respondents were asked: ‘How often are you usually confronted with more complex problems that take at least 30 minutes to find a good answer?’ Answers given are then grouped into 12 domains, five of which are based on responses to a single question, as in the case of problem-solving. Figure 13.5 presents the results for the latter. Even though only one of the 12 domains is presented, it is clear that the international rankings based on discretion levels exercised at work – shown in Figures 13.1 and 13.2 – differ from those based on the complexity of the tasks involved, as shown in Figure 13.5. For example, problem-solving in the Nordic countries is slightly higher than average, but in terms of job autonomy they come top of the list. Similarly, the relatively poor performance of Eastern European countries in terms

of task discretion is not repeated for problem-solving skills. In fact, both the Czech Republic and the Russian Federation move from the bottom half to the top half of the ‘league’ with the change of focus.

It is clear from this discussion, then, that the complexity of jobs and the discretion afforded to those who carry them out are distinct analytical concepts. Having said that, they are significantly correlated; that is to say, the more complex the job, the more discretion the worker is given, and vice versa (Gallie et al., 2004). However, the two are not perfectly aligned and therefore they are not synonymous. Collecting evidence about both aspects of jobs makes it possible to present a more nuanced and realistic picture of what jobs entail, and therefore allows, at least in principle, neither conceptualisation to predominate.

WHAT SKILLS DO WORKERS HAVE?

Another way of looking at skills is to examine what abilities individuals have and

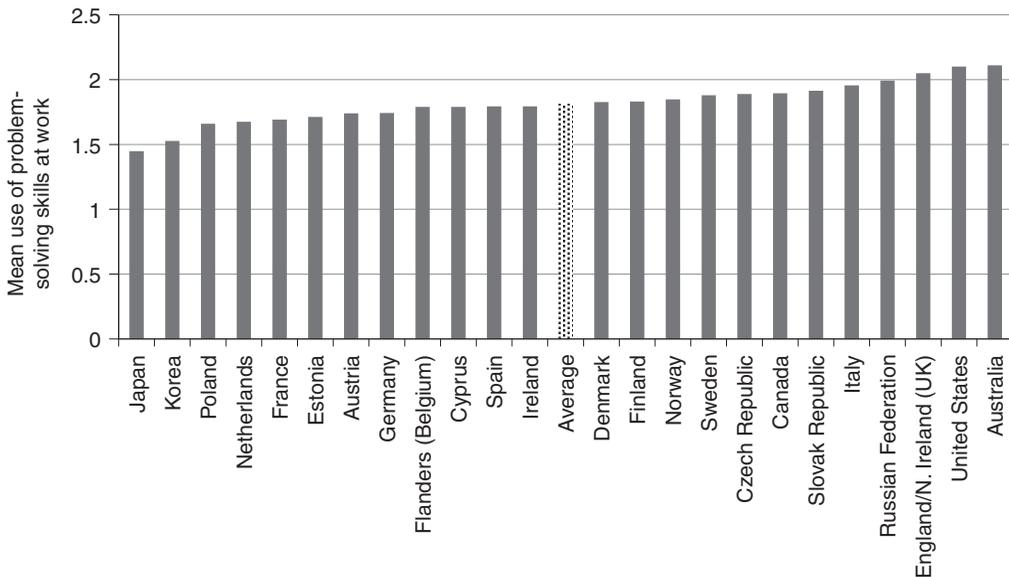


Figure 13.5 Problem-solving skills at work, OECD, 2011/12

Source: Compiled from OECD (2013a), Figure 4.1 and accompanying spreadsheet.

at what level. Here, then, the focus is the individual, whether in or out of work, as well as those not yet of working age such as school children. The best example of the latter is PISA, the international testing programme of school children co-ordinated by the OECD. It began in 2000 and is carried out every three years. It assesses how far students near the end of compulsory education (at the age of 15) have acquired the knowledge and skills considered essential for full participation in society. In all sweeps of the test, the domains of reading, mathematical and scientific literacy are covered. The number of participating countries has grown from 43 in 2000 to 64 in 2012. In the 2012 tests, children in Shanghai, Singapore, Hong Kong, Taiwan, South Korea and Japan were among the top 10 performers (see Table 13.1). In fact, students in Shanghai performed so well that their superiority in maths was equivalent to nearly three years of extra schooling compared to the OECD average (OECD, 2013b). In older industrial nations, such as the US, UK and Australia, performance was not as good, with children in these societies scoring around the average.

Based on this kind of evidence, the traditional rallying cry is that school children need to be better ‘turned out’ for today’s labour market or will face difficulties in making their way into as well as through adulthood. Lying behind such calls is human capital

theory and the idea that individuals – such as school leavers or workers with many years of experience – make investments in acquiring abilities that employers want. The higher or rarer these abilities, the higher the productivity of workers and the higher the wages they receive (Becker, 1964). As a result of this conceptualisation, ‘every worker, the human capitalist theorists are fond of saying, is now a capitalist’ (Bowles and Gintis, 1975: 74), since by investing in developing their own abilities individuals will be rewarded. However, this neglects labour’s special character at the heart of the labour process debate reviewed earlier. In commodity exchange, what you see is what you get – as summarised by the expression ‘sold as seen’, commonly used in the second-hand car market. However, this does not apply in the case of labour exchange which is marked by the absence of a precise and detailed *quid pro quo*. Rather, the capacity of the individual to contribute to the production process is the commodity which is exchanged for a price. That price is the wage which is determined by the forces of supply and demand. By contrast, the actual work expended – the labour – is determined not by the market but by the social relations of production, such as how the labour process is organised and supervised by management. The word capital, therefore, is misleading since investing in developing one’s abilities does not confer an automatic claim on future income nor ownership and control of the means of production.

An alternative argument is that education and schooling is a way of sorting and positioning labour, thus dividing the labouring class. Positional conflict theory captures this idea (Brown, 2000). For example, if everyone in a society improves their academic performance and moves the society up the PISA league table (as urged by politicians), this will do nothing to alter each individual’s position relative to others in that society and improve their relative standard of living. Yet, in the competition for jobs, it is one’s ranking against others that matters in securing access to the most desirable jobs.

Table 13.1 Reading, maths and science test scores, OECD country rankings, 2012

Rank	Reading	Maths	Science
1	China: Shanghai	China: Shanghai	China: Shanghai
2	Hong Kong	Singapore	Hong Kong
3	Singapore	Hong Kong	Singapore
4	Japan	Taiwan	Japan
5	South Korea	South Korea	Finland
6	Finland	Macau: China	Estonia
7	Ireland	Japan	South Korea
8	Taiwan	Liechtenstein	Vietnam
9	Canada	Switzerland	Poland
10	Poland	Netherlands	Canada

Source: Derived from OECD (2013b: 5).

Rates of return analyses provide support for this position, but at the same time do not fully reject the idea that workers' skills remain a strong determinant of pay (Folbre, 2012). Despite large educational expansion in the UK, for example, the monetary benefits of education have remained high, indicating that the higher qualified are, on average, more likely to receive higher wages and be in work. This is somewhat weaker than the stronger human capital position which states that human capital endowments – here measured by qualifications – determine the economic contribution workers are able to make and therefore the economic rewards they receive, i.e., there is a direct one-to-one match. Instead, the evidence is that economic rewards in the UK have become more variable and have started to decline in recent years, indicating the increased importance of ranking *within* qualification categories (Walker and Zhu, 2008).

However, the collective bargaining power of workers to claim 'skilled' status and therefore to argue for consummate wages also needs to be examined. This directs attention to the ways in which skill is constructed, defended and maintained by different interest groups, with the focus therefore placed on groups rather than the individual or the job. Social historians and sociologists are among those most attracted to such an approach. Particular use has been made of the social construction of skill approach in historical accounts of the impact of technological change, such as those reviewed earlier.

The introduction of mechanised typesetting at the turn of the nineteenth century, for example, was marked by male trade unions' vigorous opposition to the entry of women into the trade on the grounds of dilution. This resulted in the maintenance of parts of the printing production process as all-male preserves, with employers agreeing to ban the recruitment of female apprentices (Gillespie, 1953).

More generally, journeymen printers, through their craft trade unions, maintained their claims to 'skilled status' by strategies of

social closure. This involved 'a double exclusion, both of management from direct or complete control over the labour process and of other workers who offer a potential threat to such controls' (Penn, 1983: 121). This involved restricting access to 'skill jobs' to those with the requisite skills, i.e., those who had served their time as apprentices, while simultaneously exercising strict control over the number and type of people admitted to the ranks of 'the skilled' through regulation of the apprenticeship system. Journeymen printers' greatest fear was always the outsider. The biggest single category of worker barred from entry was women (Cockburn, 1983). Their role was almost entirely limited to the bookbinding and other low-paid finishing operations which were deemed as 'unskilled'. Women were not considered suitable for apprenticeships, and hence were barred from all-male print trade unions and the craft status that this inferred. Physical and moral factors such as women not being strong enough and the metals used in production being harmful to pregnancy were used ideologically to justify the exclusion of women and discourage them from applying to become apprentices (Felstead, 1988).

For some authors, then, skill is defined, at least in part, by the gender of those who perform the work. Marxist-feminist scholars see two processes at work simultaneously (Cockburn, 1981). On the one hand, powerfully organised workers forge their class identity vis-à-vis both capital and the less well organised; while on the other, men and women are to some extent mutually defined as genders through their relation to the same technology and labour process. In neither case is it a balanced process. By owning the means of production the capitalist class has the initiative. By securing and protecting privileged access to capability and technology men have the initiative. By this process, it is argued, each party gains the power to define the other as inferior, and in the case of the female worker as 'unskilled'. This has led to the suggestion that: 'Far from being an objective economic fact, skill is

often an ideological category imposed on certain types of work by virtue of the sex and power of the workers who perform it' (Phillips and Taylor, 1980: 79).

The assumption of most rates of return analysis is that the labour market is perfectly competitive, with any gender, age or other demographic differences regarded as either anomalies or as evidence of discrimination. This approach pays little attention to how the labour market is structured (or rigged) by different interest groups (as outlined above), and simply assumes that the higher the wage the higher the level of expertise needed to carry out the job. How valid is this assumption? To address this question and reveal labour market segmentation, we need to examine how well-matched workers' skills are with the skills their jobs require. Such an approach brings the previous two parts of this chapter together in the section which follows.

ARE THE SKILLS OF JOBS AND THE SKILLS OF WORKERS IN BALANCE?

As the OECD (2013a: 142) points out, 'having skills is not enough; to achieve growth, both for a country but also for an individual, skills must be put to productive use at work'. This a sentiment echoed in several government pronouncements. The Scottish Government, for example, based its Effective Skills Use campaign on the premise that 'we collectively need to make better use of skills' since 'organisations and individuals will only reap the full benefits of skills investment when workplaces fully enable staff to also *use* their skills effectively' (Scottish Government, 2012). At the UK level, too, skills under-utilisation has featured in policy discussions, with the UK Commission for Employment and Skills (UKCES) stating that 'the future employment and skills system will need to *invest as much effort in raising employer ambition, in stimulating demand, as it does in enhancing skills supply*' (UKCES, 2009: 10, emphasis added).

The supply of skills (discussed in the previous section) may not always be in alignment with employer demand (discussed in the second section). This may be reflected in skill shortages which arise where employers find it difficult to fill their vacancies with appropriately skilled applicants. Respondents to employer surveys are therefore commonly asked questions about the incidence and cause of any hard-to-fill vacancies they report. Despite the low reported level of skill shortage vacancies – affecting just 3–5 per cent of establishments over the last decade in the UK – skill shortages frequently make newspaper headlines, especially when it is claimed they may hamper business expansion (e.g., *Financial Times*, 2014a, 2014b). Frequently, skilled trades such as plumbers and electricians are in the shortest supply. However, employers' perceptions of deficiencies in the skills of the existing workforce are more prevalent. These deficiencies – often referred to as latent skills gaps – affect around one in six establishments, and have remained at that level since the data were first collected in a consistent way in 1999 (Winterbotham et al., 2014: Annex B). It is very rare for employers to be challenged from both directions; just 1 per cent of all employers experienced both skill-shortage vacancies and skills gaps.

Until 2011 employer surveys in the UK have focused entirely on the deficiencies of current or potential workers and have not even fleetingly collected data on whether the skills of the existing workforce are used effectively or not. That type of analysis was left to individual-level surveys (see below). However, since 2011 the biennial Employer Skills Survey carried out by UKCES has included one survey question which tackles this issue. It asks employers how many of their staff they consider to have both qualifications and skills that are more advanced than required for their current job. Across the UK almost half of all establishments (48 per cent) reported having at least one employee over-qualified and over-skilled – what is sometimes referred to as 'real over-qualification'. This figure equates to just

under 4.3 million workers, or 16 per cent of the total UK workforce, and dwarfs estimates for skill shortage vacancies (146,200) and skill gaps (1,409,900) (Winterbotham et al., 2014: 8, 37). However, it should also be remembered that this ‘real over-qualification’ estimate is derived from a single question and is based on employers’ knowledge of the qualifications held by workers in their charge and the skills those workers have.

More precise estimates of skills mismatches are available from individual-level surveys which contain a series of questions about job skills and the skills held by workers themselves. The ‘self-declared’ method measures the difference between workers’ views of what qualifications – used as a proxy for skills – are required to be hired for the job, and the qualifications they in fact hold. Those workers with qualifications higher than those required are deemed to be ‘over-qualified’, while those with qualifications lower than required are deemed to be ‘under-qualified’. The British Skills Survey data suggest that between 2006 and 2012 the long trend of rising levels of over-qualification in Britain was put into reverse (see Table 13.2). From 1986 to 2006, additional percentage points were added at each data point to the proportion over-qualified. Yet, over 2006–2012 the proportion fell by two percentage points, with an even sharper decline among graduates, where it fell by six points (Felstead et al., 2013).

This suggests that at a time when the supply of qualified workers was growing ever larger, better levels of matching were also taking place. This is a major development since separate country studies using non-comparable indicators typically find that over-qualification is prevalent in upwards of a fifth of the population (McGuinness, 2006). Moreover, in some countries the over-qualification rate has been rising. German data, for example, suggest that over-qualification among male full-time workers has increased from 23 per cent in 1997 to 32 per cent in 2006 (Rohrbach-Schmidt and Tiemann, 2011). Over-qualification has also been on the rise for two decades in Britain,

although it has fallen for the first time more recently.

In order to take the analysis further, responses to questions posed elsewhere in these surveys can be used to examine whether those over-qualified are able or unable to use their skills at work effectively. This suggests that the ‘real over-qualification’ rate – those over-qualified and unable to use their skills at work expressed as a proportion of all workers – has remained unchanged at between 12 and 13 per cent over the 1992–2012 period. Instead, most of the growth in ‘over-qualification’ between 1992 and 2006 was accounted for by ‘formal over-qualification’, a problem of less importance in practice, given that respondents said they were able to use most of their skills at work (see Table 13.2). This suggests that the matching process is working rather better than the unadjusted over-qualification figures would suggest.

Nevertheless, international comparisons of over-qualification suggest that the picture for

Table 13.2 Real and formal over-qualification, Britain, 1992–2012 (%)

	1992	2001	2006	2012
<i>All Workers</i>				
Over-qualified of which:	29.4	35.5	39.1	36.9
real over-qualified	12.2	12.5	12.8	12.6
formal over-qualified	17.3	23.1	26.4	24.4
<i>Graduates</i>				
Over-qualified of which:	22.2	23.3	28.7	22.8
real over-qualified	6.4	7.0	10.2	7.7
formal over-qualified	15.3	16.3	18.5	15.0

Notes: The ‘over-qualified’ are defined as those workers who have qualifications which exceed the level of qualification required for the job. This group is then sub-divided according to the response given to the question: ‘How much of your past experience, skill and ability can you make use of in your present job?’ Those answering ‘very little’ or ‘a little’ (and reporting over-qualification) are classified as experiencing ‘real over-qualification’. The remainder, that is, those responding ‘quite a lot’ or ‘almost all’, are classified as experiencing ‘formal over-qualification’ (cf. Green and Zhu, 2010: 750–752). Rounding and proportionately more missing data among graduates to the 1992 follow-up question account for the additive column discrepancies. The skills in use question was not asked in the 1997 survey.

Source: Felstead and Green (2013), Table A2.

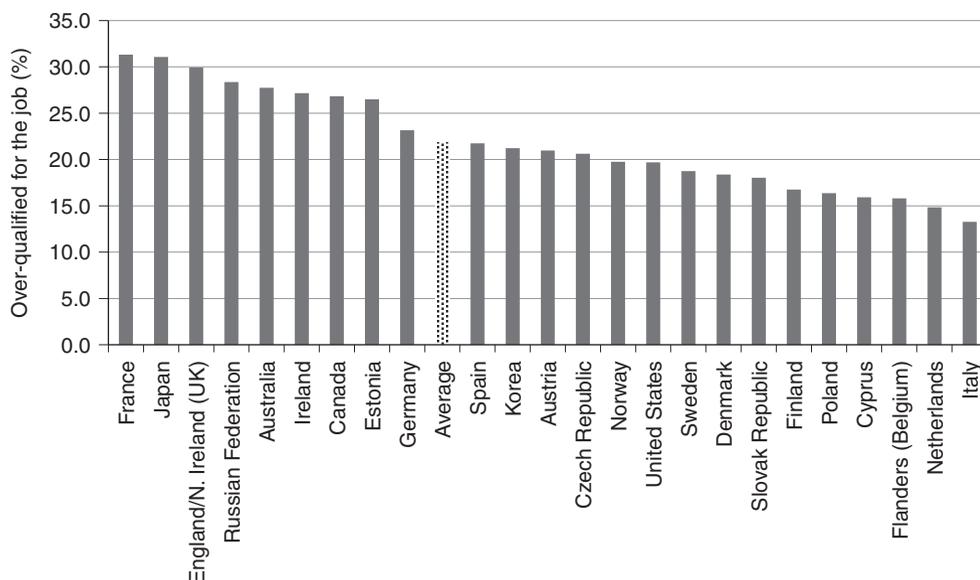


Figure 13.6 Incidence of over-qualification, OECD, 2011/12

Source: Compiled from OECD (2013a), Figure 4.25a and accompanying spreadsheet.

the UK is far from rosy (OECD, 2013a: 169–171). Using similar ‘self-declared’ methods of measuring over-qualification, mismatches are on average more prevalent in the UK than in 21 out of 23 other countries. In the UK the over-qualification is 30 per cent compared to the OECD average of 22 per cent (see Figure 13.6). However, over-qualification rates are more than one percentage point higher in France and Japan, while they are considerably lower in the Nordic countries of Finland, Denmark, Sweden and Norway.

While present day over-qualification rates are high across the world, Braverman (1974: Chapter 20) identified the phenomenon as a tendency in capitalist societies over 40 years ago. He pointed out that ‘the commonly made connection between education and job content is, for the mass of jobs, a false one, [that] will not necessarily result in a reversal of the educational trend and bring about an earlier school leaving age’ (1974: 305). Instead, competition for the most desirable jobs has increased, and has led to ‘social congestion’ – as evidenced by over-qualification – and rising levels of frustration for those who have lost out, despite

investing time and money in getting qualified (Brown, 2013).

CONCLUSION

The aim of this chapter has been to highlight the conceptual underpinnings of a topical debate which commonly features in public and political discourse. However, as other researchers have pointed out (e.g., Keep and Mayhew, 2010), skills do not offer a panacea to cure all society’s ills. Individuals’ acquisition of more skills, for example, does not guarantee higher economic rewards or even a job commensurate with the skills acquired. Similarly, increasing the stock of available skills in a society may do little to change its economic fortunes if other societies increase skills by an equivalent or higher amount and/or employers fail to put workers’ skills to good use. In short, for individuals and societies, having and even increasing skills is not enough since rewards will only be forthcoming if those skills are used productively.

In addition to driving up (or down) a society's living standards, these issues have been used – along with other factors – as a means of grouping countries into ideal-type clusters for the purposes of comparative analysis. How different societies develop worker skills, how employers put those skills to use at work, and what level of say workers have in carrying out their daily tasks are among some of the key issues which feed into the societal classification debate (Gallie, 2007, 2013; Soskice, 1999). The 'employment regime' approach identifies three clusters: inclusive (such as the Nordic countries), dualist (such as Germany and France) and liberal market regimes (such as the UK). They are differentiated from each other by: (a) the strength of non-market coordination of initial and continuing skills development with what skills are required; and (b) the level of consultation and influence workers have in decision-making at work, including how they do their job. Employment regime theory is, therefore, based on a multi-dimensional approach to skills.

The same cannot be said for the reporting of skills data. As the chapter has shown, much turns on the conceptual underpinnings of the debate. The appetite for the latest skills data is often so overwhelming that these foundations are shrouded by discussion of the latest empirical finding. As a result, it is not unusual for commentators to slip unknowingly between them. The structure of this chapter is intended to help students, teachers and analysts to avoid making similar mistakes. The chapter, therefore, distinguishes job skills (the second section) from person skills (the third section) and then considers how the interaction between these two analytical viewpoints can lead to skill shortages and skill under-utilisation (the fourth section).

Within each section some of the main conceptual debates are laid bare. Most significantly, the chapter highlights the distinction between definitions of skill which focus on discretion levels exercised at work and those which are couched in terms of the complexity of the job. While the former has a long history, which is used to illuminate (mostly) case

studies of particular industries, the latter has a much shorter lineage, which has done much to inform contemporary international survey design. Furthermore, job complexity has a direct corollary to the abilities held by workers, and so the skills mismatch debate gives additional prominence to complexity rather than discretion-based definitions of skill. It is not surprising, therefore, that the survey findings on skills which are frequently quoted in public debate – some of which are used in this chapter – tend to foreground one conceptualisation over another. However, some work and employment sociologists continue to use the word 'skill' to refer to the level of control workers have over the labour process, while others – such as employment regime theorists – focus on task discretion *and* the abilities required to do the job, including how these abilities are acquired. A key lesson, therefore, is that in order to avoid confusion, those who read, report or study the skill debate need to be careful about the underpinning definitions of skill used and the analytical level at which they are applied. After all, like Lewis Carroll's Alice in *Through the Looking Glass* (1872), those who study the sociology of work 'can make words [such as skill] mean so many different things'.

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and became central to private corporations with the innovations of Alfred Sloan and Pierre DuPont in the 1920s. It was linked to the emergence of mass production and strategies of scale and scope; those companies that best mastered the new arts of management – essentially bureaucratic leadership – dominated the mid-century period (Chandler, 1977).

Corporations exist, as Coase (1937) first showed, because markets do not enable enough consistency of communication and coordination to manage large projects. A car can't be built merely by exchanging parts in markets: the inefficiencies would be intolerable. It needs a whole system of stable processes and interfaces, with reliable means of giving orders and confidence they will be followed. Bureaucracy fulfilled those functions by breaking the overall goal into discrete pieces with clear hierarchies of authority and accountability, so that hundreds or thousands of people, each pursuing one segment, would nevertheless come up with a coherent product. This produced the familiar pyramid of offices with functional divisions. The nature of each office was determined by the requirements of the organization, so that persons were essentially defined as functions in a 'mechanical' system (Burns and Stalker, 1961).

The extreme version of the bureaucratic paradigm was Frederick Taylor's (1911) 'scientific management' of shop-floor workers. Taylor insisted that every motion should be determined by rational study of the requirements of production, and workers should merely follow the prescriptions laid down by management. At higher levels, bureaucratic rules were of course not so behaviorally detailed – Weber himself believed that most jobs would require a good deal of autonomous judgment and use of expertise. Nevertheless, the essential requirement common to all levels was that actors stay within the boundaries of their official job definitions in order to maintain the rationality of the overall system.

In practice, it was clear from the start that no organization could operate on such a purely rationalized basis, because no system

designed like a machine could deal with the complexity and fluidity of actual business activity. Real-world functioning required constant interaction and mutual adjustment among many players, which could not be controlled by the relatively slow processes of rule-writing and job definition. An excessive focus on rule-following, as Merton (1940) argued, could lead to over-conformity and a 'sanctification' of procedures, with a loss of attention to the purpose.

The initial solution involved the development of informal teamwork and cooperation. Chester Barnard's landmark *Functions of the Executive* (1938) outlined two parallel worlds: a formal structure which resembled Weber's hierarchy of offices, and an 'informal organization' of mutual cooperation. Leadership, in his view, consisted of maintaining the strength of both these worlds simultaneously. The famous 'Hawthorne studies' demonstrated that a sense of teamwork improved productivity even in routine tasks (Roethlisberger et al., 1939), and inspired a widespread philosophy of 'human relations' management.

This hybrid of formal bureaucracy and informal cooperation, cemented by secure employment and organizational loyalty, marked the best work systems through most of the twentieth century. Where management pursued a purely bureaucratic or rationalist vision, ignoring the informal organization, the result was the kind of destructive political infighting famously documented by Michel Crozier in *The Bureaucratic Phenomenon* (1964). Successful companies brought informal relations into harmony with the formal structure through a set of tightly interlocking practices. For example, compensation was relatively uniform within each level in order to prevent envy among peers and to avoid overlaps between levels; rewards were expected to come through promotions, not pay differentials. Elaborate internal training organizations took over from the educational system to provide company-specific skills beyond the entry level. Strong norms of loyalty developed to anchor a lifetime

commitment, with reciprocal obligations from the company. Equally strong norms prevented people from going over their bosses' heads or transgressing on each other's turf. These norms, and many more, were necessary to sustain the human commitment and cooperation that animated the rational hierarchy.

But companies have become increasingly aware that this bureaucratic-loyalist complex breaks down in situations of high dynamism and complexity – the very kinds of situations that are increasingly common in determining competitive success. The operation of bureaucracies requires systematically limiting channels of communication. Getting anything done beyond the immediate work group requires going up the 'chain of command', which is a formal, slow and erratic process and easily blocked. As the formal organization is arranged in aptly-named vertical 'divisions', the informal organization divides into 'stovepipes', in which relations within particular areas overwhelm the sense of the whole. Divisions fight against each other and resist working together.

Relations in bureaucratic systems are also largely restricted to other members of the system: each person worries about a boss and (above the shop-floor level) a few subordinates. Aside from a few sales people at the lower margins of the organization, no one connects to customers. Internal connections, stable and reinforced daily, become more salient than the changing pressures of the outside world – so there is a strong tendency to turn inward, to fail to respond to the environment. For the same reason, bureaucracies emphasize internal harmony, which leads to resistance to diversity and novelty, and to strong defensive routines that block learning.

These weaknesses have been documented in many studies of bureaucracy (Jackall, 1989; Kanter, 1977), and – more important – are widely accepted in practice by business leaders. Thus there has been a sustained effort to develop organizations that connect more richly. Companies have widely sought to break down stovepipes and other internal barriers to communication, to build more bridges

to the outside world, and to free individuals to innovate.

ALTERNATIVES

The critique of the bureaucratic model, and its central concept of stable offices or jobs, has produced several distinct images of what the future organization might look like. The terminology, once again, remains inconsistent: important terms have included 'ad-hocratic' (Mintzberg, 1998), 'networked' (Podolny and Page, 1998; Powell, 1990), 'collaborative' (Heckscher, 2007), 'matrix' organization (Galbraith, 2008), and dozens of others. We can distinguish a few broad strands. One aims to increase individual autonomy by reducing or even eliminating formal organization and returning to markets; another seeks a revival of a 'mutualist' philosophy that dates back to the nineteenth century, with an emphasis on local participation; and a third seeks to build networks into reliable mechanisms for coordinating economic activity on a large scale.

Freeing the Individual

The first of these sets of reforms focuses essentially on reversing the growth of formal organizations by cutting back on rules and enlarging the sphere of individual autonomy. The aim is to tear apart the restraints that hamper bureaucracy – the cumbersome chains of command, the inward-focused loyalties, the conflicting stovepipes – and to free individuals to pursue initiatives and connections on their own.

The Pure Market Image

Some foresee the end of organizations, with individuals acting as 'free agents' (Pink, 2002) hawking their wares in open markets. This tendency is facilitated by new communications technologies making possible direct relations between independent producers

and consumers. There have been some initial successes of this type in hospitality (Airbnb) and local transport (Uber). ‘Workers’ in these cases have to please only individual customers: there is neither supervisor nor powerful organization shaping the work.

The problem with this model is the same as it has always been: markets are poor at coordinating complex interactions. Even hardened economists have increasingly recognized the need for organization in some form (Williamson, 1975). Thus, while it is true that there has been substantial growth in ‘freelancing’ throughout much of the industrialized world, most of it is contracted by formal organizations for particular projects. Some of the true independent workers of the past, especially medical professionals, are going in the opposite direction, drawn more and more into regular employment. There are relatively few industries where a true market solution has advanced, mainly in personal services, such as chauffeuring or web page design for individuals; the larger movements have been towards new forms of organization, such as decentralized, mutualist or collaborative forms.

Decentralized Organization

The economic impulse is still visible within organizations, however, in modified form, in the popularity of decentralization – reducing the degree of central control by giving more autonomy to units at a lower level. Decentralization can be done in many ways: for example, by creating product units with the freedom to innovate within their own products; or by creating autonomous units that perform specific pieces of a production process (modularization) (Gittell et al., 2008; Simon, 1974).

Although decentralization is often touted as new and anti-bureaucratic, it – like markets – is essentially an old move that does not fundamentally challenge the bureaucratic paradigm. The ‘decentralized bureaucracy’ was invented by Alfred Sloan and Pierre DuPont in the 1920s, making possible much more complex production than could be achieved

in a strongly centralized setting (Chandler, 1977). But decentralization also creates its own set of problems: duplication of effort in different units, disconnection between the parts, lack of coordination for the customer, lack of fit among products made by different parts of the same company. For these reasons large companies in the twentieth century went through regular cycles of decentralization (when more freedom and innovation were needed) and centralization (when more standardization and efficiency were needed). The ‘new’ efforts at modularization and autonomy have not escaped these dynamics (Gittell et al., 2008).

The ‘Star’ Paradigm

The ‘star’ paradigm might be considered a highly decentralized model midway between organization and market. It is particularly popular in the financial sector, but has spread widely, even into traditional manufacturing. The premise of this model is that an effective organization merely gathers the most talented people and frees them to perform their best by minimizing rules and supervision. The employment relation is weak, and pay levels are highly responsive to market signals.

The focus on gathering the best people leads to a ‘War For Talent’, as an influential McKinsey & Co. article (Chambers et al., 1998) put it. The core assumption is that talent is a general individual quality: good organizations hire and retain those who have more of it. The prime solution has been to pay top talents well in order to keep them from being stolen by competitors.

The second part of this approach is to free the stars from restrictive rules. This of course creates problems of coordination and accountability. The solution has come from ‘agency theory’, which recommends monetary rewards for performance that meets the goals of the ‘principals’ – i.e., shareholders (Jensen, 1994). Thus, in the ideal scenario, work is minimally structured but maximally rewarded; no one tells you what to do, but if you do it right you get a lot of money.

The low level of structure encourages innovation and entrepreneurship. On the flip side, those who do not meet the goals are seen as 'deadwood' to be gotten rid of.

There is, however, considerable organization and management even in star models that is often overlooked. Managers define strategies, set targets, assess performance, and allocate pay. The stars can often leverage the ability to go out on the market in order to negotiate internally, but they remain subject to chains of command.

Star-focused organizations have been extensively researched, and the evidence on their effectiveness is at best ambiguous. The most influential studies focus on the performance of individuals but have little to say about whether the organizational result is better. And this is a crucial omission, because there are many reasons to believe that *even if* strong incentives increase individual effort and goal-seeking, that might not translate into better *organizational* performance:

- High reward for performance may encourage game-playing, manipulation and pursuit of short-term goals rather than a broader view of sustainable competitiveness.
- The emphasis on individual stars may undermine the coordinated teamwork needed for complex projects. If a problem requires cooperation across departments or the combination of different types of expertise, there is likely to be conflict over credit.
- Most tasks require a mix of orientations, including some highly innovative and even aggressive employees, and some who are more steady and reliable. An overemphasis on the former of these dimensions is as destructive as the latter (DeLong and Vijayaraghavan, 2003; Spreier et al., 2006).
- The approach may create a vicious circle which undermines commitment at all levels. At the top end, people who are highly marketable are constantly enticed by the lure of something better, leading to a kind of compensation 'arms race'. Other people, however, are stuck where they are because they cannot generate competing offers. This group naturally engages in narrow organizational politics to reduce their vulnerability, and they are also resentful, because it is increasingly

obvious that the company does not value them. The gap inevitably develops into a sharpening dualism. The end of the road may be an organization to which no one is really committed.

How serious are these problems, and do they offset the motivational power of individual incentives? The evidence is poor, but it tends to show that companies that avoid the star approach do better than the ones that embrace it. The evidence in *favor* of star systems is thin: surveys of the academic research have found that the core proposition, that emphasis on individual talent benefits company performance, has not been established (Rosenthal and Dudley, 2007). At the same time, there is much evidence for negative consequences of strong emphasis on individual performance. Studies of the financial services industry – the epicenter of the Talent War – shows that 'stars' who move to new companies perform worse than average in their new settings, especially when they are involved in interdependent tasks (Groysberg, 2010; Groysberg et al., 2008, 2011). Considerable qualitative work has shown the problems in more detail: overemphasis on individuals, internal competitiveness, lack of attention to systemic issues (Beer et al., 2004; Pfeffer, 2001; Spreier et al., 2006). And if one begins to list the paragons of tough performance-based rewards versus the companies that reject that approach and place more emphasis on teamwork and collaboration, a disconfirming pattern emerges. The key exemplars cited in the original McKinsey 'War For Talent' article include Enron, Home Depot, Bear Sterns, Citibank and First USA Bank. All of these have encountered major trouble in the last decade, several catastrophically. Those that have generally rejected star approaches include Procter & Gamble, IBM, Cisco, Goldman Sachs and Southwest Airlines (Galbraith, 2008; Gittell, 2003; Heckscher, 2007); overall their record is far better and more sustained.

The most consistent exponents of the star view argue that good employees

welcome these changes and embrace the new opportunities:

Anybody who is in an organization today has a place, an opportunity to contribute – there's no deadwood ... The extra responsibility makes people feel important and appreciated ... even though workloads may be heavier ... The people who remain face a challenge, but it's one that a great many are eager to confront. (Graham, 1997)

While hard evidence is scarce, what there is generally does not support this view. Especially since the 2008 recession, concern about job security has risen in both Europe and the US and appears to have fueled a broader sense of pessimism about the future (Debating Europe, 2014; Saad, 2013).

Cooperative Mutualism

Cooperatives

An old image that has resurfaced is that of a world of small producers engaged in exchange regulated not by market logic but by associational norms of sharing, mutuality and participative decision-making. This harkens back to the cooperatives of the nineteenth century, often associated at that time with worker movements. The most traditional form called for is groups of worker cooperatives (Rothschild and Russell, 1986; Wright, 2010). These tend to draw heavily on a few examples: Israeli kibbutzim; the Mondragon group, in the Basque region of Spain, which in 50 years has grown to over 80,000 workers in hundreds of companies, and has its own training and financing arms (Whyte, 1991); and the Emilia-Romagna region of Italy (Sabel, 1999). Other concentrated networks of cooperatives are found in Scandinavia and the logging areas of the American and Canadian Northwest. In the UK successive governments, both Labour and Conservative, have trumpeted versions of 'new mutualism' which would encourage such cooperatives; their primary model, besides Mondragon, is the John Lewis Partnership of retail stores.

These efforts appeal to the growing disenchantment with large bureaucracies, as well as rising inequality, and promise more local autonomy. The decentralized cooperative version is particularly attractive because it encourages a high degree of democracy. There is also strong evidence that worker ownership in general is positively related to productivity and firm success, at least when it is managed in a participatory way (Kruse et al., 2010).

It is less clear, however, that this form can thrive beyond a local level. Cooperatives have a long history as interesting but marginal institutions; most current efforts fall well within this pattern. Those that are linked into regional or industry groups appear more robust, but even the best examples of these are under strain as global flows of products and capital accelerate. Mondragon and the John Lewis Partnership have long remained as isolated beacons without engendering significant offspring, while most kibbutzim are moving away from cooperative principles (Russell et al., 2011). Moreover, Mondragon, as well as some large UK consumer cooperatives (such as The Cooperative Bank and The Cooperative Food) have run into serious difficulties since the economic crisis of 2008. Finally, it is not clear that any of these cases have significantly modified the bureaucratic form of organization: most internal accounts of Mondragon and John Lewis find that the work and authority structures are not sharply different from conventional companies.

This experience suggests that while cooperatives can occasionally maintain themselves through committed leadership and group spirit, they are hard to replicate and vulnerable to defection in times of crisis. Some analysts generally favorable to the cooperative movement have concluded, from the struggles of Mondragon and the Emilia Romagna districts, that cooperative mutualism cannot succeed widely without wider systemic reform of capitalist markets (Alperowitz and Hanna, 2013; Harrison, 1994).

Collaborative Networks

A final vision, with more traction within the core economy, explores coordinated teamwork – the combination of diverse capabilities in pursuit of a shared purpose. This has begun to coalesce into a logic of networks, which turns much of the bureaucratic logic on its head. While the virtues of good bureaucracy are stability, consistency, reliability and efficiency, the primary virtues of a network are flexibility, responsiveness and innovation. A bureaucracy creates a stable organization by dividing tasks into fixed pieces, while a network seeks constantly to reorganize capabilities around new tasks. Networks seek to create for any given problem not an organization but a team – a constellation of exactly those people who have the right knowledge and resources for that particular problem; their mission is not to execute routinized procedures, but to analyze the particular issues and respond to them. This undermines the idea that people should be attached to particular jobs: the measure of value is no longer ‘doing your job’, but contribution to the collective mission. In a hierarchical organization, those who go beyond their defined job functions are viewed as threats to the order of the whole; in a network-based system, they are vital to responsiveness and innovation.

We will elaborate three important aspects of the development of a network logic, with increasing scope:

- Stable autonomous teams, which began to emerge as early as the 1950s but became widespread only three decades later.
- A more recent development which poses even more profound challenges to the bureaucratic paradigm: the rise of temporary, project-focused teams crossing boundaries of the formal organization. These include ‘virtual’ teams that do not even meet in person but cooperate fluidly across space.
- ‘Post-bureaucratic’ organizational forms, which seek to reorganize production on a larger scale based on shifting project teams and multiple cross-cutting accountabilities.

Stable Work Teams

In the 1950s the first significant break in the bureaucratic paradigm emerged from theorists grouped in the Tavistock Institute, who began to articulate notions of *formalized teamwork* in which jobs, with clear accountabilities and spheres of autonomy, gave way to groups with shared responsibility and a flexible structure. In these ‘sociotechnical’ environments workers were expected to gain the skills for multiple tasks, to fill in for each other as needed, and even to make significant decisions together about methods of work (Trist and Murray, 1993).

In the 1980s there was an acceleration of team-based systems in this vein, under such rubrics as ‘Quality of Work Life’ or ‘autonomous teams’. These began to take on a wider range of authority. Much team research today continues to focus on this particular *kind* of team, increasingly extended upwards into the ranks of middle managers and engineers. Though terminology is inconsistent, these teams are frequently referred to under the rubric of ‘High-Performance Work Systems’ (Appelbaum and Berg, 2000).

These teams essentially gather together people who, in the older bureaucratic model, were subordinates of a single supervisor. Thus they are generally homogeneous in terms of the kind of work they do – they include assembly-line workers *or* engineers, for instance, but not both. And they are stable: the general belief in the literature is that the commitment needed for effective teamwork depends on assurances of employment security. They are usually small, six to eight people, though some have grown to two or three times that size.

What is new in these teams is that, rather than getting job definitions from HR specialists and being monitored by a supervisor, workers decide tasks among themselves and monitor each other. Thus on the shop-floor of Japanese auto factories workers gather periodically to check their performance against that of other teams and to investigate ways they can improve (Adler et al., 1997;

Rubinstein and Kochan, 2001). This radically alters the daily experience of work. In the pure Taylorist or bureaucratic structure, employees frequently develop informal peer norms around how to steer or resist their supervisor's demands; in a successful high-performance work system, they use formal problem-solving methods to improve their overall performance. But beyond the level of the team itself, the organization of work does not change a great deal: the hierarchical structure is essentially unchanged from the bureaucratic model, and teams get their goals through top-down management systems.

The research on the performance of these teams generally shows that they do better than comparable bureaucratically organized work units, primarily because of lower turnover and absenteeism, and sometimes innovative redesign (Combs et al., 2006; Stewart, 2006). However, this positive result lasts only as long as the teams remain stable and focused on a consistent task. Things are once again much less clear when one broadens out to the question: do these teams actually contribute to more effective organizations over time? It is striking how many instances there are in which teams have been effective but nevertheless have not survived – a phenomenon sometimes called the 'successful failure' (Heckscher, 2007: 213) This includes most of the touted exemplars of the 1980s and 1990s, such as Saturn's Spring Hill plant (Rubinstein and Kochan, 2001), NUMMI (Adler et al., 1997) and Xerox's Rochester plant.

There are a number of systemic reasons for this fragility:

- Stable teams build up strong internal solidarity and cohesion. They may therefore become more resistant to change introduced from outside, such as new technologies. It is easier to impose change from above on workers who are filling individual jobs than to get a team to agree to it.
- The same solidarity that makes possible internal flexibility may create walls against other parts of the organization. Where the star system pits individuals against each other, the stable team system merely moves that up a level: teams may protect their turf and withhold information from

other teams. Their successful experiments are seen as their own property rather than something to be shared.

- The grounding of commitment in security is an increasingly untenable bargain. Very few companies are able to promise real security in highly competitive markets, especially security attached to a particular team or location. Companies that have tried it have almost always been forced at some point to back off, under pressure from market or technological shifts. Thus the basic foundation of trust is undermined.

Stable teams, in short, increase flexibility and innovation within the boundaries of the group, but they do not reliably extend those gains to a larger system.

Project (Cross-functional) Teams

The research literature is insufficiently clear about the distinction between teams that are essentially permanent, as just discussed, and those that come together on a temporary basis for particular projects. The latter – especially ones that cross organizational boundaries – have grown much more common in recent decades, and their scope has widened dramatically. Whereas in the past, project work was largely limited to research divisions, today it is common to bring together assembly workers and engineers, or marketers, business consultants and programmers, often cutting across formal organizational levels, and sometimes across multiple organizations (Donnellon, 1993; Gulati, 2010). People often move in and out in different phases of work depending on the needs for skills and resources.

A major driver for the rise of project teams is the growing importance of knowledge to production. Commodities, which have low knowledge content, are increasingly going to areas of low-wage production or being automated. Work in the advanced economies generally has value because it is responsive to customer needs or innovative, or both. Responsiveness and innovation, however, increasingly depend on combining the knowledge of multiple specialists in interdisciplinary discussion. Thus the discussion of project

teams overlaps with the literature of knowledge management (Nonaka et al., 2000).

The dynamics of project teams are sharply different from those of permanent teams. They are less likely to build strong boundaries around themselves and to hoard information. But they have different problems:

- They need to master the same skills as stable teams, plus some that are even more difficult: how to integrate people quickly into the workflow as they move in and out of the team; how to revisit and redefine overall objectives as external demands shift; and often how to communicate over virtual technologies.
- They diffuse accountability by breaking the clear lines of the bureaucratic model. Members of the teams have multiple 'bosses'. Supervisors do not necessarily set the targets for their subordinates, and they cannot easily observe performance directly. And the team's objectives are likely to shift as the project develops, making it more difficult to establish clear benchmarks for success.
- They often generate political tension because they cut across existing unit lines. Team members are often expected to protect the interests of their home units rather than fully contributing as members of the project team. Such tensions can be a major source of conflict, especially as scope increases – when, for instance, teams include members of more than one company.
- They need to combine multiple kinds of knowledge with different standards and traditions. Misunderstandings and prejudices are common: engineers believe that marketers are too glib and shallow, marketers believe engineers are too perfectionist and inwardly-focused. The technical knowledge of one group must be taken on faith by members of another (Donnellon and Margolis, 1990).

In recent years the difficulties have been magnified by the growing use of communications technologies, especially virtual meetings over the internet. The challenges of virtual teams have an entire literature to themselves, but their dynamics are not essentially different from co-located teams – just more so (Hinds and Mortensen, 2005). They tend to have high levels of conflict and miscommunication. Anecdotal evidence nevertheless suggests that their use has risen

sharply in the last decade (Lipnack and Stamps, 2008).

One lesson which has come out of the research on project teams is the need for deliberate, organized process (Bryk et al., 2011; Colfer and Baldwin, 2010). It is not enough for people to form a team; there must be a set of steps that structure discussion and decision-making. In effect, rather than relying on established rules and procedures established by functional experts in a bureaucracy, project teams must largely invent and enforce their own rules. Thus explicit agreements must be negotiated about roles, responsibilities, timelines and decision processes.

Beyond Teams: Post-bureaucratic Systems

Team-based work systems present fundamental challenges to every aspect of the familiar bureaucratic organization that was dominant a few decades ago. The organization as a whole needs to learn new approaches for setting goals, assessing performance, establishing career paths, motivating employees, awarding compensation and dealing with leadership issues. The reorganization of work, in short, is just part of a reorganization of the *system* of work.

Within organizations, the proliferation of cross-functional teams, 'communities of practice' (Wenger, 1998), and temporary projects has led managers to rethink the bureaucratic hierarchy. Some have pictured it upside down, with employees at the top and management as 'support'. Though this is of course partly rhetorical – managers still hold authority – it does reflect the important fact that subordinates now often have specialized knowledge and skills that their bosses lack. Others draw multiple layers: a stable hierarchy overlaid by projects and 'initiatives'. This more complex form of collaboration combines centralization and decentralization through strong process organization: that is, people can form cross-functional teams fairly freely, as in the 'ad-hocracy' approach, but they must justify and document what they are doing so can they coordinate effectively with

other groups (Galbraith, 2008; Heckscher, 2007; Miles et al., 2009).

Across organizations there has been a general move towards spreading production along supply chains involving many companies, rather than trying to internalize everything within one company; the best of those chains involve more than purely commercial connections, but build ongoing relations and collaborative networks (MacDuffie and Helper, 2006). Customers, too, are increasingly treated not just as market agents; companies seek to draw them into deeper relations, often using social media to encourage communities (O'Hern and Rindfleisch, 2010). These companies are seeking to replace the sparse communications channels of classic bureaucracy with many rich cross-cutting relations; and they face the problem of how to organize those complex relations into a coherent process of production.

These developments have spurred great organizational innovation in mechanisms of process management and learning. This is an extremely rich field which has not been properly surveyed. It includes a wide array of techniques for managing participatory teams; for building flexible processes across teams and organizational units; and for drawing lessons that have practical use in future activity (Grover, 1999; Heckscher, 2007: 6). In the last decade the internet has spurred a further acceleration of methods for better communicating, and for gathering and organizing data.

In the light of these innovations, the bureaucratic process looks extremely limited. It has become increasingly feasible for people to come together in fluid constellations as problems evolve, without waiting for orders from their superiors. There is much less report-writing for bosses, and much more documentation of activity in ways that can actually be accessed by other actors as needed.

All these innovations, including their incomplete aspects, are even more clearly represented in open source software. This is a form of organization where the tools of bureaucratic authority are largely absent

because most actors are volunteers; yet in some instances, such as the battle between the Firefox browser and Microsoft's Internet Explorer, it has managed to outperform powerful corporations. Research on open source emphasizes the importance of distributed process management, strong reputational mechanisms, and a combination of modularized production units linked with rich discussion tools (Ferraro and O'Mahony, 2012; Langlois and Garzarelli, 2008; Benkler, 2007).

CHALLENGES OF THE NETWORK MODEL

The understanding of *networked production* – including flexible teams and post-bureaucratic organizations – is still in its infancy, though the practice is maturing rapidly. A large number of questions have no good answers and could benefit from research.

Though the evolution of work and work organization has been essentially in the direction of greater complexity, there is little understanding of how much complexity is manageable. Management texts used to emphasize limiting relations, each person dealing only with a small number of reports. The current trend, however, is to multiply links. Decentralization increases the number and difficulty of hierarchical connections, so that people may be 'supervising' dozens of people scattered around the world, rather than just a small and co-located handful; and each actor may in addition be part of multiple teams with formal responsibilities, some temporary and some longer-term, cross-cutting the hierarchical lines. Many companies have created directories of employees' skills and experiences so that every member may be able to reach any other member when necessary.

It is clearly not possible to manage an organization in which everyone deals with everyone else. Already many people feel overwhelmed by email traffic and meetings. It is essential to structure this free-for-all

without returning to the rigid and limited links of bureaucracy. Network theorists have sought to develop models of structured linkages, notably with the concepts of modularization and ‘small worlds’ (Uzzi et al., 2007; Watts, 1999) – both of which model small, continuous groups linked by flexible ‘bridgers’. But this small-world structure may still be too limiting: it does not comprehend the possibility that anyone – not just a few bridgers – may need to get resources and information from distant parts of the system. Even more important, it has not yet developed effective methods for understanding shifts in relational patterns over time, which is essential to organizing dynamic systems.

More generally, there is poor understanding of the systemic nature of the changes under way. Researchers tend to focus on one or a few pieces – compensation, strategy, relations, capabilities, hiring, and so on; but research on the nature of effective organizational systems which combine all these elements in a new way is rarer. Thus, although there is clearly widespread movement towards more complex and flexible organization, hard evidence that it works better than the old methods is scarce.

In many particular areas of human resources, the weakening of bureaucratic practices has led into still uncharted waters. To cite just three:

- *Assessment:* The diffusion of accountability discussed earlier has led to much use of multi-source or ‘360-degree’ assessment, in which many people with whom an actor has worked weigh in on the evaluation of performance; the supervisor in such a system becomes something like a coordinator of feedback rather than a sole judge. This approach may make it possible to overcome the tension between individual accountability and teamwork, which are generally seen as opposed: that is, those who contribute most effectively to the shared mission may be seen by peers as legitimately worthy of higher pay, without disrupting the sense of fairness and solidarity needed for effective teaming. But practice in this area is particularly far ahead of the research (Peiperl, 2001; van der Heijden and Nijhof, 2004).
- *Training:* Bureaucratic organizations classically relied on on-the-job experience and formal job training to develop the capabilities they needed. In recent decades many companies have reduced their use of formal employee training programs. It seems likely that many employees are drawing more than in the past, from professional associations and conferences, adult education (including online courses and certificates), and other extramural forms of training. But the extent of this move has not been well documented, and the comparative effectiveness of the alternatives even less.
- *Compensation:* The network approach has also undercut the traditional compensation system. As the stability of offices has declined, the emphasis has shifted to individual performance. A disconnect has developed between hierarchical progression and rewards, as young employees with special skills command high premiums, and older ones, with capabilities less in demand, lose bargaining leverage (Kanter, 1977). These forces have driven the spread of ‘pay for performance’, closely linked to the star models discussed earlier. Yet the evidence of the effectiveness of this approach is very contested, with some researchers finding significant problems at both motivational and organizational levels (Arieli et al., 2009; Beer et al., 2004; Deci et al., 1999).

At the broader level of society and the economy as a whole, much work needs to be done on the scope, direction and consequences of the changes we have outlined – for example:

- *Contingencies:* It is unlikely that either flexible teams or individual incentives are magic bullets that work everywhere, and they presumably improve organizational performance only in certain circumstances. A number of authors have suggested that flexible team systems are especially effective in work settings with high knowledge demands (Grant, 1996; Nonaka, 2005). It also appears anecdotally that a strong focus on individual compensation is most often used in a few settings stressing sales or investment. But there has as yet been no agreement on the relation between work organization and contextual factors. Given the speed of change in many industries, this is a tall research order.
- There are large sectors of the economy involving relatively unskilled and routine tasks that have not been much affected by the trends reviewed above. But there is also evidence that automation of such jobs is accelerating, and that the move

to knowledge value will continue to spread (Acemoglu and Autor, 2010; Autor et al., 2003).

- *Dualism*: There is some evidence that open networks gravitate to a more dualistic form, with a sharp divide between winners and losers, than traditional bureaucracies (DiMaggio and Garip, 2011). This tendency does appear in at least some leading companies – indeed, certain management systems explicitly try to weed out the best from the rest (Huselid et al., 2005), concentrating rewards on a smaller slice of the employee body. Other research, however, indicates that such high levels of inequality may undermine commitment and cooperation (Wilkinson and Pickett, 2009). There is little research that tries to examine this tension and explore what level of inequality is motivationally constructive, and at what point it becomes destructive.
- *Careers*: It is clear that the logic of networks disrupts traditional career paths. Research confirms a general decline in job tenures and a weakening of internal labor markets, especially for men (Farber, 2007; Hollister, 2011). There is less imperative for internal development of talent: it can be bought from the network. In the abstract, this could even make sense from the employees' point of view, offering them greater opportunities than the standard upward career for variety, independence, self-development and choice.

But the ideal picture of a fluid labor market is distorted and slowed by collision with the societal institutions still organized around large firms. Educational systems are geared to taking people up to their entry to the labor market but not beyond; a network logic would require that people return to education intermittently throughout their careers, rather than getting their training from inside the firm. Career information is likewise still largely restricted to firms: a network requires open information about opportunities and reputations, so that people can move quickly and efficiently to the 'right place' in the complex network. Some alternative methods of training, placement and career development are developing, but the study and practice of these lag well behind the need.

CRITICAL VIEWS OF COLLABORATIVE NETWORKS

For most of the twentieth century the critical literature on organizations, often Marxist in orientation, focused on the destructive effects

of large bureaucracies in undermining craft skill and autonomy (Braverman et al., 1974). A more recent strand has emerged around the networked form of organization.

One view sees 'teamwork' as just a rhetorically disguised form of managerial control (Fucini, 2008; Kamata, 1984; Parker and Slaughter, 1988). These critics generally focus on stable shop-floor teams, particularly in the automobile industry which was among the first to pursue 'worker participation'. They show instances where teamwork is used to amplify managerial discipline by setting teams in competition with each other, leading workers to push each other to harder work and higher performance (Barker, 1993; Sewell, 1998). Strongly contrary views, arguing the benefits of teamwork for workers as well as companies, have come from multiple perspectives, including managerial (Katzenbach and Smith, 2006), humanistic (Maccoby, 1994), and labor (Kochan et al., 1997).

Several overall conclusions can be drawn from the debate. First, managerially led teamwork is indeed very vulnerable to abuse of the type described by the critical view. Second, there nevertheless do exist successful instances that combine substantial involvement and employee satisfaction with high productivity. Third, workers, especially when represented by supportive unions, can effectively resist the abuses and turn teams towards more positive forms (Kochan and Rubinstein, 2000). Fourth, even the best shop-floor teamwork has little effect in slowing the larger forces of merger and acquisition, foreign subcontracting, and other motives for closing plants.

Above the shop-floor level the debate includes some similar themes with different contexts. A good many of the 'empowerment' programs are merely an extension of old 'human relations' management which emphasizes good feeling without significantly changing work practices (Heckscher, 1995). But many studies also show that the increasing importance of knowledge innovation as a competitive differentiator requires serious transformation of work and greater collaboration (Heckscher, 2007; Wuchty et al., 2007).

Adler's 'paleo-Marxist' argument bridges the usual critical-managerial divide: he sees collaborative teamwork as genuinely necessary to the success of capitalist firms, yet also as undermining their long-term ability to focus on profit maximization (Adler, 2009).

Another effect of the networking of production is the rise of contingent and subcontracted work, blurring the boundaries of firms and reducing employment security. This, too, has produced divergent assessments. Much management literature sees it as a mutual benefit: companies gain flexibility, while workers gain the freedom to develop their skills and interests in 'boundaryless careers' independent of any firm or boss (Arthur and Rousseau, 2001; Zeitz et al., 2009). Critical literature emphasizes instead the insecurity of the jobs and the ease with which workers can be exploited. Some see the growth of a new class, the 'precariat', which can become a source of social instability (Standing, 2011). Again, the general conclusion seems to be that the change process can move in at least two different ways: some employers exploit it for cost-cutting, but others are seeking to develop flexible networks with relatively highly paid work (Håkansson and Isidorsson, 2012).

CONCLUSION

Significant organizational changes and experiments are under way across almost all industries. The consistent driver is an attempt to overcome the limitations of bureaucratic organization: restriction of communication channels, inward focus, rigidity of rules, lack of cross-unit cooperation, and other well-documented weaknesses. We are in a transitional period in which much of bureaucracy remains, while more complex mechanisms of network relations are under construction. The star and network alternatives have the greatest rhetorical momentum, but both lack clarity in many details.

In the meantime, the decline of bureaucratic institutions is producing a series of social and

economic distortions. It generates widespread feelings of insecurity that may undermine engagement. It encourages free-agent mentality among some employees, which is disruptive to managers seeking consistency and predictability, and at the same time creates a deep moral resentment among others. Further, it generates misunderstanding and mistrust, which undermine the collaboration vital to a healthy knowledge-based economy.

It seems likely that the continuing pressures for collaboration and engagement will increasingly conflict with the structures of capitalist markets. The decentralized mutualist form of organization, while often both democratic and productive, has been weakened by the pressures of globalization. As for more mainstream participation and collaboration, there are constant incentives to manipulate it or even destroy it in the service of short-term cost-cutting. The star model, which promises to reconcile entrepreneurship and coordination, has not demonstrated much economic value, but has led to the acceleration of inequality and the undermining of broader collaboration.

Whatever route is taken, it is clear that work already looks very different from the model described by organization scholars in the 1940s and 1950s, in which employees at all levels were expected to display – as Robert Merton (1940: 562) put it – 'strong sentiments which entail devotion to one's duties, a keen sense of the limitations of one's authority and competence, and methodical performance of routine activities'. And it is probable that increasingly in the future the primary demands will involve innovation, independence, and an ability to work well with others in complex knowledge tasks.

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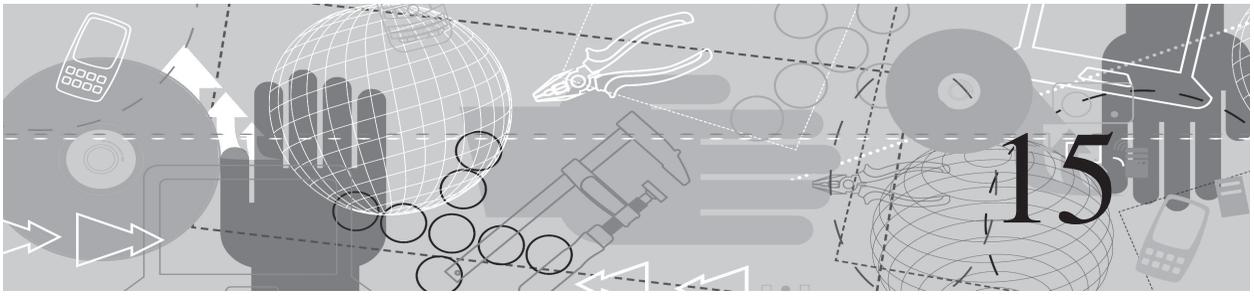
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Organizational Culture and Work¹

Mats Alvesson

INTRODUCTION

Organizational culture is one of the major themes in organization theory as well as in management practice. As a concept and framework it offers a key perspective for the understanding of organizations and working life. There are good reasons for this: the cultural dimension is central to all aspects of organizational life and how micro and macro connect. As Fine and Hallett (2014) write: ‘Everyday life in organizations is not peripheral; it is central to how affiliation, allegiance, and conflict develop, channel and organize larger structures’ (p. 1774). Even in those organizations where cultural issues receive little explicit attention and people experience limited cultural distinctiveness (unique corporate culture), how people in an organization think, feel, value and act is guided by the ideas, meanings and beliefs of a cultural (socially shared) nature. Whether managers think that culture is too soft or too complicated to bother about, or whether there is no unique corporate culture, does not

reduce the significance of culture. Senior organizational members are always, in one way or another, ‘managing culture’ – underscoring what is important and what is less so and framing how the corporate world should be understood, more or less successfully influencing the world views of organizational participants. Organizations practising intensive ‘numbers management’ may develop and reproduce a culture celebrating performance indicators and rituals around the handling of these. In most contemporary organizations, corporate culture receives a lot of attention and is seen as crucial. A key concern is that ‘culture management aspires to intervene in and regulate being, so that there is no distance between individuals’ purposes and those of the organization for which they work’ (Grey, 2005: 68).

It is tempting to emphasize the significance of corporate cultures for performance, growth and success. At the beginning of the 1980s, books identifying characteristics of excellent companies in the USA (Peters and Waterman, 1982) and the secrets behind the

highly successful Japanese companies of the time (e.g. Ouchi, 1981) highlighted corporate culture. These books, in combination with journalistic writings, created a widespread belief in corporate cultures being perhaps the significant factor behind the performance of companies. Pfeffer (1994: 6) argues that the traditional sources of success – product and process technology, access to regulated markets, economies of scale, etc. – matter less today than in the past, ‘leaving organizational culture and capabilities, derived from how people are managed, as comparatively more vital’.

But there are other, and perhaps better, reasons for taking organizational culture seriously. It is significant as a way of understanding organizational life in all its richness and variations. ‘Culture is a form of practice, linked to local understandings, everyday interactions, and on-going social relations’ (Fine and Hallett, 2014: 1775). The centrality of the culture concept follows from the profound importance of shared meanings for any coordinated action. As Smircich (1985) says, organizations exist as systems of meanings that are shared to various degrees. A sense of common, taken-for-granted ideas, beliefs and meanings is necessary for continuing organized activity. This makes interaction possible without constant confusion or intense interpretation and reinterpretation of meanings. For organizational practitioners – managers and others shaping organizational life – a developed capacity to think in terms of organizational culture facilitates acting wisely. Insights and reflections may be useful in relation to getting people to do the ‘right’ things in terms of effectiveness, but also for promoting more autonomous standpoints in relation to dominant ideologies, myths, fashions, etc. The ‘right’ thing is always uncertain and contestable, and convictions about what is ‘right’ need to be targeted for critical scrutiny. We also need to learn about culture in order to encourage and facilitate the critical thinking through of various taken-for-granted aspects of values, beliefs and assumptions in industry, occupations and organizations.

Culture is not easy to define and delimit in a clear-cut way. A glance at just a few works that use the term ‘organizational culture’ will reveal enormous variation in the definitions of this term, and even more in the use of the term ‘culture’. ‘Culture’ has no fixed or broadly agreed meaning, even in anthropology (Borowsky, 1994; Ortner, 1984), but variation in its use is especially noticeable in the literature on organizational culture, including a wealth of various perspectives, managerial and critical, positivist and post-structuralist, emphasizing order, harmony and integration, and fragmentation and ambiguity (Martin et al., 2006). It is beyond the scope of this chapter to capture all the varieties so I will concentrate on the more significant perspectives and focus on studies on organization cultures related to work issues.

Cultural studies of organizations have addressed a range of themes. Some examples include compensation issues (Malsch et al., 2012), understandings of decisions (Olie, 1994), gender (Alvesson and Billing, 2009; Ely and Meyerson, 2010), leadership (Alvesson, 2011), strategy, the meanings of organizational structure, HRM (Alvesson and Kärreman, 2007), cognitions and competences (Michel, 2007), ethics (Jackall, 1988) and organizational change (Alvesson & Sveningsson, 2015; Canato et al., 2013; Schein, 1985), etc. It goes beyond the scope of this chapter to go through all these areas. Broad, book-length overviews of organizational culture can be found in Alvesson (2013a) and Ashkanasy et al. (2011). For a recent collection of major works on organizational culture, see Alvesson (2016).

I will start with an effort to define organizational culture and then clarify the meaning of culture in relationship to other popular ‘cultural’ or ‘culture-near’ approaches: identity, discourse and institution. I will then briefly highlight cultural management, i.e. efforts from managers to intentionally and systematically shape organizational culture. The idea here is that cultural management leads to positive effects in terms of creating meaning and guidelines. This is followed by a section

more sceptically pointing to the constraining aspects of culture, which often make cultures contribute to ‘psychic prisons’ (Morgan, 1997) or ‘functional stupidity’ (Alvesson and Spicer, 2012). I address the issue of organizations being unitary or differentiated in terms of cultures and subcultures, and warn against a tendency to address cultural issues as entirely symbolic and disconnected from material aspects, before going more deeply into the subject and addressing organizational culture and work.

THE CONCEPT OF ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE

The term ‘organizational culture’ is used in many ways but can be seen as an umbrella concept for a way of thinking which takes a serious interest in cultural and symbolic phenomena. It works as a metaphor for organization (Smircich, 1983). The concept directs the spotlight in a particular direction rather than mirroring a concrete reality for possible study. Culture is a perspective rather than a fixed object of study. I agree with Frost et al.’s (1985: 17) ‘definition’ of organizational culture: ‘Talking about organizational culture seems to mean talking about the importance for people of symbolism – of rituals, myths, stories and legends – and about the interpretation of events, ideas, and experiences that are influenced and shaped by the groups within which they live’. I will also, however, take organizational culture to include values and assumptions about social reality, but for me values are less central and less useful than meanings and symbolism in cultural analysis. This position is in line with the view broadly shared by many modern anthropologists (especially Geertz, 1973). Culture is then understood to be a system of common symbols and meanings. It provides ‘the shared rules governing cognitive and affective aspects of membership in an organization, and the means whereby they are shaped and expressed’ (Kunda, 1992: 8).

When thinking about culture it is important to bear in mind what culture is *not*, that is, what a cultural perspective does not focus on. Making a distinction between culture and social structure is helpful here. Culture is regarded as a more or less cohesive system of meanings and symbols, in terms of which social interaction takes place. Social structure is regarded as the behavioural patterns which the social interaction itself gives rise to. In the case of culture, then, we have a frame of reference of beliefs, expressive symbols and values, by means of which individuals define their environment, express their feelings and make judgements. At the social structural level, we have a continuous process of interaction. As Geertz (1973: 145) states, culture is the creation of meaning through which human beings interpret their experiences and guide their actions, while social structure is the form which action takes or the network of social relationships which actually exists.

Traditional organization research, often objectivist and abstract, has proved incapable of providing deep, rich and realistic understandings. Organizational culture – at least as I and most authors use the concept – differs as it addresses the lived experiences of people. It deals with meanings and understandings. The culture concept also has the advantage that it seems to provide a conceptual bridge between micro and macro levels of analysis and between organizational behaviour and strategic management (Smircich, 1983: 346). It connects the organization as a whole with everyday experiences and individual action. It is central both in order to illuminate the collective frameworks that inform thinking, valuing and acting and for understanding social order and integration.

The term organizational culture is, however, used in different ways and also within one and the same definition. At the one end, it is viewed as a management concept, emphasizing the values, beliefs and meanings that are relevant for the business side, and is viewed as affected by management acts. At the other end, culture is given a more ambitious social science/anthropological meaning and

indicates implicit, non-conscious aspects, too deep-seated to be easily shaped by managers and other significant actors. This review chapter tries to address a middle ground.

CULTURE AND ITS 'RELATIVES': IDENTITY, DISCOURSE AND INSTITUTION

As a research area, organizational culture had its heyday in the 1980s and 1990s, but interest since then has dropped among academics. Some of the academic interest in culture has moved over to the nearby and overlapping field of organizational identity (Albert and Whetten, 1985; Ashforth et al., 2010). Similarly, the interest in organizational discourse (Grant et al., 2004) and institutional theory (Scott, 1995) can to some extent be seen as a nearby, competing orientation that has attracted considerable interest and reduced the interest in organizational culture, but culture remains a key theme for understanding the functioning (and problems) of organizations. Very briefly and somewhat crudely, the differences are as follows.

Identity is often defined in terms of certain key characteristics indicating how an institution, a social group, or an individual understands itself or herself: distinctiveness, endurance and centrality (Albert and Whetten, 1985; Gioia et al., 2013). This view addresses identity as something quite robust: it implies there is a core or an 'essence' representing how an organization, another social/organizational unit, group or individual coherently defines itself or herself. It is not about objective characteristics, but about how these qualities are seen by the people or person concerned. Identity is, like culture and discourse (and other popular terms for that matter), used in many different ways for a variety of purposes and guided by a variety of perspectives. It is, however, fairly common to argue that organizational identity represents the form by which organizational members define themselves as a social group

in relation to their external environment, and how they understand themselves to be different from their competitors (Dutton et al., 1994; Haslam, 2004). The emphasis on distinction downplays what is common for all organizations or groups (in general or in a field) and upgrades some aspects viewed as unique, significant and coherent. These are typically, favourably framed, encouraging a positive affiliation with the organization: 'as the object of belonging and commitment, organizational identity provides a cognitive and emotional foundation on which organizational members build attachment and with which they create meaningful relationships with their organization' (Hatch and Schultz, 2000: 16).

Hatch and Schultz (2002) see culture as being relatively more easily placed in the conceptual domains of the contextual, tacit and emergent than is identity, which, when compared with culture, appears to be more textual, explicit and instrumental (p. 384). Identity is thus closer to experience and 'superficial', easier to consider and communicate. Identity may change more easily and also has a weaker general impact, but perhaps is more distinct and directly impacts on how people structure and understand the world in specific respects, when the questions of who we are and what we stand for are triggered. A business opportunity may, for example, be assessed based on the (identity) criteria whether this fits with how we see ourselves (what the company stands for) or not, where identity-alien projects are typically to be avoided.

While identity refers to ideas on how people in an organization define what is distinct and unique about the organization, culture covers broader terrain, including meanings and beliefs about a wider set of issues of more indirect relevance for self-definition. Culture may, for example, be used to understand meanings around sex, age, technology, customers, products, authority, knowledge, leadership, without (all of) these meanings being directly mobilized in identity-defining situations. Culture is about dealing with what

the organizationally relevant world looks like, including, but not exclusively focusing on, identity issues around who we are and what is distinct for us and what we identify with (Alvesson and Robertson, 2016).

Culture, at least in the more ambitiously used versions of the concept, focuses on meanings and symbolism, partly of a taken for granted nature. *Discourse* emphasizes explicit language use (Grant et al., 2004). Language does not simply reflect reality, it constructs reality, is a typical slogan for discourse students. Language drives meanings, closely following and constructed by language use in operation. By contrast the field of culture studies takes language as a key element in constructions of culture, but the basic feature of culture is the system of underlying meanings that are 'deeper' and more persistent than meanings directly produced by language use. The meaning of language follows not from discourse per se, but from cultural contexts giving language use a specific meaning. A specific discourse, e.g. on the environment, equal opportunity, leadership or HRM, may be attributed very different meanings and consequences for experiences and actions in different organizational cultures (Alvesson, 2004).

Most authors talking about *institutions* give what they address a meaning partly overlapping or directly invoking culture (Scott, 1995). Meyer and Rowan (1977) refer to cultural rules and talk about 'myths'. DiMaggio and Powell (1991) write that the interests of 'scholars intrigued by the effects of culture, ritual, ceremony, and higher-level structures of organizations' have led to 'neo-institutional theory [being] ... named and reified' (p. 12). Most institutional theorists are so broad-brushed in their approach that culture is only an ingredient in a rather imprecise notion of an institution. Scott (1995), for example, says that 'institutions consist of cognitive, normative and regulative structures and activities that provide stability and meaning to social behaviour. Institutions are transported by various carriers – cultures, structures, routines ...' (p. 33). The turning of

'culture' into a part of and carrier of '*institution*' means moving from thick description – focusing on the richness and complexities of meaning – to a counting of standardized cultural recipes. An interest in institutions favours generalization around standards which makes studies neat and attractive, but all the richness of cultural studies of organizations, e.g. Geertzian-inspired symbolic interpretation (thick description) (Alvesson, 2013a; Geertz, 1973; Smircich, 1983), is lost by institutional theory in preference for 'thin description', emphasizing standardized, superficial cultural elements. There are, however, possibilities in taking the cultural meaning aspect more seriously, and investigating what happens with institutionalized ideas and standards in specific organizational cultural contexts (Aten et al., 2011). A good example is Hallett's (2010) in-depth study of a school – targeted for strict rules and standards for working exploring cultural clashes and struggles over identity and meaning.

This focus on in-depth, rich studies of meaning and symbolism – often going beyond how a group defines its distinctiveness, how dominant forms of language and standardized forms of regulatory mechanisms/patterns are used – means that culture research is more demanding, typically calling for ethnographic studies and more ambitious hermeneutical interpretation. Given the contemporary interest in surface phenomena and the pressure to publish in journals at high speed, the societal and academic conditions partly work against organizational culture studies (as addressed in this chapter) – and generally against in-depth understandings of organizational life.

'POSITIVE' CONTROL – FORMS OF CULTURAL MANAGEMENT

One of the most important themes in work and organizations is control. Very generally, control can focus on behaviour, output or minds. Bureaucracy and supervision takes

care of the first, various performance measurements (profits, sales, productivity, customer satisfaction measures) address the second, while culture is a key element in influencing minds: values, assumptions, beliefs, meanings, etc. Effective cultural control means that people are inclined to work in the broadly prescribed way: to think, value and feel in a certain direction. The socialization ingredient in, for example, professional education is supposed to lead to a high degree of reliability among professionals. Here the idea is that educational institutions and professional communities insert people with the 'right' kind of mindset, thus reducing the reliance on rigid rules and giving people space to use their judgement.

A key idea within much management thinking and practice is that organizational culture may accomplish organizational control in ways experienced as meaningful and positive. The hope is that 'with the right corporate vision, mission statement or leader, an organization can build a highly committed, unified culture that fosters productivity and profitability' (Martin, 2002: 9). The idea is that highly motivated and flexible people, acting of their own free will, will do the right thing. People are expected to voluntarily work harder and perform better, which also reduces the cost of monitoring and control (Grey, 2005). Culture is central here, but it overlaps issues or themes like identity and (internal) branding.

There are many versions of cultural management. Some are aligned with a strong emphasis on performance and measurement – and here culture reinforces a results focus around measurements rather than compensating for complexities that make measurement impossible or unreliable, as in much professional work. Producing results is a central value in such measurement and results-focused settings. There is often a cultural belief in individuals of the right kind, and with the right motivation being directly responsible for the results accomplished (Malsch et al., 2012). Sculley (1987) reports the strong results-focus of Pepsi Cola, at least among senior

groups, where internal and external (Cola wars) competition was underpinned and reinforced by a culture emphasizing the masculine, competitive ideals of corporate life. Military metaphors flourished and executives saw themselves as the Marine Corps of the business world – strong and fit, both mentally and physically. Another case is 'Hill' a UK remunerations consulting firm. The firm valued individualistic and self-managing consultants who could generate large fees with minimal intervention from management. As the Managing Director explained:

We have good people. They don't need a lot of structure and hand holding. We are too busy with our clients. One of my colleagues outside this office refers to us as anarchic. I have always taken that as a compliment. (Alvesson and Empson, 2008: 12)

Consultants were granted considerable autonomy within the context of fairly demanding performance targets. Consultants who remained at Hill thrived within this individualistic environment. They responded to questions about their organizational values dismissively:

I haven't seen any sign of a values statement. At Hill we are treated as adults. (Consultant) (Ibid. p. 12)

Hill's very individualistic culture (or 'non-culture') included nurturing the image of a tough macho loner, operating outside conventional society, reflecting the founders' organizational vision. Yet it can be argued that the vivid anti-identity rhetoric in itself constituted an integral component of Hill's culture.

In this tough, individualistic, macho cultural environment, 'identity was for wimps' – or at least this was what the MD's rhetoric suggested. The consultants who succeeded in this environment defined themselves as people who did not need to belong to an organization in the conventional sense, but who derived their personal satisfaction and material for (individual) identity construction through tangible measures of success (i.e. fast cars, prestigious clients, and 'beating

the shit out of the competition') (Alvesson & Empson, 2008).

Another version of cultural management takes almost the opposite route. It is fairly common to work with values and meanings such as having fun, being playful, involving the entire person and creating a nice atmosphere. In some cases this is a matter of diverting from work content, the labour process and structural controls. Cultural control then aims to compensate for boredom and alienation at work, raising morale and encouraging people to put on a positive face for customers. Playfulness at Disneyland is one example (Van Maanen, 1991). Another is a call centre where people were strongly encouraged to be personal, authentic and to participate in joyful social activities in and around work. 'Be yourself' was one slogan (Fleming 2005; Fleming and Sturdy, 2011). In more advanced, or at least non-routinized work organizations, cultural management creating a cohesive, positive, collaboration-friendly and loyalty-enhancing organizational climate through values, meanings and symbolism is also common. Here the emphasis may be on community and positive emotions, downplaying hierarchy and differentiation. A Swedish IT consultancy firm worked on material artefacts (the building, rooms, decoration), managerial action (being social, entertaining, playful), language use ('fun and profit' as a slogan, story-telling, encouragement to treat everyone as a friend) and rituals (e.g. quarterly conferences with a memorable content in terms of setting and activities) as part of cultural management. Managers were selected – partly through subordinates having a strong say about recruitment – to a high degree based on cultural competences and perceived fit with the organizational culture (Alvesson, 1995).

These versions of cultural management control do not of course operate on their own. There are always links with other forms of control (Alvesson and Kärreman, 2004). In the Pepsi case, culture reinforced a strong focus on performance management. In the call centre case, cultural issues partly compensated

for and drew attention from direct control of work behaviour. In the IT consultancy case, cultural control aimed to increase loyalty, commitment and a sense of having fun at work which could increase the inclination to put in more working hours when demanded, without too much complaining or suffering. Profitability was very much an effect of the number of working hours debited to clients, and cultural orientations made people willing to work extra hours without specific compensation for overtime.

In all these cases, cultural management was explicit and culture can be viewed as part of the management control strategy. In many cases, culture is taken for granted and influences experience, thinking, feeling and acting in more indirect ways. Cultural ideals may then not be an outcome of management, but rather frame and inform leadership (Alvesson, 2011). How managers act and how leadership is viewed are then strongly guided by organizational culture prescribing meanings for hierarchy, authority, followership, etc. Of course one can argue that management influences organizational culture as much as organizational culture influences management. Often there is intertwinement, making it impossible to talk about causalities. In the early years an organization's founders/executives may have a stronger impact than later senior people, who may be more constrained and guided by organizational cultures. Powerful interventions by CEOs may occasionally have a significant effect on cultural meanings, but seldom in a straightforward way, as traditional cultural orientations always influence and mediate the impact of new ideals and modes of working, sometimes in complicated ways (Canato et al., 2013).

ON THE CONSTRAINING SIDE OF ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE

Organizational culture is often viewed as a positive force, as a key element in the creation of meaning, giving people a sense of

clarity and direction. The idea is that it works as an integrative device and eases the emphasis on more obtrusive sources of control, focusing on performance measurement and behaviour (through formal structures and rules). Authors of a functionalist bent often assume that culture is based on organizations being capable of responding to external and internal demands leading to sets of assumptions, values and norms making the organization function well (Schein, 1985). Common metaphors for organizations include social glue and compass (Alvesson, 2013a). Culture as a source of inertia and an obstacle to organizational change is of course broadly recognized.

But culture can also, and even in situations without a business case for (or managerial perception of) a need for change, be seen as a set of blinders, making people subordinated to a set of taken-for-granted assumptions, values and meanings. This emphasizes the darker side of culture, offering support for meaning, sorting out experience and providing guidelines is also likely to, at the same time, reduce openness to a plurality of understandings and a questioning attitude to dominant 'truths' within the community. Some authors indicate that corporate cultures may turn employees into cultural dopes or even slaves (Willmott, 1993). Cultures then function like so-called psychic prisons (Morgan, 1997).

A more moderate version is to relate organizational culture to the concept of *functional stupidity*, i.e. the inclination to adapt to dominant social norms, emphasize instrumentality and refrain from critical thinking, asking for justification and engaging in substantive reasoning. Functional stupidity means having and using a narrow mindset, but acting competently within a restricted domain of thinking and valuing, not questioning assumptions and (espoused or implicit) values or objectives (Alvesson and Spicer, 2012). Functional stupidity is largely an organizational and managerial accomplishment, prompted by the broad economy of persuasion which emphasizes a focus on symbolic, rather than substantive, aspects of organizational

life (Alvesson, 2013b). This encourages a strident focus on symbolic manipulation in organization – often in the form of attempts to develop strong corporate cultures, sometimes associated with claims to a specific organizational identity and a corporate brand. An important part of this process involves active stupidity management. This happens when various actors (including middle managers, senior executives in addition to external figures such as consultants, business gurus and marketers) as well as employees themselves block communicative action and processes of collective and individual deliberation, through suggesting that certain ideals and meanings are self-evidently true, or superior and not to be discussed. Arguably, there are a range of forms of stupidity self-management, including a pronounced action orientation, an excessive attachment to notions of leadership, undue faith in organizational structures and unthinking imitation of institutions, which are key elements in the formation and reproduction of organizational cultures. The functional stupidity produced by such processes helps organizational members to deal with ambiguity and conjure a (false) sense of certainty about organizational processes. This can produce functional outcomes such as shared, unquestioned meanings, certainty and smooth organizational functioning for both the organization as a whole and individuals within it. These positive outcomes can have a self-reinforcing effect on functional stupidity. However, functional stupidity can also produce more negative outcomes such as rigid adherence to cultural views leading to unproductive activities, mistakes and disasters at the organizational level and a sense of disappointment for people working within the organization. Functional stupidity is strongly fuelled and reproduced by unitary organizational cultures and effective forms of cultural management persuading and seducing employees and managers to share a specific mental universe.

A range of organizational actors including peers, junior and senior managers as well as external figures like consultants and

management gurus engaged in cultural (re-) production are potential stupidity managers. These figures may engage in stupidity management in a range of different ways. Often it is not a matter of conscious, intentional action. Rather, stupidity management is based on taken-for-granted assumptions and norms which are grounded in organizational cultures. The more shared and cohesive the set of meanings the greater the likelihood of this leading to functional stupidity.

ORGANIZATIONS: UNITARY OR DIFFERENTIATED

However, organizations as a whole or even as distinct units (divisions, business areas), do not necessarily score highly on broadly shared, cohesive meanings. The term 'organizational culture' is often used to indicate a view of organizations as typically unitary and unique, characterized by a fairly stable set of meanings. Most organizations are then viewed as mini-societies with a distinct set of meanings, values and symbols shared by, and unique to, the majority of the people working in the organization. This view fits nicely with an interest in using corporate culture as a tool for increased performance and for leadership ideas and actions supposed to have a broad impact, as addressed in the previous section. It is definitively easier to make a strong case for management and leadership putting their imprint on the organization as a whole, if the latter is at least in some key respects fairly homogeneous. In order for the organizational culture concept to have a strong appeal it is also beneficial if there is something unique to point to. Claims for unique, distinct organizational identities may not stand reality tests but are popular as they are appealing and give the promise to facilitate identification and self-esteem. To be similar to other organizations in the industry sounds less good. Most people, also in organizational contexts, like to emphasize their distinctiveness. But the view of highly distinct organizational

identities as well as organizational culture as unitary and unique, is in several ways problematic in most cases where organizations are complex, differentiated and include a variety of groups, functions and labour processes. In the case of Pepsi Cola, the author describes the picture at executive levels and there is no reason to assume that the majority of employees necessarily share their cultural orientations at work. In the other firms addressed above (Alvesson, 1995; Fleming, 2005) the fairly homogenous group of people and work conditions meant that cultural management was facilitated, and broadly shared meanings, ideas and values characterized most of the employees.

The idea of unitary and unique organizational cultures can be challenged with arguments from below as well as from above in many if not most cases. The challenge from below emphasizes the internal pluralism of organizations: different groups develop different outlooks on the world. These are often referred to as 'organizational subcultures'. Most close-up studies of (complex) organizations emphasize these more than unitary organization cultures (e.g. Parker, 2000; Van Maanen and Barley, 1984; Young 1989). The challenge from above points to the powerfulness of ideas, values and symbolism shared by broader groups of people, associated with civilizations, nations, regions, industries and occupations. Taken together, this means that the local as well as more macro contexts need to be considered to understand cultural manifestations at the organizational level.

In order to understand cultural phenomena at an organizational level, not only the 'meso' (organizational) level but also the micro and macro 'forces' need to be investigated. This is of course partly a matter of national cultures, but the interest in organizational culture is quite different from an interest in finding national patterns and averages. Organizations are influenced by societal phenomena, including institutional conditions. Institutional theory often emphasizes organizational similarities; over time organizations in the same society or field tend to become more and

more similar: the so-called isomorphism thesis (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983). However, this seldom emerges in an entirely uniform manner. The challenge is to relate organizations to the societal context without reducing the former to being just a reflection of society. Region, industry, profession, ethnic groups and the specific composition and interaction effects influence organizations. Thus institutions and broader changes, including economic, demographical and technological changes, trends and fashion among consumers, but also in management, influence organizational cultures, seldom being only or mainly 'locally' produced. Also, local efforts to implement cultural management partly follow broader patterns, recipes for management and leadership often guide organizations.

Related to this fundamental issue of the level of culture are aspects such as: What are the key elements in the production and reproduction of cultural manifestations in organizations? What are the 'major driving forces' behind the shared understandings, beliefs, values and norms in an organization or a part of it? Are these shared orientations locally produced by work groups, engineered by management or imported from macro-level 'units' such as society or occupation? I will, in particular, investigate the significance of work, work conditions and the experience of community, based on doing the same kind of job, addressing organizational as well as occupational communities.

THE APPEAL OF 'PURE' SYMBOLISM AND GENERAL VALUES UNCOUPLED FROM MATERIAL PRACTICE

A lot of the interest in, and hopes attached to, the idea of organizational culture as a vital element in management control is related to the attraction of (a) the possibility of moving the entire organization in a similar direction, and (b) doing so through idealistic means (ideas, values). This has led to great efforts in managing specific, often strongly visible and explicit forms of symbolism and much talk

of visions and corporate values. The significance of such 'substantive' or material activities as productive work, the structuring of tasks, the formalization of procedures, the technical and bureaucratic control of work, cost management and the reproduction of power relationships is often neglected. It seems to be widely assumed that symbols and meaning in work organizations and vision talk can be understood without paying much attention to the specific work context – what people actually do. Instead, corporate culture is viewed as effective throughout the organization despite – or because of – very general and vague messages. This is particularly questionable in large, complex organizations with a variety of assignments, work groups and internal divisions, hierarchically and functionally.

Within management and organization theory there is a strong interest in vision and values talk and less interest in what this talk actually leads to, if anything.

[Researchers] focus heavily on the rhetoric of spokespersons and its interpretation and seem to ignore the actual settings within which normative control is formulated and applied and its meaning for those for whom it is formulated. There is scant contextual evidence concerning the use of ideology, its meaning in the context in which it is used, the practices associated with it, the nature of life supposedly resorting to normative control, and the consequences for individuals. (Kunda, 1992: 16)

This rhetoric is frequently targeted at the entire organization and consequently often general and vague. Whether this kind of message has an impact on broader groups of people in everyday work situations cannot be assumed, but is likely to vary significantly between groups and over time, particularly in socially differentiated organizations where ethnic, occupational and functional groups may respond and 'consume' the message quite differently.

Using the culture concept and borrowing from anthropology – at least in terms of jargon – organization culture theorists draw attention to unconventional aspects of organizational life to study areas such as jokes, coffee

breaks, the way people dress, the functions or consequences of the corporation's Christmas party, seating arrangements at meetings, the 'rite' of firing people, the stories told about present and former figures of authority, and so on (e.g. Boje, 1991; Dandridge, 1986; Fleming, 2005). The content and form of these activities and behaviour often seem to be considered of some importance in themselves: that is, they are viewed as contributing to the forming of organizational life (through their sense-making, meaning-creating, norm-setting, and spirit-enhancing capacities). Sometimes, in contrast, they appear to be viewed as an important source for the illumination of culture but not necessarily as of any significance in themselves. But the opposite may also be the case. Certain values can be viewed as deviating from more basic patterns in organizations. One firm, a call centre, addressed above, could be seen to use norms like fun, authenticity and play as 'a diversion tactic that takes attention away from otherwise alienating work practices' (Fleming and Sturdy, 2011: 180). An interesting contrast is the case of Sea, a strategic management consultancy firm, where people emphasized their individuality, indeed idiosyncratic orientations, as part of a culture of tolerance and pluralism, but this was mainly played in their leisure time, while work norms in the face of external relations were quite tight and the pressure for conformism in relationship to clients was strong (Alvesson and Empson, 2008). This is not to say that efforts to promote ideals of individualism and authenticity are irrelevant or negative – although the normative pressure to 'be yourself', indicate your deviance and 'have fun at work' may be experienced as problematic by some people, feeling treated like children and exposed to paternalistic management (Fleming, 2005).

The point here is that it is important to investigate broader cultural and social patterns and relate specific cultural manifestations to other aspects of the organization – cultural, social, behavioural and material – as well as the specific interpretations and experiences of the people involved. Employees seldom respond

fully in line with management's expectations and plans. Most organizations include a variety of cultural orientations, associated with group interactions, occupational communities, ethnic, age and gender groups, organizational function and level. People often have to navigate through complicated cultural terrains, not just be informed or guided by a clear and homogeneous set of values, ideals and meanings. Culture provides a sense of meaning and direction, but always mediated by situational issues, so ideals such as customer satisfaction, innovation or family feeling are always to be interpreted and practised in a variety of ways.

The relationship between a particular cultural manifestation and broader cultural patterns may be weak and uncertain. This possibility is neglected in the literature focusing on a single symbolic element. Martin et al. (1983: 439), for example, report that 'stories were selected because they generate, as well as reflect, changes in organizations', but this one-to-one relationship between organizations and stories cannot be assumed. The degree to which a story mirrors an organizational culture must be an open question. An organizational story may give us a limited and even misleading impression of the larger setting in which it is told, especially if this setting is equated with the entire organization. It may not represent much beyond 'itself'. Martin's later writings clearly support this view; here culture comes out as non-ordered and contradictory (Martin, 2002; Martin and Meyerson, 1988). Another possibility is that stories provide an ideologically biased view 'by mediating "realistically" between organizational members and their perception of the organization, constructing a reality that serves the interest of only a handful of organizational members' (Mumby, 1988: 114). Yet a third option is that stories are not told and retold in a homogeneous way, but tend to be used and interpreted in many different ways. Bolden et al. (2011: 58) emphasize that modern story-telling is a collaborative, reciprocal, social process. People will extract their own meanings, based on their experience and

the fact that ‘stories can be reproduced, re-interpreted, remade, or challenged by alternative “counter-narratives”’.

From this we can conclude that in order to get at the significant aspects of organizational culture – the meanings, understandings and symbols that are most vital for members of the organization in developing orientations within their communities and work settings – great care must be taken to include those expressive and symbolic forms that are related to everyday life, thinking and feeling, that is, the cultural reality in which people live. Such a focus may be, as will be elaborated below, more connected to a group within an organization and not necessarily equated with the organization as a legal entity. One may advocate a more fragmented, postmodernist picture of the cultural aspects of organizations (e.g. Linstead, 1993; Linstead and Grafton-Small, 1990; Martin et al., 2006), in which the assumption that a cultural manifestation will reflect a broader totality becomes even more dubious.

Some of these problems follow from the seductiveness of anthropological concepts (Helmets, 1991), rites, rituals, ceremonies, myths, the sacred, etc., but perhaps mostly from the – for managers – very appealing idea of accomplishing desired outcomes through such inexpensive means as visionary talk and engineered symbolically loaded events. The idea of the manager as a great creator of meaning for others is seductive, but this is often difficult to realize. Rather than limiting the scope of the cultural approach, it is more reasonable to shift its focus from what may be fairly peripheral aspects of organizational life to the activities central to the work of the organization or a specific group of people within it. Organizational culture research would benefit from devoting less attention to ‘pure’ symbols or general values loosely linked to everyday social and material conditions and more attention to the latter, where the culture approach can illuminate the more important aspects of organizational life.

A greater interest in the labour process and the interaction settings of everyday work

life may then make a cultural approach better equipped to understand what employees, beyond senior managerial groups, feel to be important in organizations. What guides and constrains employees’ experiences and actions at work is the key issue.

ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE AND WORK

A redirection and extension of a cultural approach would cover potentially more important aspects of organizational life than are focused in the idealistic streams of culture thinking and in most versions of cultural management:

In anthropology, where the concept is most fully developed, culture concerns all aspects of a group’s social behaviour ... Applying this anthropological approach in corporations leads one to study participants’ views about all aspects of corporate experience. These would include the work itself, the technology, the formal organization structure, and everyday language, not only myths, stories, or special jargon. (Gregory, 1983: 359)

It is of course impossible to consider all aspects of organizational life simultaneously, but it is important to avoid a systematic selectivity that neglects common experiences of organizational life. Cultural manifestations are ‘not generated in a socioeconomic vacuum, but are both produced by and reproduce the material conditions generated by the political and economic structure of a social system’ (Mumby, 1988: 108). In particular, the type of work people are engaged in and the conditions under which it is carried out interplay with culture, that is, there is ‘interaction’ between behaviour, material conditions and cultural meaning. Job content, work organization, level of skills, hierarchical position, differential opportunities, and the demands and patterns of interaction in different groups and strata should all be carefully considered.

Focusing on the cultural aspects of people’s work situations may lead to reduced interest

in phenomena such as stories or jokes or general values communicated by managers as a means to influence people. The point is whether these are ‘picked up’ in everyday work settings. Sometimes they do and influence people, sometimes there is a gap between managerial intentions and communications and the meanings guiding people. Often managerial talk of corporate culture sounds good in the PowerPoint presentation but has a loose connection to everyday work life. This can be referred to as hyper- or PowerPoint culture (Alvesson and Sveningsson, 2015).

Everyday work activities and material circumstances of the majority of employees are often ‘protected’ from the powerful impact of at least senior managers and centralized efforts to engineer corporate culture. The specific work context affects values, beliefs, cognitive styles, opinions about work and the company, etc. According to organizational and work psychology, the content of work, including its skill level, variety, scope, degree of freedom and perceived significance, is important for job satisfaction, motivation, mental health, and off-the-job behaviour (Gardell, 1976; Hackman et al., 1975). The intellectual complexity of work content seems, for example, to affect values concerning authoritarianism and belief in the possibility of influencing one’s life situation (Kohn, 1980). There is also some evidence that the degree of discretion in the job has an impact on the general level of people’s activity/passivity in and outside the workplace (Karasek, 1981). These influences mainly address the level of individual reactions, but may indirectly affect the cultural characteristics of the workplace, although of course never in a mechanical way. Cultural meanings always have a degree of ‘independence’ in relationship to behavioural and material phenomena.

Changes in work conditions trigger cultural redefinitions of the meaning of work. For airline pilots, for example, technological development has meant that flying manually is a diminishing part of work, while ‘flight management’ is more central. Although some

pilots bemoan this development, most view (or try to view) it as a matter not of work impoverishment, but of increased rationality and safety, calling for a new form of professionalism, involving more planning, intellectual work and the exercise of good judgement and less direct ability to manoeuvre the airplane through manual labour (Ashcraft and Alvesson, 2014). Here the change is almost completely technology-driven, calling for responses in terms of revisions of meanings and cultural transformation, emphasizing core meanings of work such as ‘flight management’ more than flying, rationality more than masculinity, etc. In many other cases, cultural and material changes may be intertwined, in tension or even going in opposite directions. In a firm with a culture that stressed informality and innovation a strict system for operative procedures emphasizing rules and measurements was introduced, leading to reluctant compliance over some time, but also continued expressions of frustration and critique. This response gradually meant some lessening of the new system, but the partial adaptation of it also led to people developing some new understandings and revisions of their practices, including an appreciation of the value of being more systematic and clear about communication in line with the system (Canato et al., 2013).

Whereas culture can be seen as the medium through which people experience their environment and organize everyday life, it is related to the material basis for existence and social interactions connected to these – work activities and concrete social relationships (cf. Foley, 1989). Cultural elements are embedded in both the material situation and the social structures of organizations. To be clear and to repeat one of my key points in this chapter, this view does *not* suggest that the culture concept in itself covers behaviour patterns, material things, etc. Culture refers to the ideational level of ideas, understandings, meanings and symbolism. The point is that these cultural manifestations are frequently affected by, anchored in and closely related to socio-material reality – they are not

freely floating around. On a higher level, the task of an organization appears to affect cultural patterns. This is sometimes self-evident and almost trivial to observe. One instance of this is Schein's (1985) example of the chain of up-market stores in which cleanliness was an important 'value' – hardly surprising. Hofstede et al. (1990) report that four of the six dimensions of the 'perceived practices' which they see as part of organizational culture are related to the organization's task. Given that most organizations do a variety of different tasks – in a hospital, for example, some do cleaning, some look at X-rays and write reports, others drive ambulances and others sit in meetings and talk about plans and budgets – a more specific appreciation of task may be connected even more tightly to cultural manifestations. One may find some overall elements of a healthcare or hospital culture, but janitors, nurse aides and senior administrators may have rather diverse orientations at work.

Culture research and thinking is very much abstracted from, and unconcerned about, the specific area and work conditions of an organization or work group. Instead very general cultural 'types' or variables are emphasized. Cardador and Rupp (2011), for example, compare innovative, bureaucratic, market and supportive cultures as if these were easily comparable in terms of how they affect meaningfulness at work. These four cultures have different characteristics. Bureaucratic cultures are hierarchical and rule oriented, formalized and structured. Supportive cultures embrace shared values and goals, cohesion and a sense of we-ness. Innovative and supportive cultures are, according to Cardador and Rupp (and common sense), more inclined to lead to organizational members experiencing meaningful work tasks, relationships and goals and values. This may be so, but there are some major problems with this kind of reasoning, possibly denying the variation and complexity of meanings. One can question how many organizations fit into these 'types' – all large organizations, even those which are R & D and innovation-focused, tend

also to be bureaucratic (size and bureaucracy go together) (Canato et al., 2013). Most organizations also exhibit a variety of functions or groups with different orientations. There is at most universities nowadays, for example, a strong market orientation (to attract and make consumer-like students happy), considerable bureaucracy (including the processing of large student numbers in sometimes factory-like mass education), substantial innovation (research aims to develop new knowledge) and often a strong professional community, offering support. These different meanings are not easily placed in separate subcultures, but are in various ways fused and may undergo further 'twists' as a result of interaction effects. Relatedly, we must again note that different types of culture are intimately related with material practices. One cannot compare a MacDonald's restaurant, a sales company, a high-tech R & D unit at Apple, an infantry battalion in a war zone and a mental health clinic with each other in terms of 'culture' as if there are sets of free-floating issues and values. Operations, work areas and material constraints are crucial and cannot be reduced away in favour of values disconnected from areas of operation and the material work conducted. If we consider these aspects then we also realize that few organizations are so homogenous in terms of work being conducted that they can be addressed through overarching, integrative organizational cultures. At MacDonalds, for example, people cooking hamburgers will differ from corporate communication people creatively working on new campaigns.

This is not to deny that for some issues there may be a point in indicating some overall, fairly broadly shared cultural orientations, perhaps not having a strong meaning or significance during the carrying out of everyday work, but rather functioning as a source of identification and some broadly shared understanding of the organization as a whole. And this may sometimes be important for people, with culture working as a social glue (Alvesson, 2013a). But it is important to distinguish between cultural orientations

guiding experiences and action in practices and some broader cultural orientations in relationship to the organization on a more general and more superficial level, perhaps creating loyalty and community, affecting collaborations and spirit more than practices.

There is of course no mechanistic or one-to-one relationship between material and cultural levels. The former affect cultural manifestations, but these in turn do not simply mirror material and social conditions. The meaning given to work tasks, material conditions, etc. is also central and intermeshes with how the materiality of work content and labour processes contribute to the shaping of consciousness and interpretations of the social world. Also, within a specific set of operations and material constraints, people may be more or less innovative or supportive. Materialistic reductionism and mechanical reasoning must be rejected.

The interplay between the material and cultural aspects of the work situation is shown by Burawoy (1979). He studied a factory at the shop-floor level and found, among other things, a work culture built around 'making out' – managing to produce enough to keep the piece rate. This was not only or even primarily a matter of pay; instead, it was an act, a gamble, which reduced boredom and provided a basis for discussion, jokes and integration among workers:

Even social interaction not occasioned by the structure of work is dominated by and couched in the idiom of making out. When someone comes over to talk, his first question is, 'Are you making out?' followed by 'What is the rate?' If you are not making out, your conversation is likely to consist of explanations of why you are not: 'The rate's impossible', 'I had to wait an hour for the inspector to check the first piece'. (p. 62)

The connection between work content, labour process and cultural phenomena may of course be looser and less direct than in Burawoy's study, where the cultural manifestation is a rather direct response to a boring work situation. In other cases, more complex psychological processes account for

the creation and maintenance of particular cultural patterns. Anxiety-producing and stressful work such as that in hospitals (Menzies, 1960), psychiatric institutions (Kernberg, 1980), or social agencies (Sunesson, 1981) may trigger emotional reactions leading to or at least reinforcing, for example, social defence-oriented work practices and organizational structures, rigid attitudes to rules, formal procedures, and the reification of patients/clients. The cultural elements are significant in affecting psychological reactions to the task and mediating the implementation of rules, procedures and other structural arrangements. Of course, forms of anxiety other than those directly related to work tasks and labour processes can also affect culture; being in a risky business can trigger collective, paranoiacally coloured reactions which influence understandings, beliefs, etc. (e.g. Brown and Starkey, 2000; Kets de Vries and Miller, 1984, 1986).

The cultural orientations of white-collar workers and professionals – where specific sources of anxiety, such as work with social and emotional problems associated with suffering, pain and death, may be less pronounced – can also be understood in the context of the work they do. Lawyers and people in government tax offices seem to develop critical attitudes, for example, in relation to managerial ideas and initiatives. Lawyers are used to arguing and taking the opposite position in much of their work – in court and in negotiations – and this seems to characterize their attitudes and orientations more generally in law firms, making management and more ambitious, large-scale cooperation difficult (Winroth, 1999). In a study of tax authorities that I conducted, interviewees reported that people regularly working with the critical monitoring of tax sheets were also inclined to look for errors and weaknesses in areas of work other than their 'core tasks'. This sceptical attitude then coloured broader orientations at the workplace and was a significant element in organizational culture. Managers complained that subordinates were difficult to 'flirt with' and

to get approval from in, for example, change initiatives. Something similar can be said about academics. Among this group, too, a critical, fault-finding attitude, viewed as a vital part of the job, puts its imprint on the organizational level.

The variety of work practices often tends to lead to variety in cultural orientations within organizations. It seems likely that the marketing research department and the blue-collar workers in the same company will develop at least partly different work cultures or 'subcultures'. This is not so much because of the different efforts of the organization's executives to communicate the same appropriate virtues to all concerned but rather because of differences in tasks, labour process and general working conditions. This may seem trivial, but in the more managerially oriented organizational culture literature it is often not self-evident. But also in academic writings on organizations, the work aspect is often neglected. In the collection of papers by Frost et al. (1985), based on a conference called 'Organizational Culture and Meaning of Life in the Workplace', and in the *Handbook of Organizational Culture and Climate* (Ashkanasy et al., 2011) there are scarcely any mentions of labour processes, work content, socio-material work conditions, or anything else clearly related to social practice. When, for example, such physical aspects of organizations as architecture are considered, they are often viewed not as socio-material situations – the materialization of former activities, functioning at present to restrict or provide opportunity for action or to influence ideas and meanings – but as clues to values and assumptions (Deal and Kennedy, 1982; Schein, 1985) or as symbols communicating managerial ambitions (Vilnai-Yavetz and Rafaeli, 2011). The impacts of organizational material structures upon ideas and meanings have not been sufficiently considered (Gagliardi, 1990). As Barley and Kunda (2001) note, organization studies have to a large extent lost their focus on work and may give a misleading view of contemporary employment.

An example illustrating my point is the following event in an industrial company. A young worker was asked to report to the marketing manager who tried to persuade him to say 'business' instead of 'product' when referring to the rock drills produced by the company (Alvesson and Björkman, 1992). It was part of a corporate effort to make the firm more 'market-oriented', to make people in production recognize that there are customers buying the 'business'/product, and to create a common orientation across the different areas of the company. This attempt to adopt the term 'business' instead of 'product' encountered sustained resistance from some employees. According to a shop-floor worker:

Roland (the factory manager) has also been brain-washed with that term. I am convinced that the expression originates from the marketing manager. I have nothing whatever to do with the 'business' rock drill. It is the marketing side which has to do with the business. *There* it is a matter of business, but not *here*. I am not interested in getting closer to the market. I have enough to do as it is. [The marketing manager] tried to impress upon me that it is a matter of businesses, not of the product. He tried to find out what kind of person I am. I thought it was a damned thing to do. His job is to deal with the market. He should not come down here and mess with me, that's the task of my own boss. Roland also thought it was a bit unpleasant. (He was also there.) One wonders what kind of people they have up there. (Alvesson and Björkman, 1992: 147)

The worker's strong negative reaction can partly be accounted for by reference to his work situation – it is the physical product that he operates on, not a financial transaction. The term 'business' simply does not appear meaningful and relevant. The effort to impose this kind of meaning on his work experience backfires heavily and the result is the opposite of what the marketing manager wants to accomplish – instead of a common understanding and more appreciation of customers and market considerations, the outcomes are the underscoring of differences in world-view, negative perceptions and distance between marketing and production people.

WORK SITUATION AND SOCIAL INTERACTION SHAPING MEANING

One reason why what people do is important for cultural orientations is that it affects interaction patterns. Physical closeness and the need for cooperation between workers involved in a labour process are central here. Shared work experiences often mean the development of shared meanings around work. Work content and labour processes are frequently closely related to specific social interaction processes, which are crucial to the development and expression of meaning. As Young (1989: 201) puts it:

It is precisely at this level of everyday, at the level of the detailed social processes informing relationships between organizational interests, that the content of organizational culture is continuously formed and reaffirmed. What appears as prosaic detail is actually the development of norms and values whereby events and relationships in the organization are given meaning. The mundanity of the everyday is an illusion, for it is within these details that the dynamics of organizational culture come into being.

Van Maanen and Barley (1985: 35) suggest that cultural patterns ‘cease to exist unless they are repeatedly enacted as people respond to occurrences in their daily lives’.

Studies of shop-floor cultures (e.g. Burawoy, 1979; Collinson, 1988; Young, 1989) support this position. These studies often deviate from mainstream, managerially oriented organizational culture studies, both in terms of depth of method (often long periods of participant observation) and in the picture of organizational culture that emerges. Of course, ‘organizational culture’ here is shop-floor culture, something many writers would call a subculture. However, from a cultural point of view, boundaries are not defined in legal or formal terms, but are based on identifications, interaction and the development of shared meanings and ideas. And often a ‘unit’ such as the shop floor may then be treated as a ‘cultural whole’, even though this ‘whole’ is seldom contradiction-free, as other divisions may also be important.

This, then, is something quite different from the communication of visions and values to broad and diverse groups from executives. Often executives may be quite remote from what is expressed within work groups and departments at lower levels within the overall organization. Sometimes executives do, however, have an impact across specific social settings in spite of the lack of everyday or more elaborated interaction patterns with subordinates. Skills in communication and ‘charismatic qualities’, corporate practices broadly in line with rhetoric and an ‘extraordinary’ corporate situation which captures the attention of employees (crises, success) may contribute to such influence. Systematic and ambitious efforts to control cultural orientations may, as stated, also work in this direction. Here corporate ideology may have a far-reaching impact and ‘flatten out’ variation in meanings and values attached to specific work group experiences associated with material work situations. Such a strong impact from a significant social distance cannot, however, be assumed. Although sometimes top management can have a considerable (Alvesson, 1995) or at least moderate influence (Canato et al., 2013), the impact is often more modest or limited (Alvesson and Sveningsson, 2015; Siehl, 1985). Typically, groups and occupations engaged in ‘natural communication’ associated with everyday work – spontaneous and ‘non-orchestrated’ interactions – have a significant say in the development and modification of guiding ideas, beliefs and values, and they may marginalize any impact from top managers communicating values.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

In this chapter, I have provided an overview of the concept of organizational culture, comparing this with other concepts (which are perhaps more fashionable in the field today) like identity and discourse, and have addressed the positive functions and the

more problematic aspects of culture at work. Organizational culture serves as a guiding and integrative force, creating shared meanings and supporting people who are collaborating through a shared definition and understanding of their workplace reality. At the same time, it works like a constraining force, creating a taken-as-given view of this reality. Culture reduces the openness of people and tends to freeze their world-view, privileging a particular, socially constructed and shared view of reality and making it difficult to develop and consider alternative aspects and meanings. This is indicated by metaphors for culture such as a set of blinders, a psychic prison or a source of functional stupidity.

Many organizational culture studies emphasize unique and unitary cultural patterns in organizations, sometimes viewed as an outcome of cultural management. An alternative, and perhaps in most cases more realistic, view is to see organizations as differentiated, varied and sometimes fragmented. Different occupational groups and different labour processes tend to influence cultural patterns. In particular, the work people do is influenced by, but also influences, cultural meanings. This often limits the scope of cultural management and means that efforts by senior people to manage the meaning of work and the actual meanings of subordinates may not be aligned.

NOTE

- 1 Parts of this chapter draws upon Alvesson, M: *Understanding Organizational Culture*, Sage 2013.

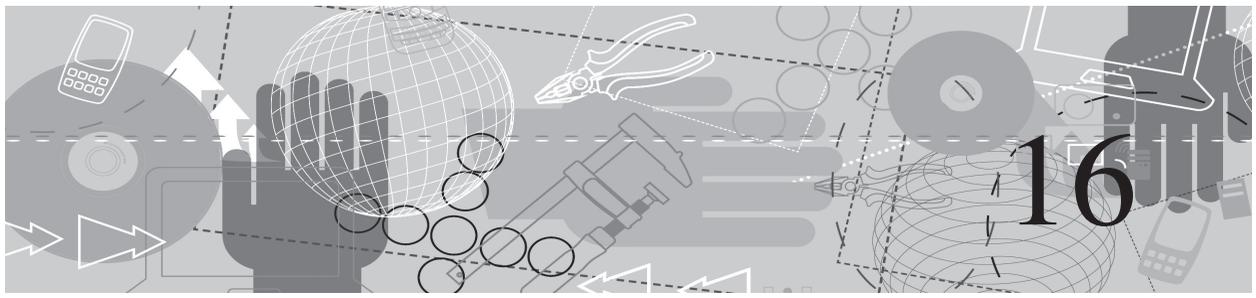
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Fordism and the Golden Age of Atlantic Capitalism

Matt Vidal

INTRODUCTION

The term fordism goes back to the time of Henry Ford. In 1916 the Ford Motor Company produced half a million Model T cars, and by 1921 it had 55 percent of the US market. Ford built on previous American innovations through the use of standardized parts and machinery, which were pioneered in the arms industry under the direction and funding of the US government. Such technologies were further developed by consumer durable goods companies including Singer (sewing machines), Pope Manufacturing (bicycles) and Western Wheel Works (bicycles). While the latter companies marketed their products in the top price category, Ford designed the Model T as a ‘car for the masses’, being the first to pursue a high-volume, low-cost strategy (Hounshell 1984). He and his engineers developed the concept of flow production, including but not limited to the moving assembly line, first installed in 1913. Due to the extremely demanding environment of

machine-paced, flow production, Ford’s turnover rate skyrocketed to 380 percent in 1913. As a result, Ford introduced the five-dollar day in 1914, effectively doubling the wage of his workers.

The fordist system was truly revolutionary, not for its contributions to productivity, which are better understood as part of a longer term evolutionary process in which Ford was one of many key players, but for its embrace of the mass market. As Hounshell (1984: 9–10) explains, ‘Before the era of the Model T, the word *masses* had carried a largely negative connotation’ but ‘Ford recognized “the masses” as a legitimate and seemingly unlimited market for the most sophisticated consumer durable product of the early twentieth century’. Indeed, the term mass production was introduced only in 1925, in an article on the topic commissioned by the *Encyclopedia Britannica* and also published in the *New York Times*, ghost-written under Henry Ford’s name by one of his spokesmen. Thereafter, mass production became a widely used term,

but fordism retained a specific meaning of high-volume, low-cost, high-wage production of standardized products.

As an academic concept, Antonio Gramsci (1999 [1929–1935]) argued that fordism, with its high wage for semi-skilled workers, was a form of material class compromise in the workplace. This notion of fordism as an institutional basis for incorporating the working class into the capitalist economy was later extended from the workplace to the macro-economy by Michel Aglietta (2000 [1970]). Fordism was not just a production system but a regime of accumulation, or national growth regime, characterized by mass production combined with institutions supporting mass consumption, including a system of collective bargaining which generalized the class compromise of relatively high and growing wages in return for labor peace. Following the work of Gramsci, Aglietta and a few other seminal contributions (Boyer 1979; Palloix 1976), the concept of fordism has been deployed within a range of disciplines, including business history (Hounshell 1984; Tolliday and Zeitlin 1991), the sociology of work (Gilbert et al. 1992; Vallas 1999; Vidal 2007), industrial relations (Dohse et al. 1985; Tolliday and Zeitlin 1992a), heterodox macroeconomics (Boyer 2000; Lipietz 1988), comparative political economy (Amin, 1995; Peck and Tickell 2000; Piore and Sabel 1984; Sabel 1982; Tickell and Peck 1992) and state theory (Bonefeld and Holloway 1991; Jessop 2002).

The concept of fordism has also received its fair share of criticism. In this chapter I carefully consider such criticism and submit that the concept of fordism is essential for an adequate understanding of the developmental trajectory of twentieth-century capitalism in Europe and North America. The strength of the concept of fordism lies in its multi-level character as a conceptual framework for establishing causal linkages between the micro-organizational and macro-institutional constitution of economies (Aglietta 2000 [1970]; Boyer 1988). The American economy became the most powerful economy in

the world over the twentieth century because its fordist *model of production* was embedded within a *national growth regime*, including a Keynesian welfare state and an explicit compromise between big business and big unions, and an *international growth regime* in which the US was the hegemonic state within the Bretton Woods monetary system.

This chapter proceeds as follows. The first section briefly outlines a regulation theoretic approach to fordism as a multilevel analytical framework. The next three sections focus on fordism as a production model in three countries: *classical fordism* in the US, *reluctant fordism* in the UK and *flexible fordism* in Germany. In the section on the US, I deal with the two strongest critiques of the concept of fordism (Clarke 1992; Williams et al. 1992). Ford's Model T production system, based on special-purpose machinery and flow production, was developed by other American firms and generalized into the model of classical fordism, based on general-purpose machinery and batch production. In the UK there was substantial resistance to fordist production due to an enduring institutional legacy from its much longer history of industrialization, while Germany adopted the model more fully, with substantial help from the Marshall Planners, diverging only in cases where it made advances on fordist production in terms of flexibility. The fifth section discusses the international regime of *Atlantic fordism*, based in the Bretton Woods monetary system (1945–1973). The sixth section discusses the leading national growth regimes that were established within Atlantic fordism: *liberal fordism* in the US, *blocked fordism* in the UK and *nonliberal fordism* in Germany. The final section concludes.

THEORY: FORDISM FROM PRODUCTION MODEL TO INTERNATIONAL GROWTH REGIME

Aglietta (2000 [1970]) developed a regulation theory of American capitalism to explain how

class compromise and economic stability were established through institutional forms of regulation based in and around fordist production. Following Boyer (1988), the analysis here distinguishes between three institutional domains: the production model (work and employment relations), the national regime (forms of competition and the state) and the international regime. Here I provide three brief theoretical comments. First, Marx (1990 [1867]) predicted a tendency toward the centralization capital – the growth of large oligopolies through mergers and acquisitions – as a normal outcome of capitalist competition. Nearly a hundred years later, oligopoly was a basic fact of industrialization according to the dean of business history, Alfred Chandler (1962: 25, 30): ‘Expanded output often led to overproduction and then to combination [i.e. horizontal mergers]. ... The threat of excess capacity appears to have been a primary stimulus to initial combinations in most American industries’. In this chapter I emphasize how oligopoly in the core of the national fordist growth regimes – in conjunction with low levels of international trade under the international Atlantic fordist regime – allowed wages to be taken out of competition.

Second, the relation of national growth regimes to the international regime can be conceptualized through Trotsky’s notion of combined and uneven development. ‘The privilege of historical backwardness’, wrote Trotsky (2001 [1932]: 27) ‘permits, or rather compels, the adoption of whatever is ready in advance of any specified date, skipping a whole series of intermediate stages ... The fact that Germany and the United States have now economically outstripped England was made possible by the very backwardness of their capitalist development’. Veblen (2003 [1915]: 42, 49, 53) offered a similar analysis in his study of German industrialization. ‘Frames of mind’ that were ‘habituated’ to the early phase of the Industrial Revolution, based in a handicraft ‘conception’ of industry, acted to restrain British technological

growth in later phases. Due to the durability of these forms of habituation and their lag in catching up with technical change, the British paid a ‘penalty for having been thrown into the lead and so having shown the way’.

Gerschenkron (1962) made the notion of backwardness central to his analysis of German industrialization. In Peck and Theodore’s (2007: 760–1) regulation theory of variegated capitalism, combined and uneven development offers a way of ‘coming to terms with the causes and forms of capitalism’s dynamic polymorphism’, including ‘combined, multiscale hybrid’ organizational and institutional forms. This theory does not assume that national economies must be institutionally homogeneous or coherent (Vidal 2014). Likewise, Djelic (1998: 2, 9) argued that ‘national systems of industrial production did not evolve in a discrete or independent fashion ... the partial convergence of national systems of industrial production after 1945 cannot be understood outside of a peculiar geopolitical context’.

Finally, in the introduction to their volume of major contributions to the analysis of fordism as a model of production, Beynon and Nichols (2006a: xviii) argued for the need to move beyond the oversimplified ‘binary histories’ of fordism and post-fordism. Regulation theory provides a methodological and conceptual apparatus for theorizing how national growth regimes within an international regime may follow similar developmental trajectories yet differ in their concrete institutionalization (for an overview of regulation theory and in-depth elaboration of my approach, see Vidal (2014)). The analysis presented here is realist, rather than ideal typical, meaning that it seeks to make claims about actually existing regimes at each level: organizational, sectoral, national and international. Whether under the name of fordism, mass production, or the American model, classical fordism was a reality-derived production model that was explicitly diffused to Western Europe (Djelic 1998). Beynon and Nichols (2006a: xiv) also note that using the

fordism/post-fordism dichotomy as a frame for comparative and historical analysis 'puts a very high premium on having specified fordism as a method of production correctly in the first place'. Following my in-depth historical analysis, I thus carefully summarize each regime in a series of tables listing key characteristics, subject to refinement based on new evidence.

THE CLASSICAL FORDIST PRODUCTION MODEL IN THE USA

Precursors to Classical Fordism: From the 'American System of Manufactures' to the Model T System

In the nineteenth century a distinctly 'American system of manufactures' emerged: special-purpose machine tools were arranged in a sequential operation to produce interchangeable parts. It was called the 'American system' by Europeans who were still using general-purpose machine tools run by skilled machinists producing custom parts. According to Hounshell (1984), the original ideas for standardized parts were developed by a French military general, Jean-Baptiste de Gribbeauval, in the 1760s. The French military's experiments with interchangeable parts caught the attention of Thomas Jefferson who lobbied for the US Congress to take up the idea. From the 1790s to the 1820s, the War Department funded the Federal Armory at Springfield and private contractors, most notably Simeon North and Eli Whitney, to develop standardized arms. This goal was not realized until the American engineer Thomas Blanchard, building on ideas borrowed from the French engineer Marc I. Brunel, designed a sequence of special-purpose machines to build standardized rifle stocks. By 1826 Blanchard had perfected his sequential, assembly-line style operation with 13 special-purpose machines that, together with his custom-made lathe,

produced the stocks without the need for skilled labor.

Now, Clarke (1992: 17) argued that there 'was nothing original in either the detail or the general principles' of Ford's system, only that he applied them to a new industry and did so with such 'single-minded ruthlessness that he transformed the condition of production of motor vehicles almost overnight'. It is true that Singer produced half a million sewing machines in 1880, as many cars as Ford produced in 1916. But there are two critical differences. First, the Model T had more than 10,000 parts – orders of magnitude more complex than the sewing machine. Second, capitalist firms before Ford had no plans to produce low-cost products for a mass market. It was Ford's focus on the mass market that was the real game changer.

A final issue concerns whether Ford's system was in fact widely replicated throughout the US economy after the 1920s. The short answer is that there were significant modifications made to Ford's Model T system, but that these are best interpreted not as the demise of fordism but as the refinement and generalization of the fordist model of mass production. Clarke (1992) argued, correctly, that Ford's Model T system failed by the end of the 1930s as his company became unable to maintain high wage costs (within the existing labor-market regime of wage-based competition), was forced to diversify products under competitive pressure from General Motors, and forced to concede unionization in 1941. At the same time, Williams and collaborators showed that the Ford Highland Park plant in the early twentieth century did not fit the stereotype of fordism, because it included flow production rather than batch production. Taken together, these views are both consistent with my interpretation: the Model T system was of such an extreme level of single-purpose orientation that it ultimately failed and had to be replaced by a modified system – which has widely come to be known as fordism.

Williams et al. (1992: 529–30) persuasively demonstrated that Highland Park was

‘proto-Japanese’, having anticipated modern lean practices: flow production with low buffer stocks and continuous improvement in reducing direct labor and improving workflow via plant reorganization. However, they are unpersuasive in their claim that inflexible, ‘dedicated equipment ... cannot be found at Highland Park’. In their interpretation, Ford’s machinery ‘was flexible in the sense that it was mainly reusable ... most of Ford’s metal working was done on bought-in, series built lathes, drills, millers and presses’. They conclude that ‘special jigs and fixtures’ were easily retooled for new products. They cite a single source suggesting Ford’s machine tools were easily retoolable, while Hounshell references hundreds of sources throughout his book showing the opposite. To begin with, it must be remembered that the Highland Park plant built a single product, the Model T, and that the changeover to the Model A took more than six months. This was largely because of the single-purpose nature of Ford’s machines: of the 43,000 machine tools at the factory, more than half were scrapped, and others refurbished, for the Model A.

It is true that Ford had a tool and die shop of skilled machinists using general purpose lathes, mills, planers, drills and grinders, but these were largely used to build and maintain single-purpose machine tools. The latter were truly single-purpose machines; in the engine department alone such machines included, according to a journalist from *American Machinist*:

special block and head spotting machines ... special machines [that] bored out the cylinders and the combustion chambers on the head ... another machine tool drilled at one time forty-five holes in four sides of the block [using] non-adjustable spindles ... a drilling machine for babbitt bearing anchor holes ... broaching machines for valve stem bushings. (Hounshell 1984: 233)

These were not machines that could be retooled. Other machines may have been of a more general-purpose type, but these were fitted with hard, expensive, often very large single-purpose fixtures, tools and dies.

Ford’s system of single-purpose machinery dedicated to making a single product was never going to have a long life. It was simply not feasible to have such a high level of dedicated, extremely expensive capital equipment in an ever-changing market economy. The cost of retooling and reconstruction for the Model A was around \$18 million (Hounshell 1984). When making annual model changes – and later, variations on the same model – flow production with dedicated machinery was impossible. There are two issues here. First, in terms of technology, while special-purpose machines undoubtedly continued to be used in mass production, there was a growing use of general-purpose machine tools. This shift was famously implemented at GM to support its annual model-change strategy, under William Kundsén in 1927 (Hounshell 1984). In addition, as Sabel (1982) has argued, to a certain extent whether a machine tool is special purpose or general purpose depends on the know-how of engineers and the skill of operators.

Second, in terms of workflow, the use of more general-purpose machines to produce more varied products made flow production extremely difficult – a problem not fully solved until the development of the Toyota production system. Knudsen thus introduced a decentralized but still vertically integrated structure – Chandler’s (1962) multidivisional form – in which there was functional differentiation between plants owned by GM but autonomously run by local management: motors and body stampings in Flint, forgings and axles in Detroit, transmissions in Toledo, carburetors in Bay City, and seven assembly plants located in large cities. This development initiated a shift from the flow production system of the Model T to a batch-and-queue production system. Even inside less decentralized factories, with significantly more parts running through an integrated factory, it was necessary to develop buffer stocks between various operations, which ensured continuity of production (Tolliday and Zeitlin 1992b).

The Classical Fordist Production Regime

Based on the foregoing, Table 16.1 presents a periodization of phases of capitalist development in the US. First *American system* is dated from Blanchard’s introduction of a sequence of single-purpose machines to produce interchangeable gunstocks in 1826. This system was based on the use of standardized parts and products, single-purpose machines and mid-volume batch production using semi-skilled labor. The American system also used internal contracting, in which the capitalist provided a factory, machines, power and raw materials, while a contractor brought his own workers into the factory and was responsible for all aspects of labor management. The contractor was paid piece-wages, but his workers were paid time-wages (Littler 1982: Chapter 7). This system was used throughout the New England arms factories and at McCormick (mechanical reapers) and Pope Manufacturing. Singer was among the first to eliminate the internal contractor system, switching in the 1880s to a system of direct hires and foremen, in order to have increased control and better information on production costs. The decline

of the internal contracting system led to the rise of piece-wages for individual workers, generating new problems as the latter, fearful of the threat of rate cutting, responded by ‘soldiering’, that is, systematically restricting output.

Second, *Ford’s Model T system* (Table 16.1), is best conceived as a transition period to the stage of fully fledged classical fordism. It is dated from 1913 to 1927, from the beginning of the introduction of the assembly line to the final year of production of the Model T. As noted, the Model T system continued the new practice of producing standardized parts and a single, standardized product with special purpose machinery. Although Ford never explicitly adopted taylorism, he certainly employed semi-skilled workers along principles similar to it. Indeed, as with fordism, taylorism is best thought of not as a system conceived and perfected by an individual (Frederick W. Taylor), but a system that was part of a broader movement of rationalization, in which many individuals made contributions (e.g. Gantt, Barth, Cooke, the Gilbreths, Bedaux), and for which Taylor was the most influential proselytizer. While the pure version of Taylor’s system, like that

Table 16.1 Core organizational models, USA, 1826–present

	<i>American system, 1826–1913</i>	<i>Ford Model T system, 1913–1927</i>	<i>Classical Fordism, 1927–1970s</i>	<i>Postfordism 1970s–present</i>
Products/ industries	- Arms - Sewing machines - Typewriters - Bicycles	- The Model T	- Durable goods - Nondurable goods - Fast food	- Manufacturing - Retail sales - Leisure and hospitality - Healthcare - Banking and insurance - Public sector
Characteristics	1. Standardized parts and products 2. Single-purpose machines 3. Mid-volume, batch production 4. Semi-skilled labor 5. Market-determined wages 6. Internal contracting	1. Standardized parts and products 2. Single-purpose machines 3. High-volume, flow production 4. Semi-skilled labor 5. High day wage 6. Vertical integration/internal labor markets	1. Standardized parts, diversified products 2. General-purpose machines 3. Forecast-driven, high-volume, batch production 4. Taylorism 5. Collectively bargained and administratively determined wages 6. Vertical integration/internal labor markets	1. Standardized parts and scripts, diversified products 2. Flexible machines 3. Demand-driven, high-volume, flow production 4. Neotaylorism 5. Market-determined wages 6. Vertical disintegration

Source: Author’s analysis.

of Ford's, was not widely adopted, many of his disciples and competitors did successfully diffuse a system of task fragmentation, process standardization and sharp separation of conception from execution.

Ford's attempt to solve the problem of soldiering, of course, was the five-dollar day wage. Lazonick (1983) showed that this high wage worked in reducing labor turnover and increasing productivity – but only for a short period. As productivity increases began to slow and competition began to catch up in the 1930s, Ford was no longer able to afford such a high wage. Close supervision could not ensure reliable and attentive workers either. The solution was found in providing internal promotion opportunities within the firm. Internal promotion ladders, and wages associated with positions rather than individuals, are part of a broader set of bureaucratic employment practices known as internal labor markets. Ford and US Steel were pioneers in this area.

As Jacoby (1984) demonstrated, however, internal labor markets were resisted by most employers and were implemented only under pressure from unions, the personnel management movement, and the state. Before the First World War, employment was unstable and inequitable. The first wave of internal labor markets was implemented following the War under pressure from skilled worker unions and reformers (social workers, academics, ministers, vocational guidance counselors), who sought to replace the arbitrary authority of the foreman with personnel departments. A minority of manufacturers began conceding these demands due to labor shortages and labor unrest during the War. The Federal government provided training for personnel managers at universities, but it was not until after the Great Depression that a majority of manufacturing firms implemented personnel departments. Specifically, the National Industrial Recovery Act of 1933 rejuvenated the labor movement, leading non-union firms to adopt personnel departments in an attempt to stave off unions. Promotion ladders did not become widely adopted until the 1940s,

under the influence of government agencies including the National Labor Relations Board, the War Manpower Commission and the War Labor Board.

Third, classical fordism (Table 16.1) consists of a refinement of Ford's Model T system. Like the latter it is based on the high-volume production of standardized parts for mass markets. GM introduced two critical adaptations with its strategy of more diversified, but still highly standardized products: general-purpose machines and decentralized, batch production. The strategy of diversified products and the structure of batch production both required improvements in forecasting, leading to the establishment of the classical model of forecast-driven, high-volume, batch production. This fordist model was increasingly associated with taylorist work organization. In keeping with the attempt to substitute management for the market (Chandler 1962), the fordist corporation implemented internal labor markets, including the payment of administratively determined wages associated with positions on an internal promotion ladder, rather than with individual performance (Edwards 1979; Osterman 1984). While the fordist core was located primarily in the manufacturing sector, fordist principles – high volumes, standardization and taylorism – were adopted in leading service companies, most prominently by McDonalds and the emerging fast-food industry (Leidner 1993).

Finally, I briefly discuss *postfordism* (Table 16.1) based on my analysis of the US case (see Vidal 2012, 2013a).¹ The postfordist regime continues the fordist strategy of producing standardized parts and diversified products. I have added standardized scripts to the list given the importance of interactive service labor in the postfordist economy, heavily concentrated in retail sales and leisure and hospitality (Vidal 2013a), much of which is scripted in an attempt to standardize service provision (Leidner 1993). All of the other characteristics of the post-fordist growth regime have been significantly modified or fully reversed from their fordist forms.

Beginning in the 1970s and '80s, the diffusion of microprocessors, CNC machine tools, programmable stamping presses with soft tooling, and quick changeover methods developed in Japan, a new generation of flexible machine tools surpassed the previous generation of general-purpose machines. Production is still high-volume, but, following the path-breaking innovations of Toyota, the model of lean production has now become dominant throughout the manufacturing world (Vidal 2011): demand-driven rather than forecast-driven production, and a return to flow principles based on just-in-time inventory and production control principles. Under the lean model, process standardization is central but it now involves workers in problem solving and is hence neotaylorist (Adler 1995). Similar principles – customer focus, flow production, neotaylorist – are being widely implemented in the service sector, with the healthcare, banking and insurance, and civil service sectors leading the way (Vidal 2011). Finally, there has been a dramatic move toward vertical disintegration, which has largely eliminated internal labor markets and has been implemented along with a return to the market determination of wages (Vidal 2013a).

THE RELUCTANT FORDIST PRODUCTION MODEL IN THE UK

The Industrial Revolution and the Precursors to Reluctant Fordism

Britain, of course, is the birthplace of the Industrial Revolution, beginning around the 1760s and running through the 1830s, including new tools, fertilizers and harvesting techniques in agriculture, the mechanization of textile production (the water frame for the cotton spinning wheel, the spinning mule and the power loom), the steam engine powered by refined coal, and advances in iron making (the use of coke and the rolling mill). Goods production in pre-industrial society was done

on a small scale either by households in the cottage/domestic industries or by skilled handicraft trades under the medieval, urban guild system. According to Marx (1990 [1867]), a gradual and uneven transformation took place from the mid-sixteenth to the last third of the eighteenth century in which capitalists combined the distinct trades together necessary to produce a final complex product, such as a carriage, or combined the same trades together in order to improve the division of labor within the trade. Over two centuries machines were introduced into manufacturing and, beginning in the nineteenth century, the factory system began to replace the artisanal system of putting-out to households or small workshops.

In terms of product and process standardization, Britain was very late to the game compared with the US and Germany. With its empire markets, the UK had the largest product market in the world during the nineteenth century (Gospel 2014). However, these markets were highly fragmented and heterogeneous, divided along class and regional lines. In tailoring to these diverse markets, British firms made a wide range of products, with little incentive to standardize products or develop mass production methods (Gospel 1992). Yet, when compared with the early rationalization movements of the US and Germany, explaining the persistence of non-standardized, small-batch craft production well into the 1920s requires further explanation.

The lack of standardization of products and processes was in part a contingent outcome of class struggles. Within management, engineers in the UK lost out in a struggle for control with accountants, because the former failed to establish control over a broad range of activities or to deal with short-term financial problems, whereas the latter succeeded (Ackroyd and Lawrenson 1996). Because British engineers failed to gain a strategic role in management, as they had in the US and Germany, their priorities were subordinated to those of accountants, leading to a failure of overall strategic management.

In the class struggle between management and labor, the former failed to gain sufficient control over the production process (Lewchuk 1983). The informal shop steward movement, which was independent of the national union movement, had gained substantial control over the shop-floor. As a result, management saw the problem of labor cooperation and ‘the human element’ as the main issue. They prioritized motivation over machine pacing and direct control; the primary mechanism for motivation was the piece-wage and then the premium bonus system, and machine pacing was seen as largely inconsistent with their motivation strategy.

Craft control was more easily eliminated in the US because capital was more mobile and able to relocate to non-union areas (Lazonick 1983), where mechanization and taylorism could be implemented without resistance from craft workers and their unions. Unskilled and semi-skilled labor in the US was not organized until the 1930s, and this large pool of workers included a large immigrant contingent, creating a wide gulf between employer and employee, facilitating the dehumanization of labor (Littler, 1982). In the UK, labor was skilled, organized and more ethnically homogeneous, leading employers to have more concern for the conditions of workers and making their primary concern the threat to their control from organized labor.

The Reluctant Fordist Production Regime

A large firm sector began to emerge before the First World War and industrial concentration rapidly increased during the 1920s. Oligopolies were established in chemicals, electrical engineering, food, drink and tobacco (Gospel 1992). During the War the government encouraged standardization of parts and products, there was an increasing use of mechanization and semi-skilled workers, and the stable markets created by the War

gave further impetus to the development of mass production methods (Gospel 1992; Littler 1982). The Ministry of Munitions intervened during wartime production ‘by discouraging product differentiation and by encouraging investment in long runs and mass production to meet government demand’ (Hannah 1983: 30). There was an intense merger wave in the 1920s leading to a substantial increase in industry concentration, and there were moves toward vertical integration in the food and beverage industries, with the rise of giant firms including Unilever, United Dairies, Boots and Cadbury-Fry. During this period the professionalization of management grew. The form of taylorism that finally gained traction in the UK was known as the Bedaux system, after Charles E. Bedaux (Littler 1982). He developed a form of taylorism that was said to be simpler to install and required less encroachment on the authority of traditional management.

During the Great Depression, Britain turned to protectionism and collusion, which greatly facilitated vertical integration and the introduction of internal labor markets (Gospel 2014). After the Second World War concentration increased dramatically. Within manufacturing, the proportion of employment in giant firms (those with more than 1,500 employees) rose from 15 percent in 1935 to 24 percent in 1951, strongly suggesting a transition to mass production techniques. By 1957 the 100 largest firms held 60 percent of net assets in the manufacturing sector and by 1969, 75 percent. The number of UK firms producing TVs declined from 60 in 1954 to just seven in 1969.

In sum, the production model that Britain achieved by the postwar period may be referred to as *reluctant fordism*. This model is compared with classical fordism in Table 16.2. British manufacturing had finally become organizationally fordist, including the use of standardized parts, general-purpose machines, forecast-driven, high-volume production. I refer to the system as *reluctant fordism* because fordist ideas were never fully accepted

Table 16.2 Fordist regimes, USA, UK, Germany, 1945–1973

	USA	UK	Germany
	Classical Fordism	Reluctant Fordism	Flexible Fordism
Core production model	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Standardized parts 2. General-purpose machines* 3. Forecast-driven, high-volume, batch production 4. Classical taylorism 5. Collectively bargained and administratively determined wages 6. High vertical integration and arms-length interfirm relations 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Standardized parts 2. General-purpose machines 3. Forecast-driven, high-volume, batch production 4. <i>Modified taylorism (Bedaux)</i> 5. Collectively bargained and administratively determined wages 6. <i>Moderate vertical integration and arms-length interfirm relations</i> 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Standardized parts 2. General-purpose machines 3. Forecast-driven, high-volume, batch production 4. <i>Democratic taylorism</i> 5. Collectively bargained and administratively determined wages 6. <i>High vertical integration and interfirm cooperation</i>
	Liberal Fordism	Blocked Fordism	Nonliberal Fordism
National growth regime	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Core employment sector: oligopolistic manufacturing 2. Mass consumption via mass domestic market 3. Supply-driven, producer-dominated supply chains 4. Liberal Keynesian welfare state 5. Class compromise: national union contacts and pattern bargaining 6. Well-integrated financial and productive capital investment banks 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Core employment sector: oligopolistic manufacturing 2. Mass consumption via domestic and European Common Market 3. Supply-driven, producer-dominated supply chains 4. Liberal Keynesian welfare state 5. <i>No class compromise due to obstructive working-class politics</i> 6. <i>Unintegrated financial and productive capital due to fractionalized capital</i> 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Core employment sector: oligopolistic manufacturing 2. Mass consumption via domestic and European Common Market 3. Supply-driven, producer-dominated supply chains 4. Corporatist Keynesian welfare state 5. Class compromise: centralized, national-level pattern bargaining 6. <i>Deeply integrated, long-term relations between financial and productive capital via Hausbanken</i>

Note: *I follow Hounshell (1984: 265–6) in distinguishing the single-purpose machine tools used from the 1850s to the 1920s in the US, from the subsequent generation of more general-purpose machine tools introduced at GM in the 1920s. The latter, which were more standardized and hence allowed a quicker changeover, can be differentiated from flexible (programmable) machine tools and presses that use microprocessors, which diffused in the 1970s and '80s.

Source: Author's analysis.

by a large proportion of British management. This reluctance can be seen in two partial but important modifications to the classical model. First, a modified form of taylorism, the Bedaux system, was adopted, and skilled workers continued to remain more important to production than in the US. Second, the UK remained less vertically integrated than the US and more dependent on arms-length relations between firms. Still, during the post-war period, internal labor markets in core firms were formalized and structured, with rules and practices for internal promotion by seniority, and wages associated with positions in the hierarchy, although there continued to be underinvestment in firm-specific training (Gospel 1992). Britain achieved high wages

through class struggle in which structural conditions made labor more powerful than capital, not through a class compromise as in the US and Germany. There were national-level agreements but significant wage drift due to local bargaining (with strong stewards and weak managers) in a context of full employment and strong demand.

FLEXIBLE FORDISM IN GERMANY

Precursors to Flexible Fordism

The story of German industrialization is much less contested than that of the UK. This section

will thus be much briefer than the previous sections. ‘The consensus seems to be’, according to Kocka (1980), that Germany’s first phase of *large-scale* industrialization ‘began about 1840 and ended with the economic crisis of 1873’. Germany followed a similar trajectory to the US: the construction of railroads, and other traditional industries, creating a large integrated domestic market. In turn, the German economy developed a core of manufacturing firms that were largely fordist, although in certain respects more flexible than their American counterparts. Now, Herrigel (1996: 18) shook up the consensus, making the critical point that although fordism was dominant in some regions, other regions were dominated by dynamic economies of decentralized, specialized small and mid-sized firms and craft producers. The latter, derived from pre-industrial roots in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, experienced their own independent form of industrialization, and flourishing alongside the fordist regions well into the postwar period. It is thus more accurate to say large-scale industrialization emerged, in Herrigel’s words, ‘alongside an already existing and still robust system’ of craft producers. This form of industrial dualism is fully consistent with my regulationist theory of combined and uneven development; such heterogeneity exists within and as across national economies (Vidal 2014).

The rise of the vertically integrated, diversified firm emerged from the 1870s through the First World War (Chandler and Daems 1980; Kocka 1980). In some respects, German moves toward fordist-type organization occurred earlier than in the US. Most importantly, as early as 1887, 14 of the top 100 largest firms were fully integrated (forward into distribution and backward into supply), and by 1907, 62 of the top 100 were (Kocka 1980). These firms were also highly diversified, more so than US firms at the time (Chandler and Daems 1980). Cartelization came along with vertical integration and diversification. Since *laissez-faire* ideas had never become strongly accepted in Germany, whose business leaders were

more concerned with stability, cartels were widely seen as legitimate forms of business organization (Djelic 1998; Kocka 1980). By 1907, cartels accounted for around 25 percent of total industrial output, and by 1930 there were around 2,100 cartels. German industry thus became heavily oligopolistic. In 1907 Siemens and AEG together employed around two-thirds of the electrical engineering industry, and still 40 percent of the workforce by 1939.

The first industrial boom in Germany, around the 1850s, was financed by banks. Germany was similar to America and different from Britain insofar as it had a very close relationship between finance and industry. However, the nature of that close relationship differed radically, with repercussions that continue to this day: America had a highly developed capital market whereas Germany did not. German banks developed a unique system of universal banking modeled on a combination of British commercial banks and French investment banks, allowing them to provide investments to industry funded by short-term deposits from commercial banking (Gerschenkron 1962). Beginning in the 1890s, banks and industry began to develop very close relations (Kocka 1980). After this period banks shifted from providing short- and long-term loans to providing primarily long-term loans. Having long-term stakes in business, banks increasingly moved to secure direct influence in firm strategy.

In Germany the development of professional and bureaucratic management took place around the same time as the US and earlier than the UK, but the complete separation of ownership from control occurred later than both (Kocka 1980). The emphasis on technical training and engineering was strong in Germany, and between 1890 and 1930 it surpassed even the US in the proportion of top managers – owners and salaried – with some academic training. In the context of a strong bureaucratic tradition from the history of German absolutism (Homburg 1983), which emphasized rules, procedures and standardization, it is not surprising that Germany

was an early adopter of product standardization and professional managerial hierarchies. Indeed, large German firms developed ideas on systematic factory organization similar to those of Taylor without having been exposed to his ideas (Kocka 1980). Upon hearing of taylorism, German managers and engineers eagerly visited the US to study it, and by 1907 it was widely discussed in Germany. After the First World War, the German electrical engineering firms, including Siemens, helped to organize associations to promote taylorism, including the National Efficiency Board, the National Committee on Time Studies, and the National Board for Industrial Standards (Homburg 1983).

The Flexible Fordist Production Model

Herrigel (1996: 150) notes that during the interwar period mass production was introduced in the steel, auto, light machinery and textile industries. The producer goods industries, including machine tool makers, were also large, bureaucratic firms, but they produced more customized products in smaller batches, using general-purpose machinery and skilled labor. As early as the First World War, Daimler and Benz were adopting methods more along the lines of classical fordism than the Model T system: a mix of dedicated and general-purpose tools, volume production in large batches based on functional (rather than flow) organization and increased vertical integration. The German batch producers were low-volume, custom producers using skilled and largely autonomous labor within a tradition of labor-management cooperation. Over the interwar period, however, the small-batch, custom machinery producers began to produce standard machines, and along with this increased standardization and volumes.

The consolidation of the fordist model occurred rapidly after the Second World War. 'The American system of industrial production', argues Djelic (1998: 2) 'was constructed

after 1945 as a universal model for the Western world'. Institutional mechanisms for transferring the fordist model to Western Europe were established by American involvement in reconstruction, most notably through the Marshall Plan – administered under the newly created Economic Cooperation Administration (ECA) in 1948 – and the American Military Government in Germany (OMGUS). East Germany, of course, was under Soviet control. The ECA and OMGUS explicitly adopted fordism as their model, understood as 'large, mass producing corporations [competing] on oligopolistic markets' (Djelic 1998: 104). Over the 1950s 'the Ministry for the Marshall Plan published close to one hundred reports on every aspect of the American system of industrial production – mass production, standardization, specialization, rationalization, antitrust, human relations, trade unions' (Djelic 1998: 181). Five thousand Germans were sent to observe American production techniques between 1950 and 1951.

In sum, in the postwar period the dominant production model in Germany came to be *flexible fordism* (Table 16.2). Like the US and the UK, German manufacturing widely adopted standardized parts, general-purpose machinery and forecast-driven, high-volume batch production. The German system achieved more flexibility through a system of democratic taylorism (a term Adler (1995) has used to describe Japanese lean production), based in a Christian and social democratic tradition of labor-management cooperation, which was institutionalized in the Works Councils Act of 1952, providing for local works councils and worker representation on supervisory boards. While German manufacturing was also highly vertically integrated, high levels of interfirm cooperation between lead firms and their suppliers provided an additional source of flexibility. Finally, based in the Bremen Agreement of 1956, national, centralized bargaining between the metalworkers union (*IG Metall*) and the Metal Industry Employers Association (*Gesamtmetall*), was used as a benchmark for the patterning of national wages in industry (Herrigel 1996: 265).

CONSOLIDATING AN INTERNATIONAL GROWTH REGIME: ATLANTIC FORDISM AND THE GOLDEN AGE

Before a brief comparison of the national growth regimes in the US, UK and Germany, it is first necessary to discuss the Atlantic fordist international growth regime, which established the structural basis for the national regimes. As we have seen, industrialization is a combined and uneven process that takes place initially at the regional level. Yet, the dynamics of capitalist development are inherently international, indeed global, insofar as the tendency of capitalist production is toward unlimited growth, which only respects national boundaries when forced to. International institutions were critical to the facilitation and consolidation of fordist development. First, the Bretton Woods agreement established an international monetary regime which allowed national policy autonomy and hence the establishment of Keynesian welfare states. Second, the Common Market established by the European Economic Community provided a basis for mass markets.

The Bretton Woods system and the Common Market undergirded a fordist dynamic of domestic mass production and mass consumption in the US and Western Europe. The European countries that most fully realized this regime were Britain, Germany and France. As Jessop (2002: 58) has argued, the smaller open economies (Austria, Denmark, Sweden, Canada) realized a mass consumption society ‘because they occupied key niches in an international division of labor whose transatlantic dynamic was decisively shaped by the leading fordist sectors in the leading economies’. Even where the smaller countries were primarily producers of small batch capital or luxury goods, they were able to share in the growth dynamic of Atlantic fordism, consuming mass produced goods via income from export demand.

The most important element of the Atlantic fordist regime was the Bretton Woods agreement of 1944, in which the major industrialized economies agreed on a system of

capital controls considered necessary to protect the policy autonomy of Keynesian welfare states ‘from being undermined by speculative and disequilibrating international capital flows’ (Helleiner 1994: 4). In the open system of international finance during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, speculative flows caused severe volatility in exchange rates and trade relations, widely being seen as having been a central cause of the Great Depression. After 1931, states turned to protectionism in trade and capital controls in attempt to stabilize their economies. As Helleiner shows in great detail, the Bretton Woods agreement was made possible because, following the Great Depression, private and central bankers had lost influence and been displaced from positions of power by a coalition of Keynesian-oriented state policy-makers, industrialists and labor leaders.

The Atlantic fordist regime – including Keynesian welfare states and economies of fordist mass production/mass consumption in the largest economies – produced what has been widely referred to as the Golden Age of (Atlantic) capitalism, conventionally dated from 1950 to 1973, when Bretton Woods collapsed and a series of macro indices began to turn. As shown in Table 16.3, GDP growth rates in the top five OECD economies during that period averaged a remarkable 5.4 percent, a level not seen before or after. Similarly, Table 16.4 shows labor productivity for the same states and period averaging 4.9 percent, with rates before and after rarely approaching even half of that. After 1973, in

Table 16.3 Phases of GDP growth, 1870–1984*

	1870–1913	1913–50	1950–73	1973–84
US	4.2	2.8	3.7	2.3
UK	1.9	1.3	3.0	1.1
Germany	2.8	1.3	5.9	1.7
France	1.7	1.1	5.1	2.2
Japan	2.5	2.2	9.4	3.8
Average	2.6	1.7	5.42	2.2

Note: * Average annual compound growth rates.

Source: Maddison (1987).

Table 16.4 Phases of growth in labor productivity, 1870–1984*

	1870–1913	1913–50	1950–73	1973–84
US	2.0	2.4	2.5	1.0
UK	1.2	1.6	3.2	2.4
Germany	1.9	1.0	6.0	3.0
France	1.7	2.0	5.1	3.4
Japan	1.8	1.7	7.7	3.2
Average	1.7	1.7	4.9	2.6

Notes: *GDP per hour worked; average annual compound growth rates.

Source: Maddison (1987).

addition to marked declines in output, productivity, profit rates and export growth, the OECD also experienced rising unemployment, inflation and export and GDP instability (Glyn et al. 2007). Finally, although the historical data on income inequality are patchy, existing data suggest that within the states of the Atlantic fordism regime there were rising or stable inequality levels up to the Great Depression and declining inequality during the 1930s, which was maintained throughout the fordism period. Following the crisis of fordism in the 1970s, inequality rose in many of these countries. According to Piketty's (2014: Figure 9.8) dataset on the share of income going to the top 10 percent of the population, inequality in the US rose from 1900 to around 1930, then declined steadily until around 1973, and has risen ever since. In Europe (UK, Germany, France, Sweden) inequality remained stable from 1900 to 1910, declined over the 1910s, remained stable again for the 1920s, and then declined dramatically from 1930 to 1980, after which it rose to the present level.

Since the collapse of the Bretton Woods system in 1973 – and the long, slow transition from national fordism institutions – most of the countries in the Atlantic fordism regime have experienced stagnant growth, declining or stagnant profit rates, and rising inequality (Glyn et al. 2007; Vidal 2013b). By the early 1970s unilateral capital controls were unable to contain speculative flows. Following a massive round of capital flight from the US

to Europe in 1971, the former suspended gold convertibility, forcing Europe and Japan to temporarily float their currencies. The Europeans tightened their capital controls in an attempt to stop the revaluation of their currencies, but they failed, and in 1973 they permanently floated their exchange rates, signaling the end of the Bretton Woods system.

A restrictive financial order was created under Bretton Woods in order to facilitate trade liberalization (Helleiner 1994). This concern dovetailed with the concerns of the Marshall Planners, who were fully aware that the model of fordism mass production they were using to reconstruct Europe could be established only if there were a mass market (Djelic 1998). Accordingly, they advocated union in Europe. The Organization for European Economic Cooperation (replaced by the OECD) was created in 1948, the European Payments Union (replaced by the European Monetary Agreement) in 1950, the European Coal and Steel Community (forerunner to the European Union) in 1951, and the European Economic Community or Common Market (enlarged and transformed into the EU) in 1957. As a result of these international associations and agreements, tariffs were removed within much of Western Europe, creating a large internal European mass market similar to the US (Maddison 1987).

CONSOLIDATING THE NATIONAL GROWTH REGIMES: AMERICAN LIBERAL, BRITISH BLOCKED AND GERMAN NONLIBERAL FORDISM

The comparative analysis is summarized in Table 16.2 (bottom panel). The American growth regime is referred to here as *liberal fordism*, due to the fact that the postwar institutional settlement included a liberal welfare state and highly marketized relations between finance and industry. Following Peck and Tickell (2000), the British growth regime is referred to as *blocked fordism* due to a failure

to realize a national class compromise between capital and labor, and a lack of integration between finance and industry. The German growth regime is referred to as *nonliberal fordism* due to its quasi-corporatist welfare state and industrial relations institutions, and to its deeply integrated, long-term relations between finance and industrial capital.

The bottom panel of Table 16.2 lists six characteristics of each national growth regime, which I discuss in order. First, the core sector of employment in all three countries in the 1950s and 60s was manufacturing. Table 16.5 shows the aggregate statistics for each country along with France and Japan for comparison. Based on this, one rough measure of fordism (or mature industrialism) might be when manufacturing accounts for one-third or more of employment; and for postfordism (or postindustrialism) when services account for 60 percent or more of employment. On this measure all four countries except Japan were fordist by 1950 and all but Japan and Germany postfordist by 1984.

The manufacturing sector in each country was also oligopolistic. Within the car industry, according to Tolliday and Zeitlin (1992b: 6), ‘Until the late 1960s each national market in Europe remained quite distinct and dominated by one or two domestically produced cheap small cars’. More broadly, in the US, the largest 100 firms accounted for 22 percent of net manufacturing output by 1919, 30 percent by 1954 and 33 percent by 1963. In the UK, the largest 100 firms accounted for 22 percent of net manufacturing output by 1924, 27 percent by 1953 and 41 percent by 1968 (Prais 1981). In Germany, the four-firm concentration ratios in 1958 were 61 percent for petroleum refining, 82 percent for cars, 49 percent for steel (in 1960), 98 percent for roller bearings, 71 percent for refrigerators and freezers, 66 percent for glass bottles and 86 percent for cigarettes (Müller 1976). By the end of the fordist period, industrial concentration in the UK had surpassed that in the US and Germany, with 90 percent of net output accounted for by just five firms in

Table 16.5 Employment structure, 1870–1984*

		<i>US</i>	<i>UK</i>	<i>Germany</i>	<i>France</i>	<i>Japan</i>
Agriculture	1870	50.0	22.7	49.5	49.2	67.5
	1913	32.2	11.0	34.6	37.4	64.3
	1950	13.0	5.1	22.2	28.5	48.3
	1960	8.2	4.6	13.8	21.9	30.2
	1973	4.1	2.9	7.2	11.0	13.4
	1984	3.3	2.6	5.5	7.6	8.9
Industry	1870	24.4	42.3	28.7	27.8	13.8
	1913	29.3	44.8	37.8	33.8	13.9
	1950	33.3	46.5	43.0	34.8	22.6
	1960	34.3	46.7	48.2	36.4	28.5
	1973	32.5	41.8	46.6	38.4	37.2
	1984	28.0	32.4	40.5	32.0	34.5
Services	1870	25.6	35.0	21.8	23.0	18.7
	1913	38.4	44.2	27.6	28.8	21.8
	1950	53.7	48.4	34.8	36.7	29.1
	1960	57.5	48.7	38.0	41.8	41.3
	1973	63.4	55.3	46.2	50.6	49.4
	1984	68.7	65.0	54.0	60.4	56.3

Note: *Percentage of total employment.

Source: Maddison (1987).

one quarter of all manufacturing industries (Gospel 1992). Davis and Cobb (2010) demonstrated that industry concentration ratios have a remarkably strong negative correlation within inequality, with a correlation of -0.8 in the US from 1950 to 2006. Across a range of other European, Asian and Latin American countries increased industry concentration was associated with decreased inequality. Inequality is reduced by high concentration due to the substitution of administrative policies regarding wages and promotions for market determination.

Second, all three growth regimes were based on mass production and mass consumption, which was achieved via a mass domestic market in the US and, in Western Europe, a combination of domestic markets and the European Common Market. As shown in Table 16.6, the US was effectively a self-contained economy, with total imports accounting for only 2.9 percent of GDP in 1962, and exports just 3.8 percent. If we consider the European Common Market as a single economic region then it was nearly as closed as the US economy, and certainly far less open than might be thought, given the common characterization of Germany and the UK as export-led economies and Northern Europe as comprising a number of small, open economies. While imports amounted to 16.2 percent of European GDP in 1962, 4.4 percent of that was from non-OECD countries, primarily raw materials, and of the remaining 11.76 percent that came from the OECD, fully 76 percent came from other European countries. Thus, considering Europe as a single economic region, imports as a percentage of GDP in 1962 amounted to just 7.2 percent versus 2.9 percent for the US. Exports accounted for just 3.8 percent of American GDP in 1962 and (excluding intra-Europe trade) 5.5 percent in Europe. In short, during the fordist period Europe had established a virtuous circle of mass production and mass consumption in much the same way as the US. According to Tolliday and Zeitlin (1992b), up until the late 1960s, trade between countries was complementary,

Table 16.6 Imports and exports of goods as a percentage of nominal GDP

		<i>Imports</i>	
<i>Importing country/region</i>	<i>Source</i>	<i>1962</i>	<i>1972</i>
United States			
	OECD	1.73	3.34
	Non-OECD	1.13	1.26
Europe*			
	OECD	11.76	14.13
	Europe	8.93	11.71
	Rest of world	2.83	2.42
	Non-OECD	4.40	3.94
		<i>Exports</i>	
<i>Exporting country/region</i>	<i>Destination</i>	<i>1962</i>	<i>1972</i>
United States			
	OECD	2.37	2.77
	Non-OECD	1.42	1.34
Europe			
	OECD	10.61	13.74
	Europe	8.80	11.69
	Rest of world	1.81	2.05
	Non-OECD	3.64	3.44

Note: *Europe: Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, UK.

Source: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (1994).

with little head-to-head trade in competing product lines. Only after domestic/regional markets became saturated at the end of the 1960s did large producers begin to enter into direct international competition with each other, pressured by reduced demand and overcapacity.

Third, producers were the most powerful firms in the economy, as opposed to the post-fordist period in which retailers have come to be the most powerful non-financial firms in the economy by virtue of their control over global supply chains (Vidal 2013a). While there was a high degree of vertical integration during the fordist period, including backward integration into components and, less commonly, forward integration into retailing, it

was still common for such companies buy-in raw materials and subcontract for many components. In these fordist supply chains, giant producers exercised powerful control over both forward and backward linkages (Gereffi 1994). Over time, as fordist producers began to vertically disintegrate and globalize production via complex supply chains, there was a shift in power away from manufacturers to large retailers, who began to exercise control over supply chains and often to dictate the terms of production. The fordist period was characterized by supply-driven, producer-dominated, largely domestic supply chains.

Fourth, Keynesian states in all three countries emphasized the use of fiscal and monetary policy to achieve demand management and full employment. The Keynesian welfare states in the US and UK were heavily liberal (Esping-Andersen 1990; Jessop 2002). Liberal states play only a residual role in providing social welfare (e.g. means-tested assistance and minimal social transfers) and emphasize market solutions to social problems rather than state interventions. Of course, the British National Health Service marks the UK state off from the US with its privatized healthcare system. Nonetheless, liberal states in both countries developed out of, and were institutionally linked with market-regulated economies (Jessop 2002). In contrast, the German Keynesian welfare state is of a conservative-corporatist type, which plays a more interventionist role in the provision of social welfare, although the family and existing status differentials are privileged, with welfare rights attached to status and class; social problems are addressed primarily by the family and the voluntary sector, most importantly the Church, and secondarily by the state. The conservative-corporatist state grew out of and was institutionally linked to a non-liberal economy based on close coordination between industry and finance, and within industry.

Welfare state regimes also powerfully shape the gendering of the labor market, and fordist regimes differed significantly on this dimension (Gottfried 2000). The conservative-corporatist regime in Germany explicitly

sought to preserve a traditional model of the family, with men as the sole breadwinners and women as homemakers. Stay-at-home mothers were rewarded with child and family allowances, while the tax system penalized married women who worked full time. Thus high wages, job security and expansive social rights were enjoyed primarily by men. In the liberal regimes of the US and UK, minimal public support for mothers meant that more women had to enter the labor market, which meant women either faced a trade-off between work and family or, because of the broader gender norms in the society, had to work while taking on the primary homemaker role. By contrast, social democratic regimes such as in Sweden, which aimed for a high social wage and low inequality, used universal entitlements, that, by the end of the fordist period, included an array of policies 'ranging from parental leave, subsidized childcare to tax reform, encouraging and enabling women to enter into the labor force by minimizing the trade-off between employment and family formation' (Gottfried 2000: 243). Gottfried characterized the gender regimes under fordism as dual breadwinner with female care in the liberal regime, male breadwinner with female care in the conservative regime, and dual breadwinner with state care in the social democratic regime.

Fifth, the US and Germany realized institutionalized forms of class compromise, while the UK did not. In the US this began with the National Labor Relations Act of 1935 and was fully realized in the Treaty of Detroit, the 1950 agreement between General Motors and the United Auto Workers, in which unions traded labor peace for wages linked to productivity increases and with annual cost-of-living adjustments. The Treaty established a pattern which was widely emulated across industry. In Germany, a class compromise was institutionalized through centralized, national-level bargaining, beginning with the 1956 Bremen Agreement in the metal industry (Herrigel 1996). In both countries the institutionalization of class compromise via collective bargaining dovetailed with oligopolistic product

markets to effectively take wages out of competition and realize a high-wage economy to drive demand.

By contrast, the UK never realized an institutionalized class compromise. Its industrial relations system has commonly been characterized as a voluntarist system, organized entirely by private business associations and unions, with an abstentionist state. Howell (2005) showed that this interpretation is not entirely correct, as the state played a critical administrative role in supporting the development of institutions for industry-level bargaining beginning in the 1890s. Industry-level bargaining was the dominant form until the institutions supporting it began to collapse in the 1950s. The new fordist organizations did not have institutions or mechanisms for internally managing economic change and productivity improvement, leading to intensified workplace-level conflict, unsanctioned and uncontrolled by the national Trades Union Congress. This resulted in a shift to workplace bargaining to establish local mechanisms for negotiating change. Along with rising strikes came wage drift, as local contracts exceeded the industry-level minimums (Gospel 1992; Howell 2005).

Finally, the US and Germany each realized a distinct form of integration of financial and industrial capital, while the UK failed to do so. In the US, industry was financed from the late nineteenth century via large investment banks such as J.P. Morgan & Company and the City Bank of New York. In Germany, we have seen how long-term relations developed via banks and manufacturers; each industrial concern was typically in a long-term, collaborative relationship with a *Hausbank*, a universal bank providing comprehensive services. By contrast, in the nineteenth century, banks in the UK had a commercial rather than industrial orientation. Lash and Urry (1987: 50) argued that because the landed aristocracy became a commercial capitalist class before industrialization, it was focused on international finance. The City of London, Britain's financial center, was engaged more in intermediation between investors

and borrowers than long-term investment. Additionally, finance, with its close ties to the aristocracy, had traditionally enjoyed high social status, whereas industry, in particular the new heavy industries, had low status. Another major factor in the underdevelopment of capital markets in early nineteenth century Britain, they suggested, was that firms were 'consistently more secretive' than in the US or Germany, resulting in a major disincentive to invest. Gospel (2014) argued that beginning in the early twentieth century British firms were able to better access equity financing, and Foreman-Peck and Hannah (2012) showed that the separation of ownership from control happened earlier in the UK than the US. Nonetheless, finance and industry remained less integrated in the UK than in the US or Germany over the interwar years, and the long legacy of problematic integration between finance and industry contributed to capital underinvestment in British industry – between 1913 and 1950, average annual compound capital productivity growth rates averaged just 13 percent in the UK versus 56 percent in Germany and 96 percent in the US (Maddison 1987).

CONCLUSION

This chapter has presented a comparative and historical analysis of the industrialization of the UK, US and Germany from the beginning of the nineteenth century through the Golden Age of Atlantic capitalism in the 1950s and 60s. I have sought here to make two basic arguments. First, this history is best understood as the combined and uneven development of regional and national economies within an international space, driven by class struggles over the institutions constituting and regulating the political economy at the organizational, sectoral, national and international levels. Second, the development of fordist institutions in the twentieth century incorporated the working class into capitalism through a mass production/mass consumption

economy, thus producing the Golden Age: two decades of remarkable economic growth and stability driven by middle-class consumption.

At the level of a model of production, following the industrial revolution in the UK, a pre-industrial, artisanal system of cottage/domestic industries and a skilled handicraft trades system began to be replaced in the nineteenth century by a factory system. Even within the British factory system, however, non-standardized, craft production remained dominant. It was in the US in the mid-nineteenth century where standardized parts and processes were developed. Henry Ford built on these innovations to develop a model of high-volume, low-cost production aimed at the mass market. This model was refined and generalized by General Motors, leading to classical fordism, widely adopted in the 1930s: high-volume, forecast-driven, batch production of standardized products in vertically integrated firms using general purpose machines and a taylorist division of labor.

Due to the reluctance of British management, the fordist model was adopted very late there. By the end of the Second World War, the British economy had established a production regime of what I call reluctant fordism, the classical model with two modifications: a modified form of taylorism in which skilled workers continued to retain an important role; and less vertical integration. By contrast, the classical fordist model was widely admired and enthusiastically adopted in Germany. I refer to the production regime there as flexible fordism, since the Germans made some improvements on the classical model: a democratic version of taylorism and high levels of interfirm cooperation between large firms and their suppliers.

At the international level, the Atlantic fordist regime was consolidated by the establishment of the Bretton Woods system (1944–1973), an international monetary regime which allowed national policy autonomy, and the European Economic Community, or Common Market, which provided a basis for mass markets in Europe. At the national level, I labeled the American growth regime

liberal fordism due to its basis in a liberal welfare state and highly marketized relations between finance and industry. The British growth regime is called *blocked fordism* due to a failure to realize a national class compromise between capital and labor, and a lack of integration between finance and industry. The German growth regime is called *nonliberal fordism* due to its quasi-corporatist welfare state and industrial relations institutions, and to its deeply integrated, long-term relations between finance and industrial capital. Wages were taken out of competition due to a class compromise in the US and Germany, and industry-level bargaining without class compromise in the UK, all of which were rooted in oligopolistic competition and the Bretton Woods financial system.

By the early 1970s the international regime, the national regimes and the organizational regimes were all under severe pressure. At the international level, unilateral capital controls were unable to contain speculative flows and eventually the Bretton Woods system collapsed, leading to the internationalization of finance. This put severe pressure on Keynesian welfare states, leading to the rise of neoliberalism. At the organizational level, fordist production was increasingly rigid in the face of emerging production models and the globalization of production. Under the globalization of finance and production, international, head-to-head competition has increased dramatically, and domestic manufacturing employment has been replaced with service work, all of which has generated a new round of destructive, wage-based competition.

In terms of future research, perhaps the most obvious direction would be to bring Canada, Japan and the remaining European countries into the analytical framework developed here. Concerning the US, the UK and Germany, I have attempted to adjudicate between contending historical interpretations and present a set of realist models of various fordist regimes, but there remain a few issues which continue to be debated or for which there is limited historical evidence. First, there is continued debate over

the whether finance and industry in the UK were deeply disintegrated (Lash and Urry 1987) or whether industry was better able to access finance than has been claimed (Gospel 2014). In particular, questions remain over the nature of relations between industry, capital markets and commercial banks in the UK, how such relations evolved over time, and how much responsibility for the long-term poor performance of the British manufacturing sector can be linked to problematic integration between industry and finance in the early twentieth century? Additionally, more comparative research is needed on the orientation of the financial sectors of the Atlantic capitalist countries – commercial or industrial, domestic or international, etc. – during the early years of industrialization from the late 1800s through the 1930s.

Second, there are disagreements in the literature over the timing and causes of the bureaucratization of labor management. Key issues include the relative balance of power between foremen, professional managers, engineers and accountants (suggestive but incomplete analyses of the UK are found in Ackroyd and Lawrenson (1996) and Armstrong (1984)). The brief evidence presented here suggests that the timing and outcomes of these power struggles differed in each country, with important implications for the developmental trajectory of each, but more research is needed. Additionally, while there is a substantial research literature on the development of internal labor markets in the US (for an overview, see Osterman (1984)), there appears to be less on the UK, Germany and other European countries. One open question concerns the role of institutional actors such as unions, the state and professional associations in the development of internal labor markets across countries.

NOTE

- 1 In the 1980s and 90s there was a debate in the literature on production models over neo- versus postfordism, where the former has been understood to

imply a partial continuation with fordist practice and the latter to imply a complete break with the past. The central point of contention is whether taylorism was replaced with a neotaylorist system of employee involvement in standardizing work, along with work intensification, or a post-taylorist system of self-directed teams of empowered workers, without standardized work (for a review of the debates, see Beynon and Nichols (2006b) and Edgell (2012)). After the dust had settled from those debates, it became clear that those arguing for a complete break had overstated their case, and it was widely acknowledged that there are both continuities (mass production and neotaylorism) and changes (demand-driven production and vertical disintegration) in lean production, the dominant model of postfordism (Vidal 2011). While the neo/post distinction is helpful in terms of taylorism, when applied to the broader concept of fordism it ultimately hinders appreciation of organizational diversity within and across sectors of the economy. Rather than attempting to distinguish production regimes of neo- versus postfordism, it is more helpful to simply use postfordism to refer to the period after fordism, understood to include a dominant but not monolithic production model, in which there are a range of progressive and regressive tendencies, institutional settlements and organizational regimes.

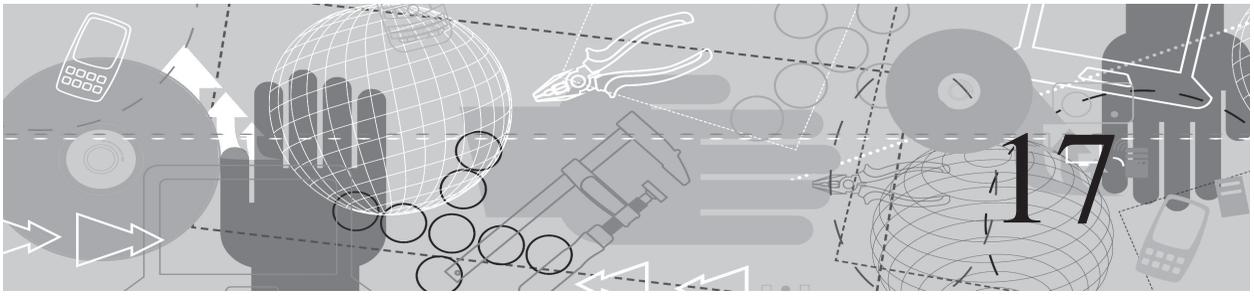
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Beyond Fordism

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THE PROMISE

The idea that workers need more control over their work, and that workplaces should be more democratic has been a pervasive theme within labour movements during the twentieth century (Coates and Topham, 1968). In the 1980s these ideas were placed more centrally within the sociology of work. While coming from a different perspective, Piore and Sabel, in *The Second Industrial Divide*, pointed to developing crises in the established system of employment and the potential for positive changes in work enabled by the new technologies. Drawing upon experiences within the apparel industry in Italy they anticipated a new revived craft-based system of production – something they termed flexible specialisation – that would replace the assembly line and create more meaningful employment.

Piore and Sabel associated the social crisis with external shocks and pressures brought about by instabilities in global commodity markets. Others, regulation theorists, were to

identify the crisis with internal pressures and contradiction within the system of production that they termed Fordism. For these authors, the post-war settlement between capital and labour, achieved through the welfare state and the productive possibilities of assembly line manufacture, had reached its limits in the 1970s. What regulationist thinking shared with Piore and Sabel, was the possibility of a new kind of capitalist formation with high growth rates and a less traumatised labour process emerging out of the ashes: an arrangement which they termed ‘post-Fordist’.²

Here then was the promise: with the co-operation of labour a new kind of settlement could be reached, which would not only stabilise employment but produce creative and satisfying jobs. Soon, however, and in the midst of these debates, there was a change. As we have seen (Chapter 16), Fordist work practices were underpinned by stable national economies linked together by political arrangements agreed at Bretton Woods, which made fixed currencies the norm. However, this system unravelled in the 1970s. This

the decision, taken in 1971, to allow the US dollar to 'float' was a critical one, opening up uncertainty on future prices and the rounds of speculation in what Susan Strange came to term *Casino Capitalism* (1986). This was accentuated when the Thatcher government removed all controls on the movement of capital. Further change accompanied the opening of the previously closed economies of the USSR, China, South Africa and Brazil to trade and investment. In the face of this, academic and political discourse changed, and globalisation took centre stage, and with it talk of 'the global race!' for jobs and investment (Beynon, 2003). These developments alerted the sociology of work to the need to look beyond national borders and examine different kinds of contexts and work regimes around the world (Nichols and Cam, 2005). Here a range of different work practices was found alongside the idea of an extended or neo Fordism. Within the de-industrialising OECD states, questions were raised about the kinds of jobs and work practices that were emerging in the burgeoning service sector.

In 2014 the wheel turned full circle with the publication of *The Second Machine Age* an erudite book that assessed the future of work in the context of 'brilliant technologies' with huge potential but also with 'thorny challenges'. In the view of the authors, Brynjolfsson and McAfee, the exponential development in digitalisation that we have seen over the past 30 years will continue with extraordinary consequences for both the range of new products and the processes that produce them. In their account of the 'huge opportunities', we see the promise return, but this time with a chilling proviso. This new world will not be a place for workers 'with only ordinary' skills and abilities to offer, because computers, robots and other digital technologies are acquiring these skills and abilities at an extraordinary rate' (2014: 11). In this context others have re-engaged with utopian ideas of the commons and work organised on principles of peer-to-peer relationships (Bauwens, 2012).

In looking 'beyond Fordism' therefore we are considering some of the major changes that are taking place in the world economy and in the world of work; and the kinds of jobs that people do, the strategies of their employers, the overall trends in employment, the employment relationship and the fate of utopias.

CAPITALISM IN CRISIS, CHANGES IN WORK AND EMPLOYMENT

In the 1970s the sociology of work was dominated by debates of a thesis developed by Braverman (1974), to the effect that there was an in-built tendency in capitalism to de-skill labour and achieve the 'degradation of work'. This was based on an analysis of Frederik Winslow Taylor's attempts to establish the principles of 'scientific management' based on the observation and measurement of the activities of workers in the USA in the late nineteenth century (F.W. Taylor, 1998). These principles became known as 'Taylorism' and were extended two decades later by Henry Ford in his automobile factory in Dearborn, where they were built into the machine through the operation of the moving assembly line. This system (well described in Chapter 16) was facilitated by the production of standardised parts, and a vertically integrated corporation. It became known as Fordism, and Doray described it in this way:

The factory was designed to produce a standardised object ... with standardised machinery and standardised methods. It was a coherent structure which could be reproduced and in which human labour was standardised and regarded as an extension of the machine system. (Doray, 1988: 70)

In its time it was seen as revolutionary and the epitome of modernism, admired first by Lenin and then the Italian Communist Gramsci (1971), who saw in the system, with its efficiency built around elaborated machinery, the makings of a new modern human being. In all this, the potentially oppressive

features of the Fordist system were overlooked. However, as Fordism became 'the regulative ideal of Western management', attention was drawn to the way its 'management hierarchies systematically strip away worker autonomy and knowledge in highly integrated divisions of labour' (McKinlay and Starkey, 1994: 190). Its success as a system of efficient production, capable of increasing rates of productivity and profits, was unquestioned. As such, the post-war period (for Brenner (2006) the 'long boom', for Marglin and Shor (1992) the 'golden age of capitalism') was identified by regulationist writers as the high point of 'Fordism', a term which for them linked macro-economic and institutional factors with the labour process and the organisation of life within workplaces (Lipietz, 1987). It was the breakdown in these broader arrangements associated with a 'class compromise' between capital and labour, together with the rise of new information technology, that led to the shift of emphasis within the sociological study of work: away from 'deskilling' and towards a more optimistic idea of 'post-Fordism' or 'flexible specialisation'.

Fordism was most clearly identified with automobile assembly and any discussion of change at work needs to begin there, and with the Ford Motor Company. In the post-war period the Ford Motor Company expanded its overseas operations and consolidated its presence on the Western Atlantic through the formation of Ford Europe. In doing this it strengthened its powerful system of product engineering and marketing allied with a forceful and direct approach to labour relations. This Fordism remained ascendant and unchanged until the late 1970s when, in the US and the EU, Ford and the other automobile companies were caught in the vice of pressure from within their own plants and pressure from outside, in the market, from imported cars made in Japan. This had the makings of an economic crisis, with excess capacity in both major markets and evidence of a squeeze on profits (Glyn and Sutcliffe, 1972).³ Within the plants, the year-on-year

increase in productivity associated with the decades of growth began to flatten out, and the companies wrestled with labour problems as workers reacted against the work pressures and the lack of autonomy. Strikes, absenteeism and other forms of non-cooperation became endemic. Something of these pressures is captured in accounts of car plants across the world: in the US (Hamper, 1986; Pfeffer, 1979), the UK (Beynon, 1973), Italy (Partridge, 1986), Germany (Wallraff, 1977) and France (Linhart, 1981). These management problems encouraged discussions of reform of the assembly line, and this was particularly evident in Sweden (Palm, 1977) where job rotation schemes were introduced as ways of dealing with the monotony of the work and also of democratising the workplace. It was in France where the response was most complex and where one of the founders of the Regulation school, Lipietz, wrote in a more revolutionary way. For him the crisis in the workplace was one part of a general crisis that prefigured the break-up of an established consensus in which technical and social progress were linked together and based upon 'the impoverishment of work', and where a bureaucratic state dominated by technocrats 'impos[ed] their conception of the good and beautiful' upon the people (Lipietz, 1992: 343).

This sense of crisis within the automobile industry was heightened by the increasing numbers of imported Japanese cars outselling domestic products in the UK and US markets. Soon these imports were replaced by direct competition from Japanese branch plants (termed 'transplants' in the USA). In response, Ford introduced a new production programme it termed 'AJ' (after Japan) aimed at changing labour relations with a more participative style of management combined with the persistent threat of plant closure and (under the Erika project) increasing automation (Starkey and McKinlay, 1994). This was translated in its UK plants into wall-mounted slogans relaying output figures from different Ford plants aimed at encouraging the fast and efficient completion of all cars, with an added

warning: 'see a gap – there's a Jap' (Beynon, 1985). This strategy of 'Japanisation' spread across the major car assemblers (Elger and Smith, 1994) and became known as 'lean production' (Womak et al., 1990). It was this which, in Vidal's view, became the 'post Fordist manufacturing labour process par excellence' (Vidal, 2012).

Lean production was a development of the system developed by Toyota and based on the company's observations of the Ford system in the US in the 1950s. It famously involves Andon Lights – green, amber and red – signalling the state of production across the sections. It was built around three separate elements which became codified and copied: an emphasis on *continuous improvement* (kaizen), supported by a more *participative style* of management and, most notably, a *just-in-time* system of stock control as part of a programme of waste reduction.

The implementation of these lean processes across manufacturing was developed through Total Quality Management (TQM) and involved a revolution in the organisation of workplaces, particularly in the emphasis on team work and team leaders rather than supervisors. While initial research reacted positively to the changes (Florida and Kenny, 1991) more detailed reports based on the experiences of the people working under the new system were bleaker. In the US, Laurie Graham (1994a and b) provided a 'view from the line' that emphasised the ways in which 'team working' produced intense and different kinds of stresses in a way that echoed the view of lean production being 'management by stress' (Barker, 1993; Parker and Slaughter, 1988). In the UK, Wood (1987) spent a shift on the assembly lines at Nissan in Sunderland and discovered that he had had 'little idea of how hard the work would be, or that, at 36, I was really too old for it'. Delbridge (1997) had a similar, if longer, experience, describing the work as harder and more soul destroying than he had anticipated. Other studies came to support a view of lean production as involving change but not satisfying any of the hopes of increased job

autonomy and work satisfaction (Lewchuk and Robertson, 1997; Milkman, 1997). In a follow-up study of Ford's Broadmeadows plant in Australia, Constance Lever-Tracy (1990) concluded that lean production and its participative style of management did not 'involve any fundamental change in the basic nature of Fordism, or constitute any major step on the road to democracy at work'. Conti and Warner (1993) came to a similar conclusion, seeing 'team working' as involving some coming together at the beginning of a shift that was then dominated by the same arduous, repetitive job tasks.

However, claims for change and improvement continued. In Canada a joint venture between General Motors and Suzuki purported to be developing a work process that 'carried few if any traces of Fordism'. A longitudinal study of the project (Rienhart et al., 1997) concluded that, for all the high hopes, the general view of the workers was of 'just another car factory'. In that same year a survey of auto workers conducted by McMaster University and the Canadian Auto Workers union established *inter alia* that over half of the employees (80% at GM) felt that they had to work as fast as possible for at least 50 per cent of the time to avoid falling behind. In that same survey only 13 per cent of GM workers and 26 per cent and 32 per cent of those at Chrysler and Ford (respectively) felt that they could work at their current pace until they were 60 (Lewchuk et al., 2001). A more recent survey of car workers in the UK concluded that the new system was characterised by a 'constant pressure to drive down costs' (Stewart et al., 2009). In the view of these authors, the emphasis on costs was so strong that it overrode the participative elements and, 'rather than establishing a new regime of industrial democracy in a thriving manufacturing sector, lean production demands labour subordination' (p. x). In their view, classic Fordism was being replaced by Fordism without trade unions or challenge from below (Beynon, 1985).

These and other studies challenged the utopian voices that had surrounded discussions of

post-Fordism work regimes. But they also confirmed that changes were taking place in the organisation and experience of work. The modification and adjustment in production systems, coupled with experimentation in new locations, became familiar to most of the manufacturing industry, and while this produced a variety of different combinations of forms, examples of significant improvements in the levels of worker autonomy have been few. This conclusion was confirmed by a study in Belgium which documented such changes across four sectors but concluded that the findings suggested ‘a “neo” rather than a “post” Taylorist or Fordist concept’ (Huys et al., 1999).

Vidal is in agreement but still thinks it helpful to use the notion of ‘post’, which, stripped of all its utopian elements, is simply indicative of a new and different form of surplus extraction with a range of elements that are closely associated with the shift to neo-liberalism. In this, sub-contracting is perhaps the most significant factor; this and the related changes that have taken place in the labour contract with the emergence of agency workers and the temporary employee.

A central feature of Fordism was the vertical integration of the corporation, and with it the incorporation of the corporate labour force into collective bargaining arrangements. Within a car plant there were a range of jobs not directly associated with production – factory cleaning would be one example. Under the classic Fordist regime these jobs would be included in the collective bargaining; they would also have been open to aging production line employees who had come to find the intensity of line work physically difficult. Under lean production, many of these jobs have been stripped out and sub-contracted to specialised firms, with a direct impact on wage rates (Bernhardt et al., 2001; Vidal, 2013b), as the car companies, emphasising their need to concentrate on ‘core capacities’, have exerted pressure down the supply chain on the operations of their component suppliers. It is here that there is the clearest break with Fordism, and one which leaves work impoverished.

This dystopic view is shared by Vidal who, through a different line of argument, sees this new mode of accumulation as deeply ‘dysfunctional’ and anything but transitional (Vidal, 2013a). It is ‘the new normal’. Here the capacity of the automotive assemblers to ‘externalise’ their labour costs to other specialised companies forced to compete for the sub-contract has become a general feature of the new employment system, spread across manufacturing and into the burgeoning service industries.⁴ The consequences of these developments have been significant. Outsourcing has been the major cause of the growing disparity in incomes between the top and the bottom in the UK and the US. The driving down of pay and conditions in the outsourced companies has also been a major factor in sustaining the reproduction of low wage, low autonomy jobs in both these economies (Bernhardt et al., 2001; Goos and Manning, 2007; Vidal, 2013b).

SERVICES RULE

In the first decade of the twenty-first century, over 80 per cent of employment in the UK and the USA involved the provision of services, either directly to the consumer (as in a restaurant) or to another company (as with the outsourced cleaners in a car plant). The majority of these workers were women, especially those in the ‘routine service jobs’ eloquently described by Reich (1991).⁵ Although many women did work in manufacturing during the period of high Fordism, they were in a minority and most of the key industries were dominated by men. Here perhaps is the most dramatic illustration of the way in which the organisation of work and employment has changed. In the 1950s and 1960s the largest employers were private or public corporations operating in heavy industry and manufacture. Not so today, when the two largest private employers in the world are Walmart (2.1 million employees world-wide) and the fast food franchises of McDonald’s (1.9 million).

So significant have been these developments, that sociologists have seen them as being emblematic of a new system – Waltonism for Vidal (2012) and McDonaldisation for Ritzer (1993). Ritzer in fact saw the development of the fast food industry with hamburgers being ‘assembled and sometimes cooked in an assembly line fashion’ (1993: 484), as a ‘truly revolutionary development’. The revolution, however, is not one that fits with the early utopian views of post-Fordism, it relates to the *extension* of the Fordist labour process, with the assistance of lean principles, into the field of restaurants and catering. Here, however, and unlike manufacturing, the jobs (while similarly repetitive and with low skills and little discretion) are low paid, often part-time and not unionised.

Vidal picks out a similar and more extended pattern of change with regard to the supermarkets, and retailing more generally. In Walmart (which dominates retailing in the US and has a powerful presence in the UK with its ownership of Asda), he sees the most radical development of the new subcontracting model with large retailers exerting their economic power over their myriad suppliers, pushing down wage rates and tightening job controls (Vidal, 2012).⁶ Here we have a circle, of a less than virtuous nature, with a lean retail sector providing cheap food, ready meals and goods for time-strapped households whose real wages were being squeezed (Lichtenstein, 2006; Parker, 2013).

With a high proportion of its costs tied up in labour, the ‘supermarket’ revolutionised the grocery trade. Relocated in low-cost sites away from town centres, self-service shopping emerged as one way of both reducing labour costs and rationalising the relationship with the customer. The sales-person became the check-out operative and the ‘deskilling’ of the labour force facilitated, accentuated and reinforced another key development – the growth of female, part-time labour’ (Du Gay, 1993: 572). Here Waltonism reproduced the other key element of the post- or neo-Fordist world, with the extended hierarchy of the Fordist corporation being replaced

by a flattened structure where the majority sit at the bottom with no ladder to take them upward (Grimshaw et al., 2002). Here many work as shelf-stackers, and Barbara Ehrenreich shared their experience when she took a job at the Walmart store in Minneapolis (Ehrenreich, 2001). There she came upon a management practice that would have been very familiar to Henry Ford himself. Ford, like Taylor, found ‘waste’ intolerable and the waste of time, beyond redemption. In his view it was the business of management to ensure that the worker had ‘every necessary second but no unnecessary second’. Workers were paid to work, not to talk and not to smile (Beynon, 1973). So too at Walmart, where the management and their ‘spies’ patrolled the store seeking out workers talking about something other than work. New recruits are warned about ‘time theft’, defined as ‘doing anything other than working in company time: anything at all’ (Ehrenreich, 2001: 146).

In the self-service supermarket shopping is coordinated electronically through the bar code reader positioned in the check-out area with a link to the central ordering department through a system known as EPOS (Electronic Point of Sale). The worker glides the produce over the reader, which works out the customer’s bill and enables senior management to analyse sales figures in detail (see Harvey et al., 2002). So, here, and across a range of service industries, lean production techniques have been applied. At Tesco, for example, the managerial area of the store centres around a cart-wheel design, with each area of the store’s operations evaluated daily (as with the Andon lights) in red, amber or green symbols (Beynon et al., 2001).

Deliveries to the stores are organised through a series of regional distribution centres (RDCs) that rationalise and mechanise the complex logistical process associated with securing and distributing a wide range of produce. Some of these RDCs are owned by the supermarket chain itself, but mostly they are outsourced to large independent logistics companies like Exel and Wincanton. An average sized RDC will deal with between

500,000 and 1 million cases of produce a week, with between 1,000 and 2,000 lorries being loaded and moved off each day. This loading is achieved by workers ('pickers') travelling around the warehouse on forklift trucks locating and picking the cases required; all to the demands of the clock. As one manager explained:

The coordinates of each pick point are measured. So it [the scanner] knows how far you are travelling to each assignment. A picker will go along and pick up a set of labels on a pallet, and he'll know that he's got eleven and a half minutes to do that product, do that pallet. (Harvey et al., 2002: 222)

The revolution in retailing outlined here was taken one step further with the application of lean principles and digitalisation to the (once conventional) mail ordering business. Here the Amazon corporation has been the main driver, with its aircraft-hangar-like warehouses now dwarfing many RDCs. Carol Cadwalladr (2013) joined one of these in South Wales, as an agency worker, and heard it described as a 'fulfilment centre', within which she was an 'associate'. She explains that on her second day 'the manager tells us that we alone have picked 155,000 items in the last 24 hours. Tomorrow ... that figure will be closer to 450,000'. To this, he adds 'We didn't just pick and pack ... we picked and packed the right items and sent them to the right customers'. In the next week, they learned, the hours would be longer, with compulsory overtime each day as well as an additional shift.

Amazon describes itself as 'earth's most customer-centric company'. Its workers, in contrast, seem to be less of a priority. During a shift, pickers will walk 15 miles, often starting their meal breaks five minutes away from the canteen and toilet block, always 'picking'—minute by minute. The remorselessness involved in these accounts is reminiscent of the assembly line that never stops. Here the line is replaced by the fact that the pickers carry scanners which allow their activity to be tracked and for the company to produce 'inactivity reports' (Scholz, 2015). Here

too people learn ways to survive. As one warehouse worker in Jefferson Indiana explains:

to allow for longer break times and prevent going over on lunch, [pickers] grab the last item they intend to scan, about three minutes before the start of break, get as close as possible to the front of the floor they're working on, then scan it exactly one minute before break starts. This gives a little extra time to put away the pick cart and make it down to the break area, without management tracking you down and asking why you stopped picking three minutes before break. (Nolan, 2014a)

Comments like these have a deep familiarity with earlier times in manufacturing, as do the experiences of front-line managers responsible for the efficient operation of the system. Having left Amazon, one explains how:

I was supposed to work as an account manager but ended up with a completely different job on the quality team (Amazon is so big on lean management and I worked as a Kaizen specialist). ... job description switcheroos are very common at Amazon. I worked for a manager that slept in his car on Sundays so he could be in the office bright and early for the weekly business review with top management. (Nolan, 2014c)

Another, who worked in the Seattle office, drew attention to an established HR practice in the company where:

You literally must re-interview for your position, while in that position, constantly. It comes up at least every three months. And you keep getting those reminders that people outside want your job! Pretty stressful work environment. (Nolan, 2014b)

The Seattle office featured in the investigation by the *New York Times* which focused on the fact that the company was 'conducting a little-known experiment in how far it can push white collar workers' (Kantor and Steitfeld, 2015). In his careful consideration of Amazon's operations in the EU and the USA Simon Head concluded that it was characterised by a 'poisonous mixture of Taylorism and Stakhanovism,⁷ laced with twenty-first century IT [and] a pervasive culture of meanness and mistrust' (2014: 42).

In spite of these excesses, Amazon is seen as an extremely successful business, and, as

Head points out, its founder Jeff Bezos came second in the world rankings of admired CEOs conducted by Harvard Business Review in 2012 and the company itself was third in CNN's world list (Head, 2014: 36). In the view of the *Financial Times* (2015):

Amazon's workers are not slaves ... Mr Bezos is at the hard-nosed end of US entrepreneurship. But until there is further evidence that his approach is deterring vital staff from joining Amazon, or driving customers away, he is unlikely to change – and there seems little reason why he should.

It would seem that retail with its sophisticated use of information technology as a tool for executive planning and labour control has emerged as a leading force within management, most especially within the service industries, both private and public. In spite of large-scale privatisations and sub-contracting, a large part of the service sector remains in public ownership, containing some of the biggest employers⁸ in the EU and US. The nature of work and employment relations in this state sector is therefore of some interest, although it has never been centre stage in the sociology of work. The presence of an intervening state and a national economy was seen by regulationist theory to be a critical component of the period of high Fordism. Some, like Murray (1991) went so far as to suggest that the state itself, as employer, could be seen to have a 'distinctly Fordist element' in its provision of standardised services, centralised organisation and Taylorist labour process. This was at best an oversimplification. Certainly the organisation of work in the nationalised industries, public utilities and local and central government barely qualified as Fordist (Hudson, 1989). In fact many of these highly unionised and professionalised jobs contained a degree of freedom from management control, often linked to an ethic of public service. This memory of working as a postman in the 1970s in the UK reveals elements of all this:

I liked being a postman. Whenever I was asked for my occupation I was proud to make that declaration. It had, I felt, a certain cachet. I liked the job

and the comradery with my colleagues. Yes the basic pay was low but it could be supplemented and I liked the sense of security and of belonging to an historical institution. (Johnson, 2014: 125, emphasis in original)

There are many similar accounts, all pointing to the fact that, ironically, it was the *post-Fordist* period that has delivered a form of *Fordist* labour process into the state sector in the guise of lean production and new forms of public sector management, largely borrowed from the practice in private corporations.⁹ It seems that this process affected both routine service work and the professional activities of doctors, teachers, and the like. Generally the experience is of greater pressure and greater constraint.

Foster and Hoggett's (1999) study of a benefit office reveals how when faced, day after day, with the pressures from clients, and their often urgent needs, these workers become anguished. Rather than a flexible labour process they describe an 'exhausted labour process', maintained by the commitment to public service. This extension of the techniques of lean production to the state sector has been demonstrated most vividly by investigations into changes introduced into the taxation offices of the UK's Revenue and Customs Department. Here a majority of employees identified lean production with a move to a highly pressured working environment. One female administrative officer explains that:

After twenty seven years in the Inland Revenue following the introduction of lean, I am now deskilled, demotivated, stressed out most days, afraid to be sick, feel unappreciated, provide a poor service for customers, am not allowed to voice my opinion, looking forward to the day when I can leave for good. (Carter et al., 2013: 762)

All this has been allied with new management information systems that build on their capacity to generate large amounts of comparative performance data. While Ford was able to compare outputs across its plants and between its plants and those of its competitors in the 1980s, today hospitals and universities in the UK find themselves

regularly located in various league tables of performance and placed in opposition to each other through various market arrangements. Commenting on these issues more generally, Monbiot (2014) has observed that:

The workplace has been overwhelmed by a mad Kafkaesque infrastructure of assessments, monitoring, measuring, surveillance and audits, centrally directed and rigidly planned, whose purpose is to reward the winners and punish the losers. It destroys autonomy, enterprise, innovation and loyalty, and breeds frustration, envy and fear. Through a magnificent paradox, it has led to the revival of a grand old Soviet tradition ... known as tufta. It means falsification of statistics to meet the diktats of unaccountable power.

The Soviet reference is of interest given Lenin's early positive view of Fordism and its capacity to transform the Soviet economy. It has also been remarked upon by Ron Amman who found that his knowledge of the operations of the old Soviet Union, 'far from being a waste of time, had instead provided me with a unique qualification' for an understanding of the public sector reforms in the UK. With some irony he wrote that: 'The growing managerial pressures on the public sector in Britain, which caused dismay and incomprehension to many colleagues, were instantaneously recognizable to an old Soviet hand' (Amman, 2003: 468).

GOING GLOBAL

State employment is changing in other ways too. In 2011, the UK Cabinet Office produced a note of guidance that focused on 'situations in which suppliers of a procured service would wish to use offshore capability to deliver some or all of the service in question' (www.sourcingfocus.com/site/newsitem/3829/), revealing the extent to which the state had emerged as a coordinator of international outsourcing. This shift was clearly linked to the development of a globalised economy and has had a direct impact upon the organisation and nature of work.

Historically, the crisis of Fordism was reflected in firms incrementally relocating work to low-wage sites. Cowie, in his major study of RCA, saw this as a step change in an established pattern in industrial capital's 'continuous struggle to maintain the social conditions necessary for profitability' (Cowie, 1999: 2). This was facilitated in no small part by the advent of the micro-processor and the internet which, along with satellite communication, made it possible for machines and offices, in spatially separated locations, to be linked, and for separated design and manufacturing teams to be working in distributed production systems. In this way a new international division of labour began to emerge, first in clothing but then more generally (Barnet and Mueller, 1974; Froebel et al., 1981). This was strongly associated with developments in the electronics industry, as a wholesale restructuring took place in the organisation of employment across the planet. By the turn of the century incremental change had been replaced by the wholesale relocation of entire industries.

This can be seen as the emergence of a global Fordism (Lipietz 1982). In Europe and the US it was associated with widespread factory closures, as major manufacturing centres were dismantled (Bluestone et al., 1981; Massey and Megan, 1982) and new ones opened, initially further south (in Spain and Mexico) but later worldwide where the main impact came from China and India. The diamond industry is one example. For a century the cutting and polishing of the world's diamonds had been based in Belgium. Not any more: now 93 per cent of this work is done in India by 1.3 million workers through a labour process altered in a way that could come out of the pages of Braverman's book. Cross (2014: 93) in his study of the role of the giant sub-contractor Worldwide Diamonds describes this as 'a classic story of globalisation's race to the bottom'.

In 2014 three Chinese companies appeared in Fortune's Top Ten global companies when ranked by revenue (<http://fortune.com/global500/>) and the FT's top 500 included

23 Chinese and 12 Indian corporations.¹⁰ One consequence of this was seen in the UK automotive industry. When MG Rover went into administration in 2005 its key assets were purchased by the Nanjing Automobile Group, which was itself taken over by the state-owned Shanghai Automotive Industry Corporation (SAIC). SAIC is the largest of the 'big four' Chinese automobile assemblers and has established joint ventures with Volkswagen and General Motors, producing 4.5 million cars a year. The rise of the industry (and the extensive use of joint ventures) has been emblematic of the country's transformation into a major manufacturer. In 1990 the automobile industry was operating at a low level of technological development, with 1.57 million workers producing half a million vehicles. By 2010, however, over 18 million vehicles were being produced but with only a slightly increased labour force of 2.2 million. These official figures, as Zhang (2014) explains, hide the numbers employed on temporary contract. In China the automobile companies have established strong elements of a Fordist regime, replete with TQM and lean production techniques, and with the support of the trade unions secured by the state. However the benefits of the system were not spread evenly across the workforce. As the system of joint ventures became established, Zhang explains that there was a move towards:

a leaner and more flexible workplace, including the replacement of permanent and long term workers with contract-based formal workers, as well as the use of labour force dualism and a large number of temporary workers. By the early 2000s the labor regime in the auto assembly sector had shifted to a dual labor regime. (Zhang, 2014: 48)

The unequal treatment of these different categories of workers, combined with the pace and organisation of work, emerged as a source of tension and open conflict, with Zhang's first-hand accounts adding to our understanding of growing labour unrest (Mitchell and Sebastopulo, 2014). A similar pattern has been observed in India, where the

automobile industry, while less advanced than its counterpart in China, reveals a similar dependence upon temporary workers whose pay is often little more than a third of the wages earned by the permanent staff members (Annavaiah and Pratap, 2012; Cross, 2014). A study of a locality in Uttar Pradesh, the state with the highest level of foreign direct investment in manufacturing in the country, found that although the mix of practices varied:

The overarching themes that emerged ... were of firms controlling workers through the use of multiple employment contracts, high labour turnover, wage differentials, increasing control over work regimes, heavy workload, deskilling, the containment of unions, an atmosphere of fear in many firms and control through use of institutional supports. (Trivedi, 2007: 12)

Conditions such as these were identified as contributing to riots in the Indian auto factories year on year, with several of them resulting in the killing of management staff (Sarkar, 2015).

The automobile industry, while central to a discussion of Fordism, is just one part of the complex picture of capital's global reach. In fact, the roots of this expansion lie beyond auto, in the enormous development in electronic communication and digital technologies. Most often associated in the public mind with 'Silicon Valley' in California, this industry has its productive base elsewhere. The key minerals (tantalum, tin and gold) are mined in the Democratic Republic of Congo, often under conditions of forced labour (Fuchs, 2014), whereas the laptops, tablets and cell phones themselves are assembled in China and the Pacific Rim. Here the Taiwanese company Hon Hai Precision Industry (Foxconn) plays a leading role. The largest private manufacturing company in the world, Foxconn employs 1.2 million people, and from its factories in China supplies Apple, Dell and Hewlett Packard. Here work is organised in regimes that verge on 'bloody Taylorism' (Lipietz, 1987, 1995; Jessop and Sum, 2006), with extensive use of migrant

female labour¹¹. The company's flagship site at Longhua employs 400,000 workers, mostly young migrants from the countryside. The plant operates 24 hours a day, producing a quarter of a million iPhones for 365 days of the year. Workers have one day off each fortnight. On the other days they spend 12 hours in the factory. One young woman employed as a general assembly-line worker (staff number F9347140) described her days in this way:

I was responsible for spot inspections of glass screens to see whether they were scratched. ... I reported to the line leaders 15 to 20 minutes earlier for roll call. Leaders lectured us on maintaining high productivity, reaching daily output targets and keeping discipline. ... Toilet breaks during the working hours are also restricted. ... I had to ask permission from the assistant line leaders to leave my seat. ... Checking the screens of the products made my eyes feel intense pain. (Chan, 2013)

Another explained how in her job:

I take a motherboard from the line, scan the logo, put it in an anti-static bag, stick on a label and place it on the line. Each of these tasks takes two seconds. Every ten seconds I finish five tasks. (Chan, 2013)

In ways that echo accounts of Henry Ford's Rouge River plant we learn that:

Friendly chit-chat among co-workers is not very common even during the break; everyone rushes to queue up for lunch and eat quickly. The company prohibits conversation in the workshop. In the factory area, CCTV cameras are set up virtually everywhere for surveillance. Thousands of security officers are on duty, patrolling every Foxconn factory building and dormitory. (Chan, 2013)

In other ways too, Foxconn assembly line workers are prone to say that outside 'everybody wants to work here; inside everybody wants to quit'. In 2014 Foxconn announced the opening of new factories in Turkey and Slovakia.

This global shift away from the advanced capitalist states is critical to understanding the changing state of work, and that service industries, especially in the sphere of telecommunications, have been affected

just as radically. In the OECD states, most especially the UK, call centres became seen as a major source of technical innovation, providing the employment growth to compensate for the loss of manufacturing jobs. These sites had become the principle source of routine consumer communication for major corporations. Mainly located in the old de-industrialised regions, they were often used to symbolise a new dawn; a new way of life and of working. In 2003 the industry employed almost 400,000 people and the hopes were for significant expansion to near a million employees by the end of the decade. The future however proved to be less predictable and growth more fitful. Yet in 2013 the UK industry employed 650,500 'agents' in over 5,000 establishments. Many of these were small but over half of the workforce was employed in the 400 or so larger ones. By this time the industry had had a change in nomenclature from call to *contact* centres, most commonly associated with large specialist global corporations, mainly delivering for the retail and finance sectors, with the latter (banks, credit card companies, insurance companies, building societies, collection agencies and credit reference agencies) accounting for up to 40 per cent of total revenues.¹²

Early studies of work in these centres drew on other parallels with manufacture, pointing to the repetitive nature of the work and the associated pressure and managerial surveillance. Workers referred to this as a key feature of the job, mentioning how 'they monitor every minute' and how 'you get your stats every day'. They knew that their conversations were recorded and that (increasingly) they were required to keep to a prepared script:

It used to be more of a core guide as opposed to a script. That has become more scripted now. Now they are saying 'you've got to sell these products in this order'. (Beynon et al., 2001: 287)

Many researchers (borrowing from Hochschild) came to see this as a form of emotional labour – talking and dealing with people on the telephone, artificially following a script

while appearing ‘natural’ and ‘genuine’ – and noted that women were increasingly used in these roles (Belt et al., 2002; S. Taylor, 1998). Several studies have pointed to the stresses associated with this highly rationalised form of communication work (Deery et al., 2002; Holman, 2003) and of how organised outbursts of ‘fun’ have been used to ‘let off the steam’ in the pressure cooker (Kinnie et al., 2000). For here the calls come in repeatedly: as one ends, the next one begins in a way which invites the metaphor of the assembly line – ‘the assembly line in the head’ is the phrase that it suggested to Taylor and Bain (1999). As with manufacturing, this work was not secure or immune from the growing phenomenon of offshoring. As the UK industry noted:

[T]his sector had shown the most inclination to move offshore, with many insurers (Prudential and Aviva are perhaps the most prominent) and banks (Santander Group, Lloyds HBoS, Barclays and Barclaycard) taking advantage of labour cost differentials, although other banks such as RBS have not done so. There has also been a shakeout, driven by the credit crunch, which has put increased pressure on finance companies to cut costs further. (ContactBabel, 2011)

In this companies received considerable support and encouragement from publications like *Off Shore Insights* (2006) which explained:

Today the benefits of global sourcing include the ability to improve service levels, new growth opportunities and increased competitive advantage. But even as other consideration factors become important determinants of a country’s success in globalization cost savings remain key. And while a number of factors affect the cost savings potential of any given global sourcing arrangement, the cost of labour is amongst the most important.

This article includes a map of the world highlighting potential call centre sites with details of wage rates. Here India emerged as a site where recruits with high standards of education and good English could be employed to answer queries and sell products to customers five thousand miles away in the UK and US. This was backed up by the sector’s own forceful marketing. The website

<https://www.outsource2india.com/> offered advice on the outsourcing of mortgage services, photo editing, research and analysis, software development, engineering services, healthcare services, financial services as well as call centres. So much so that in 2012:

There are over 265,000 BPO jobs in Bangalore alone, of which call center positions represent a sizeable proportion. BPO is the buzzword form of business process outsourcing – the trend of multinational companies like Microsoft to base services or entire departments in India. (Walker and Hatley, 2012)

India’s welcoming policy to inward investments built on the general fluency in English in the population, the high number of university graduates and its location in the time zones. Night working in India enabled the agents to contact UK and US citizens throughout the day. This process – working through the night and talking to people of a different culture in their kitchens and living rooms, sometimes in a different day from you – added a new dimension to the emotional labour of working in BPO. It also required additional training, provided (at a fee of around \$900) by companies like Prion Edutech, which has over a hundred training campuses in India. Here the primary goal is to change the way the agents speak. For example, the eradication of the Mother Tongue Influence (or MTI for short) is the focus of Prion’s course ‘Accent Neutralization’. Here ‘students repeat syllables like ‘pa pa pa pa pa’ for 30 minutes at a time until they begin to lose their Indian accent’ (Walker and Hatley, 2012). Once employed in a BPO setting, speaking Hindi is a sackable offence, for you to work here, you need to change who you are.

In Delhi, as in Bangalore, everyone it seems had stories from their old jobs, which they called ‘processes’ – ‘collections process’, ‘inbound processes’ (taking calls), ‘outbound processes’ (placing calls), ‘hardcore sales’ – and they all remembered the bad calls.

I remember quite well this guy who just called me up and said out of nowhere, ‘You fucking Paki,’ We don’t take those things personally; it’s part of

the job. So I just said, very calmly, 'Yes sir, if I am a Paki, then this Paki would be helping you fix your computer'. (Marantz, 2011)

Generally, they just get on with it. Like Sonam:

From 1 to 11 am every day, she sits on the floor with a headset clamped firmly around her head, microphone held in front of her mouth with a stiff wire. Up to 100 times a day, a beep sounds in her ear to warn her that another Canadian needs help from their bank. She does not need to actively accept the call; it simply goes live, and the account information comes up in the screen in front of her.

'Hello, Mr. Smith, thank you for calling TD Canada Trust Bank, how may I assist you today?'

When the problem is resolved or the sale finished ... another beep in her headphones in less than five seconds. ... She has the power to hold off the beep, by pressing a button marked 'AEW' on her monitor, but, she laughed, 'If I hold off calls for more than fifteen seconds, they [her managers] will come after me.' (Walker and Hatley, 2012)

However, there were problems in India. Growth rates in employment began to slow as there were reports of turnover rates as high as 30–35 per cent in established sites (Vaidyanathan 2011). These were largely located in 'Tier 1' cities, and relocation away from these more prosperous areas became a priority for the companies. Tier 3 cities like Ahmedabad and Jaipur offered sought-after sites and so did neighbouring states like the Philippines.

Several Indian firms have set up substantial operations in Philippines which has a large pool of well-educated, English-speaking, talented and employable graduates. Almost 30 per cent graduates in Philippines are employable unlike 10 per cent in India where the training consumes considerable amount of time, according to the report. (Press Trust of India, 2014)

The Secretary General of Assocham (the Association of Chambers of Commerce and Industry of India) spoke of fears that the country might lose as much as \$30 billion in foreign exchange earnings to the Philippines and that 'there is a need to reduce costs and make operations leaner across the BPO industry' (Press Trust of India, 2014).

At the same time there is competitive pressure from Eastern Europe as British firms began to outsource parts of their customer services to companies based in Bulgaria. 6oK is one of these firms, employing 650 staff speaking 27 different languages between them. 6oK was voted 'outsourcer of the year' at the European Call Centre and Customer Service Awards ceremony in 2013 and its CEO Jonathan Gladwish explained how it saves 40 to 50 per cent by relocating away from the UK, where working in a call centre is often seen as merely a 'stopgap' for graduates (Merrill, 2013). While there has been talk of call centre jobs returning to the UK (ContactBabel, 2011; Arvato, 2015) this reshoring process is still an uncertain one. What is clear is that this industry, like manufacturing, has 'gone global' – with its rootlessness linked into a powerful rationale of cost reduction. Here, as Marantz, (2011) has accurately observed, even the winners are losers to some degree because:

Agents know that their jobs only exist because of the low value the world market ascribes to (their) labor. The more they embrace the logic of global capitalism, the more they must confront the notion that they are worth less.

DIGITAL TIMES: CYBERTARIAT, PRECARIAT, COMMONS

In reflecting on the broad changes that have taken place over the past 40 years, sociologists of work have needed to take a broader, more reflective view that goes beyond the workplace itself, as national markets have broken up, production and communication systems have become global, and Keynesian economic policies have been replaced with neo-liberal ones. Within all this, a technological revolution has taken place associated with extraordinary developments in computing. This revolution has seen the fulfilment of 'Moore's Law' that computing power would double every two years. The Sony Playstation 3 provides a good example of this. Launched

in 2006 it had the computing power of the powerful ASCI Red computer that had cost the US government 55 million dollars to develop in 1996 and occupied 100 cabinets over 1,600 square feet of floor space. Brynjolfsson and McAfee (2014) use this example to highlight the implications of exponential growth as we approach ‘the Second Machine Age’ associated with ‘the digitalisation of just about everything’. Here and elsewhere (2011) their admiration for the capacities of the new machines is matched by worries over their social impact, most especially in terms of jobs, with the re-emergence of interest in Keynes’ notion of ‘technological unemployment’. A comprehensive analysis at a workshop on machines and employment at Oxford University concluded that these developments, either directly or through off-shoring, ‘will put a substantial share of employment, across a wide range of occupations, at risk in the near future’ (Frey and Osborne, 2013).

The pace of these changes has led Huws (2013) and others to see the first decades of the twenty-first century as representing a new departure in the scale of the international division of labour. Standing (2009) agrees and, like Munck (2002), has drawn parallels with changes in the nineteenth century, described by Polanyi in *The Great Transformation* (1944), when the commodification of labour was pushed to its extremes and work became dis-embedded from social institutions. In this view the second great transformation is a global phenomenon, with 1.5 billion people competing for highly mobile jobs, many of them as ‘contingent and temporary workers of diverse descriptions’, making up a group. Standing loosely describes as ‘the precariat’ (ILO, 2014; Standing, 2009, 2011: 110). We have seen examples of this process in China and India, with rural workers migrating to urban centres and competing for work.

This theme was developed by Roberts (2004) when he wrote of ‘services on the assembly line’, and Huws (2003, 2014) has also written extensively on the ways in which the lives of the keyboard workers have

been affected by the changes in computing and word processing. She argues that ‘digital Taylorism’ has overtaken Braverman’s account of change in office work, and sees the emergence of a *cybertariat* at the centre of contemporary changes at work. This idea stems in part from the ways in which digital platforms have allowed powerful transnational corporations to extend their outsourcing strategies to individual workers located around the world. Well-known exponents of this so-called crowd work would be CrowdFlower, Clickworker and CloudCrowd. CloudFlower advertises its ‘labor on demand’ solution, provided by over 500,000 workers in more than 70 countries:

CrowdFlower customers complete massive volumes of simple jobs quickly, with none of the lead time and overheads associated with traditional hiring and outsourcing. (<http://www.crowdsourcing.org/site/crowdflower/crowdflowercom/1572>)

Again it is Amazon, through its Mechanical Turk operation, that has pushed the boundaries furthest. Mechanical Turk has its own mystificatory language in which the employers are called ‘Requesters’; the jobs, ‘Human Intelligence Tasks’ or ‘HITs’; and the workers, ‘Providers’ or ‘Turkers’. In reality, the way in which work is organised amounts to a reincarnation of the putting-out system, in which workers perform parcels of work delineated by employers (or by computer programs triggered to put out work on behalf of employers), for which they are paid by the piece and for which they bid on Amazon’s platform, with Amazon charging the employer 10 per cent commission. Amazon’s Mechanical Turk website promises an ‘on-demand and flexible workforce in the cloud’ and the ability ‘to access thousands of high quality, low cost, global, on-demand workers’ (Amazon Mechanical Turk, 2015). The work takes the form of micro tasks, the like of which computers cannot do or cannot do as well as humans. Examples that Amazon itself provides include, amongst others: photo and video processing (for instance, tagging objects found in an image for easier

searching, finding the best image to represent a product); data verification (de-duplication of yellow pages entries); information gathering (finding specific fields or data elements in large legal or government documents); and data processing (translation, rating the accuracy of results for a search engine). The task may be of value in its own right. For example, when used in conjunction with an iPhone, Mechanical Turk's pieceworkers can help blind people to find particular objects, whether they be jars of marmalade, house keys or whatever, and to 'read', say, street names (Jabr, 2011). These kinds of jobs are exceptional, however. Usually the Taylorised tasks are fragments of a larger process that often have to be completed in a highly repetitious manner (Bergvall-Kareborn and Howcroft, 2014).

The pay for crowd work is generally poor, on one estimate an average of \$2 an hour (Marvit, 2014). Crowd work can be highly stressful, since a constant flow of HITs cannot be relied on, nor constant prices, nor even the certainty that employers, who have the whip hand, will pay for work done. Stress is still more likely if 'Turking' is a primary source of income and whatever the hours that crowd workers spend performing bit tasks and searching for further pieces of work to perform, they are separated from each other and exist in a legal limbo. The workforce is becoming yet more widely dispersed with an increasing proportion of Indian workers, who are more likely to be less educated and to rely on online work as their primary source of income (Ipeirotis, 2010; Ross et al., 2010). Its size is difficult to estimate accurately, but Kaganer et al. (2012) describe a 'skyrocketing annual growth' in global revenue from crowdsourcing platforms, which increased by 53 per cent in 2010 then by another 74 per cent in 2011. In a general survey Mandl (2015) has indicated that there is a significant potential for growth in this form of employment across Europe.

This new digitalised piecework system is often presented in terms of workers making 'choices'. The prime attraction to employers

of this new Taylorism is that it is a source of cheap, highly exploitable labour. Crowd work offers an inexpensive, increasingly global, zero-hours system, and as such epitomises the underemployment that characterises much of the world of work today.

Crowdsourcing has not been restricted to data entry and routine office work. It has been extended to the innovative jobs that were to be at the very centre of the creative revolution in work brought about by information technology. In looking at software development and engineering, for example, Baldry and Marks (2009) have come to see this kind of knowledge work as 'white-collar manufacturing'. In the area of mobile applications, Apple and Google, the market leaders, have, through crowdsourcing, been able to outsource this development activity, harnessing the creativity of individual developers around the world. Occupying a position between casual employee and entrepreneur, these designers have a home-based working life that accentuates current trends in the new economy beyond Fordism. However it also 'further enhances precarity and uncertainty' (Bergvall-Kareborn and Howcroft, 2013: 978).

In considering these developments we are reminded by Robert McChesney, author of *Digital Disconnect*, that the internet began as a function of the public sector, was assisted by government subsidies and was non-commercial. The vision was 'of an egalitarian, non-profit sector where people would come together and share' (McChesney 2014). It was in this spirit that Linux was initiated in the early 1990s by Linus Torvalds, a 20-year-old computer science graduate student at Helsinki University. This open source and free operating system was developed under a licence which freed users to use the software, and change, share and develop it as an alternative to the operating systems of the great capitalist powers, Microsoft and Apple. As such, Linux represents the potential for a non-profit dominated way of living. There are other such examples – Wikipedia, an open-source collaborative writing and

information platform; OpenStreetMaps, a non-commercial and collaborative project to create and utilise map data world-wide; WordPress, free web software for creating websites and blogs; Drupal, an open-source content management framework with many free community additions; GoTeo, a social network for crowdfunding and collaboration; and P2PU, a free peer-to-peer university, summed up by the invitation 'Learn anything with your peers. It's online and totally free'.

These are important developments and suggestive of the potential for a parallel and collaborative form of working to emerge alongside the corporate world of neo-Fordism. The crowd workers can work collectively through the digital technology. Turkopticon is an add-on for Mechanical Turk's platform that allows the workers to publicise and evaluate their relationships with employers by rating their experience, including cases of non-payment by employers for work done. There are online forums where work can be discussed. In the US, crowd workers are attempting to strengthen their weak position in the labour market by having themselves legally recognised as employees rather than contractors, a category that excludes them from the benefits and provisions for which only employees are eligible. Here too scholars, committed to the original ideas of the internet, have considered ways in which the world of the Amazon Turk could be democratised, with the creative development and empowerment of crowd workers. Following a conference on crowd work, they met to produce a report that tried to plan ahead, explaining that:

Crowd work may take place in the scale of minutes, but the impact of crowd work may be felt for generations. We have asked: what will it take for us, the stakeholders in crowd work – including requesters, workers, researchers – to feel proud of our own children when they enter such a workforce? Answering this question has led to a discussion of crowd work from a longer-term perspective. (Kittur et al., 2013)

More generally scholars have pointed to the emergence of collaborative working via the internet and how this has encouraged the

growth of a new understanding of the 'commons'. Bauwens(2013) identified the emergence of a new 'cognitive working class' whose structural location in service or cognitive work inclines them towards the values of openness associated with peer-to-peer (p2p) arrangements. Borrowing from Marx's account of the transition from feudalism to capitalism he sees p2p as a proto-mode of production:

in which the value is created by productive publics or 'producers' in shared innovation commons, whether they are of knowledge, code or design. It occurs wherever people can link up horizontally and without permission to create common value together. (Bauwens, 2012)

In spite of the obvious problems posed by the power of the large corporate platforms, state security systems and the ways in which Linux was incorporated, Bauwens is sanguine about the future of this silent revolution and the capacity of this new working class to create a decisive space of commons activity within the capitalist world, taking control of their work.

CONCLUSION: THE LONGER-TERM VIEW

The rationalisation of production processes and the extension of the divisions of labour made possible by the production of more and more sophisticated machines are clearly identifiable in manufacturing factories around the world. More significant perhaps has been the extension of these principles into the office and a wide range of service industries, accelerated by ICT and the digital revolution. In assessing the implications of these developments it is difficult to find extensive support for the optimistic views being expressed in the 1980s. While there has been a significant shift in management style, notably with the emphasis on team working, the evidence for a major shift in the value systems of the major corporations, as suggested by Boltanski and Chiapello (2002), is thin at best. On the contrary, the most recent reviews of the changing

world of work and employment (Brown et al., 2012; Head, 2014; Urry, 2014) have emphasised the ways in which new technologies facilitate off-shoring strategies to maintain profit margins often based on de-skilled and speeded-up jobs. Urry in fact begins his account with a quote from Warren Buffett, the successful US investor, to the effect that: 'There is class warfare alright, but it's my class, the rich class, that is making war, and we're winning'¹³ (Urry, 2014: 1).

We are left with the question of how far 'beyond Fordism' have we travelled. Certainly, if viewed from the standpoint of worker autonomy and the salience of work based upon pressured and repetitive job tasks, the answer must be 'not very far'. Here it is the extension of Fordist practices *beyond* manufacturing and *beyond* the USA and Europe that is most notable, reminding us that Fordism, even under Henry, was more adaptable than has been recently understood (see Clarke, 1992; Williams et al., 1992:). Looking beyond the labour process, however, there have been significant changes, most notably in the corporate practice of outsourcing work previously carried out 'in-house'. This resurrection of the sub-contract as a central part of business has been allied with the weakening of labour contracts through a variety of agency systems, making many jobs temporary and work more insecure. These tendencies have been exacerbated by the use of an increasingly powerful information technology.

These trends, mapped out on a world scale, will be the new focus of attention for the sociology of work as managers strive to imagine and create a world in which 'all inefficiencies in production are eliminated' (Cross 2014: 101) and workers continue to seek greater fairness and autonomy with talk of other kinds of real utopias (Wright, 2010).

NOTES

1 In completing this chapter I am greatly indebted to the help of my friend Theo Nichols and to the

- correspondence I have had with Matt Vidal. Bob Carter's comments and those of Steve Davies and Helen Sampson have been much appreciated.
- 2 This formulation and its historical grounding has been strongly challenged. See Brenner and Glick (1991), Clarke (1992) and Sayer and Walker (1992).
 - 3 Most recently, Michael Roberts has documented this trend in the rate of profit, developing the framework outlined by Marx in <https://thenextrecession.wordpress.com/2013/12/16/us-rate-of-profit-up-slightly-in-2012-flat-in-2013-down-in-2014/>
 - 4 A study of the outsourcing of catering, IT, facilities management, employment services, office support, technical consultancy, and other services, estimated that in 2010 these employed 3.3 million people, making up 12.25% of all employees in the UK (Oxford Economics, 2012).
 - 5 Given this shift, it is surprising that so much of the discussion of Fordism and post-Fordism has been concerned with manufacturing alone, and with in sectors where the labour force is predominantly male (Herouvim, 1989: 589).
 - 6 This identification of retailing with the darker side of the world beyond Fordism is ironic given the salience of the sector within earlier utopian views in which Benetton figured centrally. As Robin Murray put it: 'the groundwork for the new system was laid not in manufacturing but in retailing ... the revolution of retailing reflects new principles of productivity, a new pluralism of production, and a new importance of innovation. As such it marks the shift to the post-Fordist age' (Murray, 1988: 11).
 - 7 This is another reference to the Soviet Union of the inter-war years when highly productive workers (like Stakanov) were identified as national heroes.
 - 8 When the BBC attempted to establish a list of the largest employers in the world, seven of the top ten were state owned! In this list Walmart was dwarfed by the US Department of Defense with 3.2 million employees. The British NHS, with 1.7 million employees was fifth (BBC, 2012).
 - 9 The additional irony of course is that Johnson became a member of the government that helped to push though and extend these changes.
 - 10 It also includes ten from Brazil, eight from Russia and five from Mexico (ft.com/indepth/ft500).
 - 11 Lipietz (1995) sees 'bloody Taylorism' as having two components. 'First, activities are primarily Taylorist but relatively poorly mechanised. The technical composition of capital in these firms is particularly low. In this way, this strategy of industrialisation avoids one of the inconveniences of import substitution: the cost of importing large quantities of equipment. Also, given that this strategy mobilises a largely female workforce, it incorporates all the traditions of domestic patriarchal exploitation. Second, this strategy is

'bloody' in the sense that Marx spoke of 'bloody legislation' at the outset of English capitalism. To the traditional oppression of women, this strategy adds all the modern weapons of anti-labour repression (official unions, absence of civil rights, imprisonment and torture of opponents)' (p. 5).

- 12 This development was associated with a restructuring of banking in the 1990s that shifted the 'bank branch' from the centre of operations. Specialised offices dealt with the settlement of accounts while customer relations and the marketing of new products were to be dealt with through call centres. With this more specialised division of labour we can see a radical change in the system of recruiting, where the appointment of school-leavers to a 'career with the bank' has been replaced by multi-tier recruitment policies.
- 13 At another time Buffett pointed out the unfairness of the fact that he, a billionaire, paid less tax than his routine office staff.

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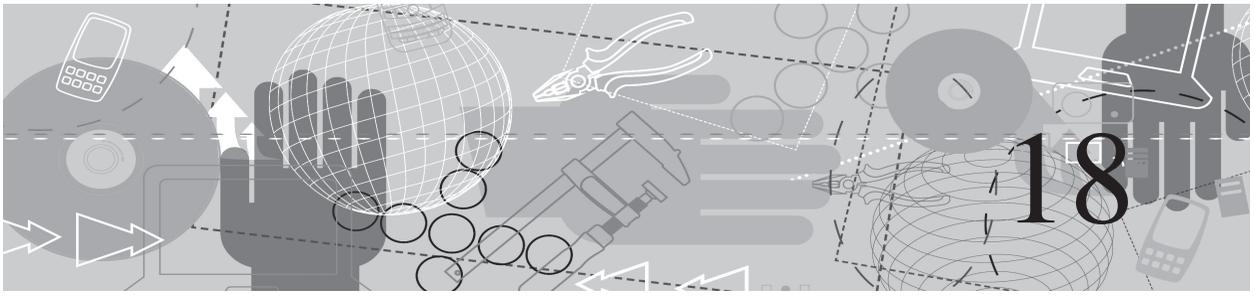
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Interactive Service Work

Amy S. Wharton

The growth of services and the corresponding decline of manufacturing and agriculture have transformed the world economy. According to *Fortune's* Global 500 ranking, the giant retailer Wal-Mart Stores generated the most revenue of any company in the world in 2014 (<http://fortune.com/global500/>). Compare this to 1960 when the largest revenue-generating companies were car, oil, appliance, or steel producers. Following General Motors at the top of *Fortune's* list in 1960 were Exxon Mobil, Ford Motor Company, General Electric, and U.S. Steel (http://archive.fortune.com/magazines/fortune/fortune500_archive/full/1960/). Wal-Mart's ascent to the top of the *Fortune* Global 500 provides compelling evidence of the centrality of services in the world economy and labor market.

This shift toward services has been most dramatic in industrialized (or post-industrialized) economies, but the development process in countries across the globe has been associated with an expanded service sector. Services make up roughly 70 percent of employment

in OECD countries (Wolfl, 2005). Services are also a significant component of the informal economy in both industrialized and developing countries (International Labour Organization, 2002). The impact of service sector growth has been profound. Just as the forces of industrialization revolutionized nineteenth-century economies and societies, so too has the rise of services reshaped work and life in the current era.

At the heart of services are service jobs themselves. In an economy dominated by services, most workers are employed in jobs that have a service component. The proliferation of service jobs has been accompanied by an outpouring of research on this employment sector. Reflecting their social and economic importance, sociologists of work now devote more attention to research on service than to manufacturing (Lopez, 2010). This chapter takes a close look at these jobs, paying attention to their distinctive elements, or the ways in which service jobs differ from non-service jobs, as well as to areas of continuity

between the organization and structure of service work and other types of employment. The chapter begins with a historical and theoretical overview of research on service jobs. In occupational terms, service work is a broad and ambiguous category. Identifying how these jobs have been conceptualized and defined is an important first step. This section also examines the concept of emotional labor and traces its foundational impact on theory and research. This impact can be clearly seen in three themes that dominated early research on service work and continue today. These include: studies of frontline service jobs, with a focus on issues of power and control; attention to the consequences of emotional labor; and the gendered dimensions of service work.

In the second part attention turns to current and emerging areas of research on service jobs. Services have permeated virtually all areas of life, and service jobs have become increasingly differentiated as well. Although emotional labor remains an important concept, researchers interested in service work – including Hochschild herself – have pursued several new lines of inquiry. Inequality in the service sector, especially of class, race, and ethnicity, is a central research area, which has expanded to include new topics and themes. In addition, the study of emotion and emotion regulation at work is flourishing, a development that has increased understanding of workers' experience of interactive service work and its consequences for their well-being. A third area of current research focuses on health care and care work more generally. These issues have become especially important in the context of neoliberal politics and the continued commodification of tasks associated with personal, familial, and private life. The chapter concludes with an assessment of what we have learned about service jobs and what important questions remain to be explored. This section also discusses how knowledge about service jobs has contributed to a broader understanding of the experiences of service workers.

CONCEPTUAL AND THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS

In his 1956 classic, *White Collar*, C. Wright Mills offered prescient observations about the emerging service economy and its implications for the nature of power and control in the workplace. He saw bureaucratization and the expanding ranks of white-collar functionaries as engendering more psychologically (or emotionally) based forms of control over workers. Bell (1973: 116) placed this transformation in a larger perspective, characterizing work in pre-industrial society as a 'game against nature'; in the more mechanized, technologically advanced industrial societies, work was a 'game against fabricated nature'. Work in a post-industrial economy, Bell (1973: 116) argued, was a 'game between persons'. Mills (1956) and Bell (1973) identify a key feature of service work and denote one significant way that it differs from work involved in the production of manufactured goods. Although there are likely few jobs that can be completed without some type of social interaction, interaction has special significance in the service workplace. Because services are delivered through people, social interaction does not merely facilitate the completion of work tasks, it is a central element of the work process.

At the most general level, performing a service means that people are paid for the activities they perform for customers or clients. Customers or clients can be either individuals or organizations, such as businesses. Most nations as well as international economic organizations have developed ways to formally classify and categorize service activities by industry and occupation. At the industry level, these classification systems typically distinguish between goods-producing and service-producing industries. Agriculture, manufacturing, mining and construction are classified as goods-producing, while services include everything else – from entertainment and recreation to health. Within the service-producing category, there is a further distinction between services provided to

consumers, such as health services, and those provided to businesses, such as personnel supply.

Industries are categorized based on the nature of the product they produce, while occupations refer to the specific tasks or activities that people are paid to perform. Although ways of classifying occupations vary, these systems enable researchers to identify occupational categories with a service component (Elias, 1997). Jobs represent an even more detailed description of work, providing information on where and for whom the work is being performed, as well as the tasks themselves.

What we know from these efforts to identify and classify service work is that service employment is highly varied and occurs in a wide variety of settings. Service jobs range from ‘fast food to brain surgery’, from repairing a computer or preparing a meal to selling insurance or providing psychotherapy (Wofl, 2005: 30). Although most often found in service industries, service jobs can be located in any business or industry, including in manufacturing. Some service jobs are highly paid, professional positions, while others offer low wages and little job security. Services encompass many of what might be considered the ‘best’ jobs in the economy, but also include many of those perceived as the ‘worst’ (Kalleberg, 2011).

Though diverse across many important dimensions, services share some fundamental characteristics. First, the products of service work are intangible (Zemke and Schaaf, 1989). Unlike manufactured goods, which can be shipped, stored, and sold off a shelf, services are inseparable from the person who produced them. Further, production and consumption can occur almost simultaneously in service encounters between workers and customers (or clients). Customers are thus directly involved in the service labor process. At the most fundamental level, service work is a social encounter. The social relational dimension of service jobs is what most distinguishes them from those involving the production of goods. Because interaction with

customers is an aspect of virtually all service jobs, theory and research on service work is particularly concerned with this activity.

Theory and Research on Service Work: From Taxi Drivers to The Managed Heart

Interactions between service workers and their customers have long been of interest to sociologists (e.g., Davis, 1959; Gold, 1952; Whyte, 1948). As is the case of much current research, early work paid close attention to the micro-level dynamics of interactions between workers and their customers. These studies of janitors, taxi drivers, and others recognized that interaction in a service encounter contained elements that set it apart from interactions outside the workplace. This research also helped reveal the interactionally based dynamics of power, control, and resistance in the service encounter.

Along with the insights of Mills (1956) and Bell (1973), these early studies of service encounters helped pave the way for Hochschild’s (1983) classic, *The Managed Heart*. One of the most influential books by a sociologist in the twentieth century, *The Managed Heart* became the touchstone for decades of research on service jobs. Hochschild (1983) argued that the nature and consequences of work in a service economy profoundly diverged from work in the industrial era. Her understanding of emotion’s role in social life was the basis for these claims.

Hochschild (1983) invoked the concept of emotion management (or emotion work) to call attention to the ways that people actively shape and direct their feelings in accordance with societal norms, or ‘feeling rules’. Emotion management occurs as people attempt to align private and personal emotions with normative expectations, or attempt to only outwardly conform to these norms. The first process, involving an attempt to make one’s personal or private emotions consistent with societal expectations, represents an emotion management strategy of ‘deep acting’.

Attempting to only outwardly conform to societal feeling rules involves ‘surface acting’. For Hochschild, emotion management is an ongoing feature of everyday life and emotion itself is deeply social. In her words, ‘In managing feeling, we contribute to the creation of it’ (Hochschild, 1983: 18).

Emotion management is shaped by social and cultural norms, but this process is not directly regulated by other individuals or organizations. Hochschild contends that this changes in a service economy when interaction between workers and customers (or clients) becomes a central ingredient in the labor process. She uses the concept of ‘emotional labor’ to characterize the emotion management process after it has been moved inside the workplace and overseen by employers. Service workers perform emotional labor in their interactions with customers or clients. Given the centrality of interaction to service delivery, employers have a stake in workers’ ability to manage their emotions and they thus seek to regulate and monitor this process. Hochschild argues that emotional labor is a distinctive and pervasive feature of work in a service economy.

For Hochschild, emotional labor is a requirement of service jobs in the same way that physical labor is required for many jobs in the goods-producing sector. Although these two types of labor are very different, they are both subject to some of the same underlying dynamics. For example, jobs requiring emotional labor can be organized in ways that facilitate or restrict workers’ control over the labor process. These jobs can be highly routinized or provide more autonomy for workers. In calling attention to these characteristics, Hochschild suggests that despite being different from physical labor, jobs requiring emotional labor may engender some of the same types of responses from workers. As she explains:

Beneath the difference between physical and emotional labor there lies a similarity in the possible cost of doing the work: the worker can become estranged or alienated from an aspect of the self – either the body or the margins of the soul – that is *used* to do the work. (Hochschild, 1983: 7, emphasis in original)

The particular form of alienation engendered by jobs requiring emotional labor involves what Hochschild (1983: 90) calls ‘emotive dissonance’. Workers are required to express or suppress emotions according to externally imposed criteria and regardless of whether these align with personal feelings. Over time this practice leads to self-estrangement and distress. Hochschild’s discussion of the consequences of emotional labor for workers and society at large has received a tremendous amount of attention from researchers and continues to engender discussion and debate. At a broader level, the concept of emotional labor itself has been central to decades of research on service work (Lopez, 2010; Wharton, 2009).

Frontline Service Jobs and the Service Triangle

In *The Managed Heart*, Hochschild explored service work through a focus on the occupation of flight attendant. Later researchers embraced this occupation-specific approach, and in-depth, qualitative studies of particular service jobs have continued as an important research stream. These studies acknowledge emotional labor, but also attend to other features of service jobs, especially ‘frontline’ jobs requiring high levels of face-to-face contact between workers and customers (Zemke and Schaaf, 1989). One important research concern involves the dynamics of power, conflict, and control in these work settings. In frontline service jobs, these dynamics are expressed not only in workers’ interactions with customers, but also in employers’ efforts to regulate these interactions. This three-way, or ‘triangular,’ relationship complicates traditional notions of workplace power dynamics (Lopez, 2010; McCammon and Griffin, 2000).

These issues were highlighted in much of the early research on interactive service jobs (e.g., Leidner, 1993; Macdonald and Sirianni, 1996b; Paules, 1991; Tolich, 1993). An important insight of this research

was that despite lacking formal status and authority, interactive service workers are not completely powerless or without control. The tripartite relations of power between workers, customers, and employers create opportunities for all parties to leverage these relations for their benefit. For example, Paules (1991) showed that, while many aspects of restaurant work reinforce workers' subordination to customers, managers had limited ability to control waitresses' interactions with customers. Instead, these interactions were directed largely by the workers themselves. Waitresses' interactive strategies often gave them the upper hand with customers, enabling workers to both protect their dignity and benefit economically through the tipping process.

Leidner's (1993) now classic study of fast food workers and insurance salespeople provides one of the most comprehensive analyses of power, control, and resistance in interactive service work. Fast food, with its emphasis on standardization and highly routinized production, is organized around some of the same principles as manufacturing. Leidner examined the implications of employers' efforts to routinize interactive service jobs and the factors that might facilitate or undermine such efforts. In exploring these issues, she contributes to our ability to understand areas of convergence and divergence between services and other forms of work. For example, routinization in fast food involves not only an attempt to standardize how workers complete physical tasks, but extends to their interactions with customers. By requiring workers to adhere to tightly scripted exchanges and closely monitoring their compliance with these interactional expectations, fast food employers aim to ensure consistency in their customers' experiences. As in other types of work settings, fast food workers respond to these efforts in a variety of ways, ranging from accommodation to resistance.

Overall, Leidner agrees with Hochschild (1983) that restricting workers' ability to control their interactions with customers is potentially damaging psychologically and

that routinized service work may be even more distressing for workers than the routinization of jobs involving physical labor. But Leidner also recognizes that these negative consequences are not always realized or perceived by workers themselves. Like Paules, Leidner shows the ways that workers strategically manage interactions with customers to resist degradation and gain power on the job.

In contrast to fast food, the job of a door-to-door insurance salesperson is relatively immune to routinization. Not only are insurance salespeople's interactions with customers impossible to physically monitor, but effectiveness in sales requires an ability to be responsive to the highly varied needs and concerns of individual customers. In her analysis of Combined Insurance, Leidner (1993) showed how this employer exerted control over its salespeople through intensive socialization practices aimed at creating strong work identities and an enthusiastic embracing of company goals. This strategy benefited both insurance salespeople and their employer because it made workers more successful and led to increased sales. In this case, the service triangle reflected an alignment of workers' and employers' interests and control over the customer. Issues of power, control, and resistance are longstanding themes in the sociology of work and, as shown later in this chapter, this topic continues to draw interest from researchers studying service jobs.

Emotional Labor and its Consequences

Hochschild's arguments in *The Managed Heart* inspired research on the construct of emotional labor and the consequences for workers whose jobs require this activity. Hochschild (1983) used census data to identify occupations that involved emotional labor. She concluded that just under 40 percent of jobs in the United States required this activity, and these jobs spanned the occupational spectrum from professionals to workers in private households. Because she defined

emotional labor only in broad, occupational terms, however, much early research sought to clarify and operationalize this construct, primarily with the use of survey data. These studies tend to be more quantitative than qualitative in their methodology, using survey data to assess the prevalence and consequences of emotional labor.

There remains no consensus on the best way to quantitatively measure emotional labor, although there are common elements across approaches. For example, many have associated emotional labor with the frequency and intensity of the customer interactions required by a job (Brotheridge and Grandey, 2002; Bulan et al., 1997). Others focused on the degree to which workers must manage their emotions during interaction, sometimes also distinguishing between management strategies that involve 'faking' emotions displayed to others and those that attempt to create the required feeling (see Brotheridge and Grandey, 2002; Erickson and Ritter, 2001; Pugliesi, 1999). For example, Grandey (2003: 91) asked workers to indicate the average extent to which they 'just pretend to have the emotions I need to display for my job' or 'work hard to feel the emotions that I need to show to others' (see also Brotheridge and Grandey, 2002). Erickson and Ritter (2001) queried people about their experience of specific emotions on the job and the degree to which they attempted to hide or cover up those feelings. Scales developed by Glomb and Tews (2004) and Brotheridge and Lee (2003) also attempt to capture to Hochschild's (1983: 33) distinction between 'surface acting' and 'deep acting' as forms of emotional labor.

These measures were put to use in studies attempting to identify the consequences of emotional labor for psychological well-being. Researchers were especially interested in the consequences of surface acting and the 'emotive dissonance' engendered by having to display emotions that are different from one's real feelings (Hochschild, 1983: 90). This research generally supports the conclusion that surface acting is associated

with psychological distress (Brotheridge and Grandey, 2002; Van Dijk and Brown, 2006; Erickson and Ritter, 2001; Grandey, 2003; Zapf and Holz, 2006).

This research helped to disentangle the effects of surface acting on psychological well-being from any possible negative effects of performance of interactive service work more generally. For example, workers employed in interactive service jobs are not more distressed or dissatisfied than workers in other occupations (Wharton, 1993). Most studies also failed to show a relationship between the frequency or type of interaction required at work and negative psychological outcomes for workers (Brotheridge and Grandey, 2002; Morris and Feldman, 1996; Wharton, 1993; Wharton and Erickson, 1995). Although employment in an interactive service job can have negative consequences, researchers have learned much more about the underlying processes that produce these effects. Overall, these studies laid the foundation for an explosion of theory and research on emotion in the workplace that continues today (see Wharton, 2014).

Gender and Interactive Service Work

The emergence of a service economy is closely intertwined with changes in women's work and family lives in the latter half of the twentieth century. Married women's movement into the paid labor force during this time was both a cause and a consequence of the expanded service sector. Women's increasing involvement in the paid labor force in the decades following World War II created a demand for workers in areas such as food service, childcare, and personal services that became substitutes for women's unpaid labor in the home. Women also flooded into other, rapidly growing areas of the service sector, such as retail and health care. Most women today are employed in services, and women make up over half of all service sector workers in OECD countries (OECD, 2002).

As a result of these connections, gender has long been a central concern in research on interactive service work. Hochschild (1983) noted the predominance of women in interactive service jobs that required deference, ‘niceness’, and attending to others’ needs. The type of emotional labor expected in these positions corresponded to and reinforced stereotypical expectations of women, especially those who were white and middle-class. Others examined how women’s alleged enhanced capacity to provide care and support has been built into the formal and informal expectations of service jobs (e.g., Steinberg and Figart, 1999; Lively 2000; Martin, 1999).

Many service jobs are viewed as more appropriate for women than men on the basis of the kind of emotional labor they require. Macdonald and Sirianni (1996a: 3) use the term ‘emotional proletariat’ to refer to the low-paying, low-skill service jobs that require workers to display friendliness and deference to customers. Women fill the ranks of the emotional proletariat, but as a growing body of research shows, so do racial and ethnic minorities and members of other disadvantaged groups. As Macdonald and Sirianni (1996a: 15) note, ‘[i]n no area of wage labor are the personal characteristics of the workers so strongly associated with the nature of the work’.

Not all jobs requiring interaction with others are gender-typed as female, however. Stereotypical male interactive styles emphasize authority and competitiveness, and these qualities are most often reflected in service jobs held by professionals. In her study of a law firm, Pierce (1995) contrasted the gendered expectations built into the job of litigator (a predominately male occupation) with that of the predominately female-dominated paralegal job, showing how these expectations reflected and reinforced gendered workplace hierarchies. Although both paralegals and litigators performed emotional labor, they did so in different ways. Litigators learned to strategically deploy intimidation and gamesmanship in order to be successful

in the courtroom. This adversarial approach drew upon masculine stereotypes and reinforced the connections between masculinity and the skills needed to be a good litigator. In contrast, paralegals (especially female paralegals) were expected to display care and support for male attorneys.

Caring was not part of paralegals’ formal job descriptions, but rather was an unacknowledged and informal expectation to which they were held accountable. Pierce’s (1995) attention to the formal as well as informal expectations associated with women’s service jobs contributed to an extensive literature on the meaning, organization, and devaluation of care work in the paid workplace and in the wider society (Crittenden, 2001; England, 2005; England and Folbre, 1999; England et al., 2002; Erickson, 2005; Wharton and Erickson, 1993).

CURRENT AND EMERGING AREAS OF RESEARCH ON SERVICE WORK

Recent years have seen a burgeoning of research on service work (Lopez, 2010). Much of this research builds on themes discussed in the previous section. For example, inequality in the service workplace is a significant focus of current research. Although gender inequality remains an emphasis, current studies take a more intersectional approach, attending to issues of social class, race, ethnicity, citizenship, and sexuality. A second topic area includes efforts to broaden Hochschild’s concept of emotional labor and examine emotion management at work more generally. Sociologists have contributed to this research (see Wharton, 2014), but it has also been informed by organizational researchers, and especially organizational and industrial psychologists (e.g., Brief and Weiss, 2002). Third, researchers have begun to explore the distinction between commercial and human service work, with a particular focus on health and other forms of care work.

Intersectionality and Inequality in the Service Workplace

Gender and gender inequality have long been addressed in studies of service work. However, as Mirchandani (2003: 721–722) noted, ‘While theorists illuminate the different forms of emotion work required in various professions, there is little understanding of the relationship between the occupation of workers and their social locations within interactive race, class and gender hierarchies’. This has changed in recent years, as systematic attention to other dimensions of inequality and disadvantage has increased and intersectional approaches have become more common.

Macdonald and Merrill (2009) note the ways that an interactional framework can inform research on service work, and particularly the emotional proletariat. These authors estimate that U.S. women of all racial and ethnic groups are between two and three times more likely than their male counterparts to work in the emotional proletariat. This group of 73 occupations represents those in which workers have little control over the conditions of work, including their interactions with customers, and are closely monitored by employers. Macdonald and Merrill (2009) pay particular attention to the role of ethnic niches and labor market segmentation in the service sector, noting the ways that this differentiation shapes hiring practices and work organization in these jobs. They argue that ‘ethnicity and gender shape hiring decisions because they shape service interactions’ (Macdonald and Merrill, 2009: 115).

An intersectional analysis is also useful for understanding the contested relations of power in the service triangle. Kang (2003, 2010) focuses on the intersection of gender, race, and class in the highly feminized world of nail salons. She shows how the emotion work of female manicurists, who themselves were mostly Asian immigrants, depended on the racial and class backgrounds of their mostly female customers. Williams’ (2006) study of toy stores reveals a similar pattern;

relations between customers and workers depended on a complex intersection of race, gender, and social class, as well as whether the store catered to an upscale or mass market clientele. These studies underscore the ways in which intersectional perspectives have reshaped research on interactive service work.

Other research examines these questions in a comparative framework or through the lens of globalization. For example, Sallaz’s (2009) comparative study of casino dealers in the United States and South Africa shows how the organization of interactive service work in each country is shaped by societal-level racial dynamics. Otis (2008: 15) argues that ‘global interactive labor’ cannot be understood using paradigms developed for a goods-producing economy. Because of the interconnectedness between service production and consumption, interactive service work in settings outside the U.S. embodies both local and global influences. Otis’ (2008, 2011) research on the Chinese service sector reveals the central importance of local consumer markets in the organization of interactive work and the role of gender in this process.

Transnational service work is also the focus of Mirchandani’s (2012) research on Indian call center workers. Her study calls attention to an increasingly common practice whereby interactive services are provided across national borders. Customer service in particular has been radically transformed: ‘No longer involving face-to-face interactions between customers and workers, telecommunications technologies facilitate the widespread provision of customer service that is temporally synchronous and spatially distant’ (Mirchandani, 2012: 2). Mirchandani argues that Indian call center workers’ interactions are, at one level, reflective of global power inequities and customers’ preoccupation with workers who are different from themselves, while at the same time these workers are expected to connect with their customers. In addition to exploring how workers navigate this interpersonal terrain of being different and being the same, Mirchandani (2012) examines many other features of

transnational customer service, including the effects of bureaucratization and relentless time pressures on workers' ability to address customers' needs.

Care work as a type of interactive labor continues to receive significant attention from researchers. Intersectionality and globalization have been essential frameworks for understanding this issue. Female migrants from poorer countries are increasingly employed as paid care workers in wealthier societies, and this makes race, class, and citizenship factors important in understanding caring labor (Ehrenreich and Hochschild, 2002; Parrenas, 2009). Studies have explored how these dynamics are expressed in female caregivers' relations with their female employers (Hondagneu-Sotelo, 2001; Macdonald, 2010). At a broader level, researchers are raising questions about the human rights of migrant caregivers (Parrenas, 2001).

A related approach to understanding inequality in the service workplace puts social class at the center of the analysis. Social class is a key concept in studies of the industrial workplace, yet this topic has been largely missing from research on interactive service work. In particular, while relations between service workers and customers have been a subject of research, these relations have not typically been viewed as sites for the reproduction of class inequality. Hanser (2012: 300) argues that research on 'the classed nature of service interactions' contributes to broader sociological concerns relating to consumption, culture and lifestyle as expressions of class privilege.

Williams and Connell's (2010) study of retail sales work provides an example of this line of research. Williams and Connell (2010: 350) use the concept of 'aesthetic labor' to describe the requirements for upscale retail sales jobs, where workers are expected to 'look good and sound right'. Performing aesthetic labor means that workers must display a carefully cultivated demeanor and 'embody particular styles of standing, speaking, and walking' (Williams and Connell 2010: 350; see also Witz et al., 2003). For the upscale

retailers in their study, the right aesthetic was one that personified the affluent customers the stores sought to attract. By hiring workers whose demeanor and self-presentation conveyed class privilege, employers selling upscale goods create an association between the worker and the brand. This association helps stores attract the right kind of customers, but it also transforms workers into consumers who identify with the brand that they represent. Williams and Connell (2010) argue that this blurring of the worker-consumer boundary is disempowering and reinforces social inequality, because it discourages workers from identifying with their jobs or challenging their low pay and other poor employment conditions. The requirements of aesthetic labor also help to sustain discrimination along class, race, and gender lines. Selection of workers based on appearance, demeanor, and fit with a brand inevitably reinforces group stereotypes.

Several other studies also explore the customer-worker relationship from the perspective of class, power, and consumption. For example, Kang (2010: 157) argues that rather than resist or challenge disrespectful treatment by customers, some manicurists instead 'claim status by association with their customers' race and class privilege'. Achieving a sense of 'vicarious status' was a way to minimize the subservient position in the manicurist-customer exchange (Kang, 2010: 157). Like Williams and Connell (2010), Kang (2010) shows how many interactive service jobs intimately involve workers' bodies as instruments of production and consumption (see also Mears and Finlay, 2005; Wolkowitz, 2006). In attending to issues of embodiment and aesthetic labor, researchers have helped to illustrate how interactive service jobs not only draw on workers' inner lives and emotions, but also require them to transform themselves and their bodies in the service of employers (Wolkowitz, 2006). In Kang's (2010: 20) words, the 'body is the vehicle for performing service work'.

Attention to issues of power and inequality in the service workplace is also reflected

in studies of service worker organizing. Moving from the interactional to the organizational level is another way that research on the service workplace converges with studies of industrial work. The expansion of the service sector in the late twentieth century was accompanied by declining union membership, not only in the United States but also in other industrialized countries (Cobble and Merrill, 2009). The service sector represents both a challenge and an opportunity for revitalizing the labor movement. The challenge stems from some of the distinctive features of service work, including the types of establishments where service workers are typically employed (e.g., small, personal, non-bureaucratic) and the role of the customer (also, client or patient) in the service transaction. These characteristics make the worker-employer relationship less transparent than in a manufacturing work environment. Other aspects of service work present labor unions with new opportunities for organizing, but call for new strategies, approaches, and goals.

Successful unionization efforts among janitors, home health care workers, and call center workers illustrate these opportunities (Chun, 2005; Cobble and Merrill, 2009; Doellgast, 2012; Katz et al., 2003). For example, customers and clients can be valuable allies in service organizing efforts because these groups also stand to gain from improved treatment of service workers (Cobble and Merrill, 2009). This may be especially true in care work industries, such as health, education, and childcare, which are essential to societal well-being (Dwyer, 2014). Service workers may also have allies in social movements and community organizations that can bring public attention to workers' situations (Chun, 2005). Building support for improved working conditions in the service sector may also require a broadening of the goals of collective bargaining to include issues such as recognition, advancement, and participation in the workplace (Cobble and Merrill, 2009; Doellgast, 2012).

Emotion in the Service Workplace

While some have moved away from an emotions-based approach to interactive service work, another line of current research revisits the concept of emotional labor and makes the topic of emotion management at work an explicit concern. This research agenda, which draws heavily from theory and research on emotion, is broadly multidisciplinary, reflecting the contributions of sociologists, psychologists, and organizational researchers. Studies aim to understand the role and effects of emotion in workplace interaction more generally – not simply as expressed between workers and customers, but between co-workers and within groups as well as between individuals.

Grandey et al. (2013) use an emotion regulation framework to recast emotional labor research. This psychologically-based framework emphasizes the range of strategies people use inside and outside the workplace to influence their emotions, including 'which emotions they have, when they have them, and how they experience and express them' (Gross, 1998: 275). From this perspective, emotion management (or regulation) can occur at various points as an emotion is experienced (Grandey, 2000). The strategies deployed in this process are highly variable and depend on a range of both individual and situational factors, with different consequences for psychological well-being. While Hochschild (1983) was most concerned with employers' control over workers' emotions, Grandey et al. (2013) are interested in the full range of factors that shape workers' emotion regulation processes, as well as the impact of those processes on workers and customers.

This framework has opened up new research possibilities at the same time as it has helped confirm earlier findings regarding the consequences of emotional labor. The research possibilities include attention to the factors that shape workers' emotion regulation strategies, as well as the mechanisms through which these strategies impact workers and customers (Groth et al., 2013).

In addition, as researchers aim to understand the consequences of emotion regulation for psychological well-being, they have learned more about the effects of 'deep acting' as a strategy of emotion regulation. One recent meta-analysis reported a positive association between deep acting and well-being and no evidence that deep acting is related to negative outcomes (Wang et al., 2011). Mikolajczak et al. (2009) suggest that standard measures of deep acting actually tap into several distinct emotion regulation strategies, each of which may have different effects on psychological well-being. At a broader level, this research calls attention to the importance of authentic emotions. Authentic emotional displays are not only important for customers, but authenticity is also a critical factor in workers' ability to resist burnout and stress.

A related area of emotions research focuses on emotional expression in the service workplace. What emotions are displayed at work depends on many factors, including occupational and organizational norms about what is appropriate. 'Display rules' that are codified as formal job requirements have long been of interest to researchers, and studies have examined workers' willingness and ability to comply with these requirements (Rafaeli, 1989; Rafaeli and Sutton, 1989, 1990; Sutton and Rafaeli, 1988). It is well known that workers in many service jobs are expected to display positive emotions (i.e., smiling, making eye contact) in their interactions as a way of signaling care and concern for customers' experience. Positive display rules are more likely to engender deep acting, while surface acting is more common in work settings where negative display rules are present (Wang et al., 2011).

In professional settings, display rules are often informal and thus better understood as norms that govern what kinds of emotional displays are appropriate. Emotional display norms in professional workplaces tend to emphasize congeniality and a pleasant workplace demeanor. Members of dominant groups may not only find it easier to comply with these norms, but may also have

more latitude in when and how they comply. For example, the expression of anger is discouraged in professional workplaces, but African-American men feel greater pressure than their white counterparts to comply with this norm (Wingfield, 2010). However, even while trying to show emotional restraint and avoid the racial stereotype of 'the angry black man', African-American men are more likely than white co-workers to experience situations that might provoke an angry response. This 'emotional double-bind' also confronts others in subordinate statuses at work: they may be more likely than more advantaged workers to experience negative emotions, but also face more pressures to suppress these emotions (Erickson and Ritter, 2001).

Expressions of anger in the workplace have received much attention from emotions researchers. Sources of workplace anger may be found in a number of areas, including unfair treatment and perceived disrespect, incivility, or rudeness (e.g., Booth and Mann, 2005; Gibson and Callister, 2010). Sloan (2004) found that people employed in jobs requiring high levels of interaction with others experienced more anger at work than others, but the reasons for their anger differed depending on job status: workers in low-status interactive jobs felt anger as a result of mistreatment, while those in high-status jobs reacted with anger to perceived disrespect. Other studies confirm that status shapes the expression, sources, and targets of workplace anger (Collett and Lizardo, 2010; Lively and Powell, 2006).

Research on emotional responses to inequality and poor treatment not only focuses on those who experience these issues, but also explores co-workers' responses and support. In an early study of co-worker support, Lively (2000) showed how such support helped paralegals cope with the emotional labor demands of their role. In more recent work, Sloan (2012) finds that unfair treatment by customers or supervisors engenders not only anger but also stress, and co-workers help mitigate those reactions. As both researchers note, however, despite its

benefits for workers, co-worker support can also be viewed as a practice that helps to reinforce existing workplace hierarchies. Further, providing this support can be seen as a form of devalued and highly gendered invisible work (Pierce, 1995).

Care and Commodification in Interactive Service Work

Interactive service work takes place in a variety of industries and sectors. Researchers are increasingly interested in health care – a large and growing consumer service industry. Many service occupations in health are human service jobs, with a caring component. Emotional labor has been a central frame in many studies of health care workers (e.g., Bolton, 2000; Erickson and Grove, 2008; Theodosius, 2008). A central aim in these studies is to understand the differences between care work and other forms of interactive service. Despite the interactive component of both types of jobs, the differences between them are more than superficial. As Erickson and Stacey (2013: 180) explain, there are ‘ontological and epistemological implications of grounding one’s work in the study of care (where human relationships are essential) or the study of commerce (where demands of economic rationality prevail)’.

Calls for economic efficiency and standardization challenge the ‘ethic of care’ that has historically guided health care workers. Erickson and Stacey (2013) warn that the ongoing commercialization of human service work requires renewed efforts to understand the emotional demands and experiences of health care workers. Along these lines, studies show how changes in the structure, practice, and professional norms in health care work have impacted workers’ positive experience of caregiving (Huynh et al., 2008; Lopez 2006; Stacey, 2011).

Grant, Morales, and Sallaz (2009) reject the view that treats health care as either emotionally alienating or fulfilling for employees. Instead, they suggest there are ‘different

pathways to meaning’ in caring organizations. They studied a large university hospital that encouraged its nurses to think of their work as ‘spiritual care’ (Grant et al., 2009: 338). The nurses in their study interpreted the hospital’s views in different ways, with different consequences for their feelings of authenticity. Korczynski (2009) makes a similar point, arguing that whether interactive service workers experience their jobs as alienating or fulfilling depends on particular features of the job and work organization.

Health care may represent the crucible of competing organizational logics involving commodification and care, but this issue has more far-reaching applications. In her recent book, *The Outsourced Self*, Hochschild (2012) returns to themes that motivated *The Managed Heart*, particularly the ways that the market has penetrated family and personal life. Hochschild (2012) observes that services are for sale today that would have been hard to imagine only a few decades ago. These include so-called personal services, such as dating, surrogacy, coaching, and other activities that in prior eras would have been performed for each other by family members or loved ones. As the market encroaches further into private and personal life, Hochschild (2012) worries that people are becoming emotionally detached from themselves and their connections to others.

In addition to the personal and societal implications of commodified care work, researchers have continued to explore links between the social organization of care work, economic inequality, and state policies. Care work is undercompensated and devalued relative to similarly skilled work in other areas (England et al., 2002). Low-skilled care workers are among the lowest paid U.S. workers and the expansion of this labor market segment has contributed to the polarization of job growth in the U.S. economy over the last three decades (Dwyer, 2014). Dwyer (2014) suggests that the expansion of a low-wage care sector can be explained partly by neoliberal policies that have squeezed out state support for care work, and professionalization efforts

that stratified the care sector and divided care sector workers. Gender, race, and class differences within the care sector reinforce patterns of wage inequality in the U.S. economy. Dwyer (2014: 412) suggests that societal investments in ‘human infrastructure’ would be one way reduce job polarization and the gender and racial economic disparities that it has helped to reinforce.

CONCLUSION: WHAT DO WE KNOW AND WHAT DO WE NEED TO KNOW ABOUT INTERACTIVE SERVICE WORK?

Interactive service jobs comprise a large and growing segment of the world economy and have been studied by sociologists since at least the end of World War II. A key focus of early research on interactive service work was on understanding what made these jobs different from those in manufacturing. The customer’s role in the labor process and the significance of interaction as the vehicle through which services were produced, delivered, and consumed figured prominently in the literature. Hochschild’s book *The Managed Heart* was an important contribution because she simultaneously drew attention to what was new or different about service jobs, while at the same time noting the ways in which this difference could be understood using a framework drawn from industrial work. For Hochschild, the emergence of emotional labor was less about the uniqueness of service jobs than it signaled a new form of employer control over workers. Hochschild’s observations inspired an outpouring of research on interactive service jobs that took up issues of control and power in the service workplace, examined the psychological consequences of emotional labor, and explored the gendered dimensions of interactive service work.

Sociological understanding of interactive service work has become increasingly nuanced and multifaceted. Research incorporates

themes of longstanding interest in the sociology of work, as well as providing new frameworks and vantage points. This blend of attention to enduring questions in the context of new realities has yielded insights that can serve as a springboard for future research and understanding.

Inequality is a persistent feature of social life. Inequalities across multiple dimensions have become a key focus in current studies of interactive service jobs. Intersectional approaches have revealed how the experience and organization of interactive service work are shaped by multiple dimensions of difference and inequality. Relations between workers and customers are also defined by complex class and status hierarchies that reinforce (while also blurring) the inequalities of power and control that permeate the service triangle.

In studying these issues, researchers have not moved away from examining the interactions that are at the center of the service labor process, but they have added texture to their analysis. This includes increased recognition of the processes through which interactive service jobs reproduce both the cultural and economic dimensions of class inequalities (Hanser, 2012). This focus links research on service work to more longstanding concerns in the sociology of work. A second way that research has evolved is through an expanded conception of the service labor process. Emotional labor remains important, but researchers have also recognized the embodied nature of interactive labor. The decline of manual labor has transformed but not diminished the body’s relationship to work. Attention to the body connects several predominant strands of research on interactive service work.

As studies move to consider interactive work in these ways, however, it is important not to lose sight of the fundamental role of emotion in these jobs. Emotional labor is only one pathway through which emotion may shape the organization and experience of interactive service work. We have learned much more about the emotional processes

that influence the performance of interactive service work and responses to this work. Emotional expression in the service workplace is shaped by employer guidelines and professional norms, but it is also shaped by situational factors, including inequality and unfair treatment.

Studies of interactive work have been increasingly attentive to human service work (or care work). In addition to workers' experiences in these jobs, researchers have examined the broader organizational and societal contexts that shape caring labor. The care sector is a large and growing area of the economy and health care in particular is a critical site for examining caring in the context of commodification and capitalism.

In attending to these themes, researchers have contributed to an expansive literature on interactive service work. We know much more about some topics than others, however. In particular, although interactive service jobs span the occupational spectrum, lower-paying, more routinized jobs have received the most attention from researchers. We know less about other types of interactive service jobs, including those that George (2008: 115) calls 'expert service work', involving 'knowledgeable, customized interactive labor'. A broad definition of service work has been useful as a way to understand large-scale economic changes. It has been less helpful for identifying differences within the service sector.

Systematic attention to these differences is important in the context of an expansive and growing service sector. Early research on interactive service jobs focused primarily on what was unique about these positions, while current research often highlights the continuities between service jobs and other forms of low-wage work. Both vantage points are important and useful. Attention to a wider range of service jobs may yield fresh insights about the organization of work in a service economy and its impact on workers and the larger society.

In addition to a focus on a wider range of service jobs, researchers should continue to

move beyond the individual worker or the worker-customer dyad. Social relationships are at the center of research on interactive service work, but research on these relations has been somewhat narrowly conceived. Qualitative studies of particular work settings have provided rich detail, but there has been less systematic attention given to the organizational and social features of service work contexts. These contexts include workplace social relations as well characteristics of employers and organizations. Understanding their impacts provides another vantage point from which to explore the continuities and discontinuities between service and industrial work.

Finally, as the world continues to struggle against recession, economic uncertainty, and rising levels of inequality within and between countries, it is time to more fully consider the broader economic and political context of service work. The drop-off in unionization that accompanied the decline in manufacturing and the growth of service jobs contributed to prolonged wage stagnation among middle- and lower-income workers that continues today. While high earners have experienced an economic recovery, low-wage workers have not. Rising economic inequality has been critiqued by policy-makers and challenged by social movements operating on both a local and global scale. Locally, worker advocacy groups like the Los Angeles Alliance for a New Economy have fought for a living wage and better working conditions for the vast service labor force in the hotel and hospitality industry (Greenhouse, 2014).

Fast food workers have been especially central in efforts to improve workers' economic situations in the face of widening inequality. As Finnegan (2014) notes, 'the fast-food workforce is just under four million and growing, and the main companies are so rich and powerful that the stakes are higher than in any labor struggle in recent memory'. The worldwide protests of fast food workers in cities across the globe that took place during 2014 represent a new and potentially powerful form of labor activism. Just as fast

food served as the archetypal service job in early studies of interactive service work, these jobs are likely to play an important role in future research on the global economic and political implications of the service economy.

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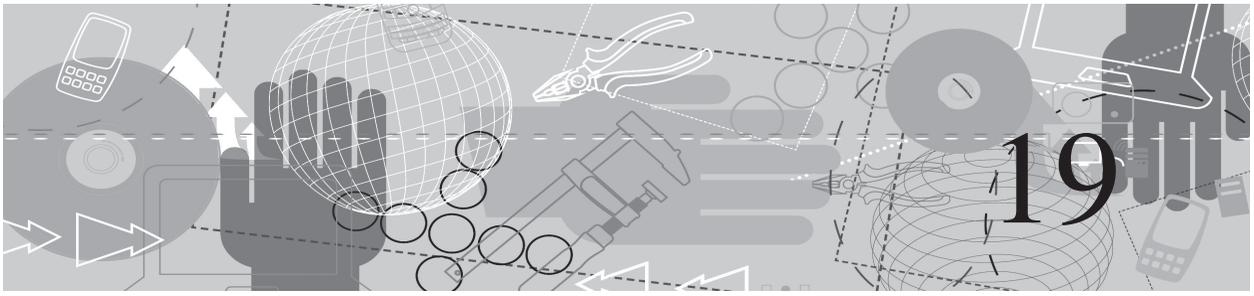
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The Organization of Service Work

Kiran Mirchandani

The term ‘service work’ captures a stunning array of activities and rather than a unified group, service workers are deeply stratified by their geographical settings, class positions, social locations and quality of work. There has been a dramatic rise of the service sector globally. Based on an analysis of ILO data, Poster summarizes that ‘most new jobs within the formal sector around the world are in services ... these jobs involve doing something for people rather than making things’ (2007: 63). Russell accordingly describes the service economy over the past three decades as the ‘great employment sponge’ (2006: 92; see also Hearn, 2008; Howcroft and Richardson, 2008). This chapter poses two questions: (i) what are the geographical, social and legislative factors which shed light on the diversity of jobs and working conditions which comprise the service sector? and (ii) does the shift towards services-related labour globally exacerbate current inequalities, or can the unique features associated with service work challenge systems of stratification and offer new opportunities for worker advocacy?

In the sections below, I consider three ways in which service work is organized – geographically, socially and contractually. I then draw on ethnographic field research I have conducted with a diverse range of service workers – human resource managers, call centre agents, drivers, housekeepers and security guards employed with transnational corporations in India – in order to explore the impact of the proliferation of transnational service organizations on the quality of life for a variety of service workers.

DEFINITIONS OF SERVICE WORK

There are a few factors which uniquely characterize employment in the service sector globally. First, unlike the exchange of goods, the commodification of service is necessarily embodied. As van den Broek notes, ‘rather than producing tangible products like cars or clothing, interactive service workers ... trade in aesthetics and emotions – that is workers

sell attitude, personality, and voice or traits which are culturally and socially specific' (2004: 60). Second, service interactions involve not only employees and employers, but also customers who automatically introduce uncertainty into service relationships since employers cannot fully mandate their responses. Dunkel and Weihrich summarize: 'services are more than economic transactions. In service relationships, service employees and customers or experts must work together actively if the task or service is to get done' (2013: 50). Employers may be driven by efficiency motives while customers may have service expectations that are not particularly cost-effective. Service workers mediate these opposing demands of employers and customers through their emotional labour (Russell, 2006). Finally, rather than a self-contained sector, service labour in fact pervades all other sectors given that work, even in industrial, agricultural or manufacturing jobs, frequently involves dealing with customers, assessing the needs of others, working in teams, and engaging in peer learning and teaching. Zysman et al. (2013) provide a vivid illustration of the pervasive nature of service work by noting that a window washer employed by General Motors may be classified as a manufacturing worker, while his or her colleague doing the same job through a subcontractor may be classified as a service worker. This diffusion of service work into other sectors suggests that there is as much intra-sector diversity as inter-sector diversity within the service industry.

THE GLOBAL GEOGRAPHIES OF SERVICE WORK

Many countries have experienced a shift in their labour markets due to the rise of both formal and informal jobs in the service sector. McDowell summarizes, 'the service sector now provides employment for about three in every four waged workers in Western Europe, North America and Australasia'

(2009: 30). World Bank data reveal that this growth in the service sector extends to countries in both the global north and the global south. In line with this, a recent report by the Asian development bank documents the shift towards service jobs in 'lower income' countries such as Bangladesh, Nepal, Vietnam and Cambodia. Estrada et al. report that 'lower-income economies are still primarily agricultural, but there is some evidence that services have contributed substantially to economic growth in the past decade' (2013: 3).

Despite the overall growth of the service sector, there are significant differences between service jobs. In many cities, theorists note that most service jobs are low-wage and routinized, akin to factory work, rather than creative and high-skilled (Estrada et al., 2013: 4). In a case study of service employment in India, Nayyar confirms the stratified nature of service jobs by noting that:

the subsectors of services which are characterized by low quality of employment accounted for the largest shares in total services employment ... these include wholesale and retail trade, transport and other social, community and personal services ... In contrast ... communication, financial and business services are characterized by high quality of employment, but accounted for a very small proportion of total services employment. (2012: 4714)

Despite the fact that pay scales within the service sector vary dramatically, feminist theorists have argued that rather than jobs themselves being skilled or unskilled, the social recognition of skill is itself a political process structured by pre-existing assumptions. As DeVault (1991) has shown in her work on 'feeding the family', despite the fact that caring work is unpaid or poorly paid, it requires a complex interplay of physical and mental labour and involves skill, planning, organization, creativity and attention to detail. In a similar manner, Waring (1995) compares unpaid childcare work done by women with the jobs of highly paid workers at a US nuclear missile facility, and illustrates the infinitely greater complexity of the former.

There is no doubt that the growth of the services has been accompanied by its

growing stratification. Highly paid financial analysts, supermarket cashiers, lawyers, drivers, doctors, domestic workers, police officers, and parents are all engaged in service work. As will be explored further in the next section, social hierarchies related to gender, pay, value and control differentiate these jobs. In terms of the worldwide geography of service work, however, there are vast discrepancies between elite workers who comprise small percentages of those employed in cities and countries worldwide and low-wage service workers who make up the bulk of the workforce within the service sector. In many countries in Asia, Latin America and Africa a significant proportion of low-waged service work also occurs in the informal economy (Bryson et al., 2004).

Services have historically also been traded across national borders through worker migration. Domestic workers and nurses, for example, were systematically recruited from countries in Asia (such as the Philippines) and the Caribbean to serve the health needs of US or Canadian populations (Pratt, 2013). Migrations for sex work or the global movement of customers for sex tourism are other examples of widespread trends in the transnationalization of service labour (Spanger, 2013).

At times, rather than the migration of workers, there is a migration of work through outsourcing and offshoring (Palm, 2006: 3). Within global capitalism, organizations are incentivized to seek labour cost reductions, and the outsourcing of work is one key strategy through which such reductions have been achieved. Historically, the exchange of services required the co-location of providers and receivers but accompanying the growth of telephone- and computer-based communication technologies in recent decades has been the proliferation of remote service provision. This prompted the offshoring of service work from capital-rich to labour-rich countries. Bryson (2007) characterizes this as the 'second global shift'. The first global shift in manufacturing work involved the establishment of factories and assembly

plants in countries which had large numbers of low-wage workers with few other employment options. Unlike manufacturing industries, services were 'supplied and consumed locally in a process of face-to-face co-production. This type of "facing-based" economic relationship in which both parties to a transaction are co-located usually defines the traditional service relationship' (2007: 32). The second global shift disrupted this, as service interactions became mediated by communication information technologies. Bryson notes that the geography of the second global shift is qualitatively different from the geographies of the first global shift of manufacturing and assembly jobs. Aside from being driven by cost considerations, service firms also search for locations which provide linguistic and cultural 'nearness' between customers and service providers (2007: 38). Palm documents overlaps between trends towards telephone-based customer service provision and self-service. He notes that 'telecommunications networks are the primary vehicles for outsourcing today, but outsourcing ... is always a story about work, done by new people getting paid less to do it. Call center employees perform this work, but ... so do the customers they serve, working for free' (2006: 3). The outsourcing and offshoring of work is facilitated through the standardization of jobs – a phenomenon that Ritzer and Lair (2008) have referred to as 'McJobs' – which involves the creation of repetitive and routine jobs with limited worker discretion. Outsourced and offshored customer service work, for example, occurs in conjunction with the stringent use of scripts, performance matrixes, and time management technologies.

THE SOCIAL HIERARCHIES IN SERVICE WORK

Theorists have attempted to make sense of the diversity within the service sector by referring to the normative assumptions

underlying the organization of jobs within the sector. Service work is stratified along the lines of gender, race and class. Women, many of whom are of colour and poor, predominate in paid domestic, sex, and childcare work globally. Not all service work is done by women, but feminization continues to structure many poorly paid service jobs. With the growth of precarious employment in the West and transnational subcontracting in developing countries, assumptions regarding masculinity and femininity inherent in jobs have become far from static. Gender is embedded in jobs in the sense that these jobs are structured to require certain ways of working for all employees. As Adkins notes:

[W]orkers may perform, mobilize, and contest masculinity, femininity, and new gender hybrids in a variety of ways in order to innovate and succeed in flexible corporations. Thus men may perform (and indeed be rewarded for performing) traditional acts of femininity ... and women may perform (and also be rewarded for) traditional acts of masculinity. (2001: 680)

Leslie Salzinger characterizes this as 'productive femininity', whereby femininity forms 'a structure of meaning through which workers, potential and actual, are addressed and understood, and around which production itself is designed'. Rather than being automatically connected to female bodies, femininity is reconstituted 'as a set of transferable characteristics, including cheapness, natural docility, dexterity, and tolerance of boredom' (2003: 36).

In all service interactions, neat distinctions between production and social reproduction do not exist. Since part of the service being exchanged is the embodied self, the care and deportment of service workers' bodies is integral to the product being exchanged. The 'nearness' or direct contact between workers and customers who live in varied social and geographical locations also results in processes which are unique to service interactions. In a study of call centre workers living in India and providing customer service to clients in North America, Europe and Australia, I traced the nuanced, multi-faceted and often

invisible work which was involved in worker-customer encounters that crossed national borders (Mirchandani, 2012). I argued that two dominant relations structure Indian customer service workers' jobs. First was the notion that these workers are fundamentally different from Westerners and second was the idea that they are their cultural clones and therefore establish service relationships based on familiarity with ease. As a result, workers' jobs involved 'authenticity work' – or the work of establishing and managing legitimacy in the context of colonial histories and transnational economic relations. Indian customer service agents did authenticity work by simultaneously constructing themselves as foreign workers who do not threaten Western jobs; as legitimate colonial subjects who revere the West; as 'ideal Indians' who form an offshore model workforce providing the cheap immobile labour needed in the West; as flexible workers who are trainable and global; and as workers who are far away yet familiar enough to provide good services to their customers. Labour in transnational customer service work is geographically driven by the needs of global firms seeking cost reductions in labour costs. Given that many customers live in capital-rich countries and labour costs are low in labour-rich countries, a majority of service calls received by agents in India are from the USA, the UK and Australia. While service interactions focus on a bank transaction or ticket purchase, encounters are also forums within which an array of normative hierarchies on gender, nation and race are enacted.

Service work is also, as noted earlier, structured by class. McDowell (2009) distinguishes between financial/business and consumer services; the former are 'producer' services which are related to the money markets and the professions required to support financial capitalism. Consumer services, by contrast, involve interactions between workers and customers. A large segment of those who provide consumer services can be characterized as a 'service proletariat' (Macdonald and Sirianni, 1996), given that they work in low-wage,

routinized jobs in which they have little discretion, creativity or security. Consumer services can also be defined in terms of the embodied nature of the work – doctors, financial advisers and insurance brokers are engaged in ‘high-tech’ service work, while many service occupations involve ‘high-touch’ jobs such as hairdressing, nursing or massage therapy (McDowell, 2009). McDowell summarizes, ‘in embodied interactive service work, the closer the contact between service providers and purchasers, the lower the status of the work, and, usually, the lower the financial reward’ (2009: 49). This divide between high-tech and high-touch jobs is deeply gendered as the latter draws on traditionally feminized skills such as caring, empathy and providing service. The ‘body work’ (Wolkowitz, 2006) performed by a surgeon is different from that performed by a personal support worker; the latter ‘does not usually have the authority of a doctor ... is usually a woman, sometimes a migrant worker, holding an ill-paid job, with little social status, and moreover one that is often stigmatised because of the dirty work it involves’ (Twigg et al., 2011: 180).

Not only are there stark differences between service professionals and service proletariat, these groups are also interrelated. As Sassen notes, ‘both firms and the lifestyles of their professionals generate a demand for low-paid service workers’ (2008: 457). Growing numbers of service professionals with demanding jobs, which require long hours of work, have household, childcare, leisure and health needs which are met by low-wage service workers. As many feminist theorists have documented, there exists a ‘global care chain’ where middle- and upper-class women and men recruit women from poorer countries who in turn have to meet their domestic care needs by relying on poorly paid local women or unpaid relatives. Yeates summarizes the geography of care chains by observing that ‘predominantly female adults from poorer countries serve adults and children in rich (destination) countries’ (2012: 138).

Other theorists note that stratification within the service sector can be conceptualized in

terms of the relationship between work and technology. Zysman et al. (2013) distinguish between irreducible services and automated services. The former require the presence of a human being who is an integral part of the service being provided. Workers such as hairdressers, psychologists and judges may rely on technology for their work but these jobs cannot be completely automated. Other service work, such as ATM banking or online airline booking, is automated so that human involvement is limited to back office tasks, and no direct contact between customers and workers is required. As Zysman et al. note, a considerable amount of service work can be seen as ‘hybrid’ – that is, relying heavily on technology and requiring some worker-customer interactions.

Feminist theorists writing on female-dominated service professions such as teaching, childcare, nursing and waitressing have historically documented the gendered assumptions implicit in jobs which involve doing things for people, and the mechanisms through which this work is feminized and often devalued. As Steinberg and Figart note, service organizations which require the constant display of friendliness hire women to fill these jobs on the assumption that women are better at displays of warmth (1999: 17). Theorists note that service work often involves emotional labour which is gendered in the context of ‘women’s allegedly greater facility with emotions – the feminine capacity to console and comfort, flatter, cajole, persuade and seduce ...’ (Frith and Kitzinger, 1998: 300). Along the same lines, Hall argues that much of the service work done by women is considered an extension of women’s roles in the home. Restaurants, for example, construct and legitimate a gendered image of the server as deferential servant (Hall, 1993: 455).

In this context, there is considerable discussion within the feminist literature on whether opportunities in the service sector globally provide new opportunities for women. In some settings, such as in call centres for example, women have access to better paid jobs than in the manufacturing sector. As Mitter et al.

(2004) caution, however, transnational corporations are driven by profit motives, and decisions made in faraway places may not always benefit employees. Export-oriented and outsourced jobs are often unpredictable, and, unlike manufacturing or assembly firms which require fixed infrastructure such as machinery, service jobs can be shifted from country to country when firm executives perceive cost advantages in such moves. At the same time, some women may be able to challenge their social and economic barriers with access to employment and income.

Ethnographers provide vivid examples of the ways in which service workers are in fact active agents in processes of globalization. Carla Freeman, for example, shows how workers attempt to define their work, and notes that 'informatics workers in Barbados demonstrate through a variety of practices that they are not the passive pawns of multinational capital they have sometimes been depicted to be' (2000: 36). She notes that women's jobs are both a source of pride and pleasure, and simultaneously a source of stress and dissatisfaction. She challenges assumptions that women in the third world are passive pawns of multinational capital, and instead focuses on the agency women enact through their work and their lives. She shows how service workers disrupt traditional notions of class and are active agents in meaning-making on globalization. She notes, 'despite the industry's highly regimented and disciplined labour process, closely resembling factory assembly work, informatics workers adopt a language and set of behaviours for describing and enacting themselves as "professional" nonfactory workers in ways that effectively demarcate them from traditional industrial labourers' (2000: 2).

Freeman also demonstrates that global capitalism is not monolithic; constructions of the 'ideal third world worker' are both shifting and context specific. While other studies have revealed, for example, that young, childless and unmarried women constitute ideal third-world women workers, in Barbados family responsibilities are often believed to make women more committed to their jobs.

Contrary to the assumption that multinationals seek a predefined flexible female labour force in the third world, Freeman argues that ideal pools of flexible labour are actively and continuously created.

The organizational 'creation' of ideal service workers has been termed 'aesthetic work'. As Witz et al. (2003) argue, workers do not deliver service but they are part of the service experience. The ways that service workers are required to look, act and sound on the job reflect the organization's identity. Conversely, workers deemed not to possess the bodily attributes which match an organization's image are excluded from jobs, or streamed into lower-status work. Aesthetic preferences in the labour force can therefore be used to exercise discrimination, as was the case with Filipino migrant nurses to the UK who, on the basis of their race, were deemed to be inappropriately embodied for, and therefore systematically excluded from, training which would allow them to become nurse managers (Batnitzky and McDowell, 2011; Dyer et al., 2010). In this sense, service work is a forum through which normative ethnic preferences are enacted by clients, customers and employers. Those employing domestic workers, for example, often 'express a preference for care workers from certain countries whom they believe possess certain behavioural, cultural, linguistic or religious traits thought to bear on the quality of the service provided' (Yeates, 2012: 143). While the exercise of such preferences is a form of racism in so far as it is based on racial stereotypes, it occupies a legislative grey zone, and workers have little protection or recourse when they face exclusion based on the fact that they are deemed not to possess the correct aesthetic and embodied traits for particular service jobs.

LEGISLATIVE AND CONTRACTUAL ARRANGEMENTS IN SERVICE WORK

Service workers have been deeply impacted by neoliberalism, although not uniformly so. Senior government officials and policy

makers are part of the service economy, as are casual workers who may provide services for cash or barter. These vast disparities within the service workforce have been sustained in large part by the shifting nature of the employment relationship and the growth of contractual labour and other forms of labour informalization. While 'core' public sector employees, and sometimes those employed by large organizations, are often protected by strong labour laws and unions, a growing number of service workers, both low- and high-wage, are employed informally. Agarwala (2013) notes that informal workers include those who are self-employed, those employed in informal enterprises, and contractually employed workers who work in formal organizations through subcontractors. Workers not only receive limited or no protection under state labour laws, they also have little job security and no recourse if they are fired without cause or paid less than the minimum wage.

Neoliberal government policies enacted in many countries around the world foster informality in an effort to attract foreign capital. Industrial cleaning work, for example, is frequently contracted out by large multinational firms to subcontractors. Aguiar and Herod (2006) report that subcontracting of cleaning work in Chile has led to the intensification of work for workers, with nine-hour shifts, no more than minimum wage, no unions and short-term contracts. Soni-Sinha and Yates studied janitors in Toronto and similarly note that cleaning in many global cities is done by immigrant workers. They show that 'cleaning work is poorly paid, has low social value and is invisible work, often done in the dead of night when clients are gone. Under the cloak of invisibility, employers subject these workers to harsh, often abusive, treatment as though somehow doing dirty work justifies this behavior' (2013: 738). Pai provides an example of such practices amongst office cleaning companies in UK. She argues that rather than being directly employed, cleaners are hired through contractors who engage in fierce competition to maintain service

contracts. As a result, 'these cleaning contractors and agencies share the common practice of low pay and poor working terms, that is, the absence of written particulars of employment, the absence of sick pay and holiday pay, non-compliance with minimum working hours, unfair dismissal, etc.' (2004: 164). A recent study conducted by the UK's Equality and Human Rights Commission (2014) shows that these conditions have persisted for cleaners over the past decade. Workers face bullying, discrimination, unpaid wages, work intensification and disrespect, with many, especially migrant workers, worried about reprisals.

In India, Srivastava notes that almost the entire growth of the service sector between 1999 and 2004 has been in informal employment. He argues that 'while the formal sector of the economy, particularly the services sector has grown rapidly, employment relations have become more informal and flexible, and informality and flexibility are experienced in relation to all forms of employment' (2012: 65). The widespread prevalence of informality in service work makes the protection of workers both paramount and challenging.

Service jobs have therefore been deeply impacted by the 'vagabond' nature of global capitalism; both capital and workers move often deeply impacting communities and families. In her ethnography of the effects of global restructuring in a village called Howa in Sudan, Katz explains, 'from the vantage point of capital, the world may be shrinking, but, on the marooned grounds of places such as Howa, it appeared to be getting bigger every day' (2001: 1224). With the out-migration of men from Howa, there was a much higher reliance on the labour of children, who had to travel long hours for wood gathering, making school attendance difficult. As a result, children did not have the opportunity to develop the skills necessary to participate in the new global economy from which they were further disconnected. Globalization in this sense has resulted in both spatial disconnections and connections. The vagabond nature of capitalism has been exacerbated by

the global shift towards financial capitalism. As Batt and Applebaum note, ‘financialization refers to a shift from managerial capitalism, in which the returns on investments derive from the value created by productive enterprises, to a new form of financial capitalism, where companies are viewed as assets to be bought and sold and as vehicles for maximizing profits through financial strategies’ (2013: 1). Financial capitalists, rather than organizational actors play a large role in determining company success, location and policies.

Service work is also unique in terms of the temporal dimensions of jobs. Many consumer services are, for example, synchronous – that is, they are produced and consumed in the same instant. Doctors, massage therapists, hairdressers and sex workers do work which involves interactions with customers. Telephonic call centre workers may be spatially remote from their customers, but still provide a service which is temporally synchronous. For example, Indian call centres providing service to Western customers are required to operate primarily during Western daytime hours. Although workers may at times have partial night shifts, many are assigned shifts which occur fully during the night in rotation. Based on interviews with workers in Noida and Gurgaon, Poster (2007: 105) draws a parallel between call centre agents and other migrant workers who are ‘pulled away from the family to serve global economies’.

Night work also poses particular challenges for women workers. Patel (2010) traces the ‘mobility-morality’ divide which impacts female call centre workers in India. Women gain economic and social status through their employment in professional transnational firms. At the same time, their families often object to the night work which call centres require because of assumptions of danger and promiscuity associated with working at night. Patel documents the resilience of patriarchal norms through which women’s mobility is controlled and which continue to structure employment contracts.

For call centre workers, for example, under the guise of ensuring worker safety, workers’ movements in and out of the workplace are monitored by security guards. Families often allow women to work at night only because of organizational provision of van services which attempt to ensure safe passage from homes to workplaces. While these safety provisions are presented as ‘perks’ or job benefits, they also have the effect of curtailing worker mobility.

Contractual arrangements in many routine service jobs often enact strong organizational controls and managerial power. At the same time, there have been wide-ranging efforts to enhance worker advocacy and resistance. Cobble and Merrill (2008) note that almost all of the increase in union membership in the US has been in service occupations. Nurses, home care workers and childcare providers are amongst the groups of service workers who have voted to unionize. Brophy (2009, 2010) documents strikes and work stoppages carried out by call centre workers around the world. In 2008, in Mexico, 1,700 telecommunications workers went on strike to achieve a 4.4 per cent wage increase. In 2009, in South Africa, call centre workers achieved a 7.5 per cent wage increase. In Ireland call centre workers threatened to strike and managed to reduce the frequent use of punishments and unjustified dismissals. Similarly, call centre workers employed by Aliant in Canada undertook a four-month strike in order to achieve moderate pay increases.

Some unions, successful in organizing service workers, have attempted to move away from traditional factory paradigms on which their organizations were originally built. Instead, they recognize that advocacy for service workers needs to not only acknowledge the diversity of workplaces within which these women and men work, but also be based on a recognition of the relationships between workers, customers and managers which form the service triad (Cox, 2010). In Canada, the Service Employees International Union (SEIU) launched a Justice for Janitor’s programme, where subcontractors in each

city were brought together to establish a common basic wage rate for workers. This strategy undermined corporate attempts to exert downward pressure on labour costs through competition between subcontractors (Watson, 2014).

Forms of advocacy for service workers extend beyond traditional labour unions. Agarwala (2013), for example, shows how security guards in India are represented by a 'guard board' which serves to establish minimum industry standards for working conditions and wages. Such initiatives are based on the recognition that service workers are unique in terms of the diversity of employment relationships they hold whereby some are independent contractors, not all are part of the formal economy, and many work in multiple or shifting workplaces and encounter schedule instability. In providing service, workers often develop relationships with managers, customers and co-workers. Advocacy for workers requires what Cox (2010) has termed 'intimate unions' – those which recognize the importance of the embodied and intimate care interactions that many service workers do and forefront issues of sexual harassment or violence which workers often face, and challenge the monetary devaluation which accompanies the definition of emotional and care labour as unskilled.

These analyses suggest that the vast diversity within the service workforce requires multiple forums for labour advocacy. Call centre and software workers in India, for example, are represented by an association called 'Unites Professionals' (Unites Pro) (<http://unitespro.org/>), which is associated with a global union but is itself a cross-employer, membership-based association. One of the main challenges of organizing call centre and software workers is that although they may face unfair labour practices, they conceptualize themselves as professional workers rather than as part of the working class which is traditionally associated with trade unions (James and Vira, 2010). To be successful, Unites Pro decided to create partnerships with employers, offer

career development programmes to support members and downplay collective bargaining attempts. Such an approach suggests that service unions may need to adopt 'neo-corporatist agendas' which aim to identify overlapping rather than contradictory benefits for workers, firms and governments in order to achieve labour protections (Noronha and D'Cruz, 2009).

CASE STUDY OF SERVICE WORKERS: NEW COLONIALISM OR CHALLENGING INEQUITY?

Interviews with service workers provide vivid illustrations of the ways in which normative assumptions structure employees' jobs and identities. My ethnography of diverse service workers employed in transnational corporations in India shows how service work is geographically and contractually organized, as well as how hierarchies of class, gender and national privilege are enacted in service encounters. I focus here on an illustrative case – one large service organization, which did not exist 40 years ago and now employs more than 150,000 people worldwide. As part of my interviews with call centre workers and auxiliary service workers, I interviewed a diverse range of service workers in employment at this organization. I consider the similarities and differences in their work experiences and identities below.

Cueservice¹ is one of India's most successful companies and was first established in the early 1980s by a handful of people who foresaw the potential for India to become a hub for software and customer service outsourcing. It now has 150,000 employees and generates billions of dollars in revenue. Cueservice is known for the imposing and modern architecture of its office buildings, which are housed in sprawling free trade zones in many cities in India. The company epitomizes the image of modernity promoted by the neoliberal Indian state since the early 1990s. Cueservice

workers are not all located in India – indeed, the company has more than thirty offices in cities around the world. These global offices focus on marketing company services and obtaining contracts for IT, consulting and customer service projects which are then executed in India at a fraction of the labour cost. The company deals with a wide variety of industries and has demonstrated continuous growth over its thirty-plus year history. This is despite the fact that Cueservice faces severe competition from a number of Indian firms who target the same business segment. It has received numerous contracts and prides itself on its robust training programme for workers.

During my interviews with customer service workers, housekeepers, drivers and security guards employed with transnational firms in India (Mirchandani, 2012; Mirchandani et al., n.d.), I met several service workers employed with Cueservice. The life histories shared below demonstrate the ways in which service work can, on one level, be extremely exploitative and devalued, while at the same time it provides a setting which allows for the emergence of worker identities and agencies. Through their service labour, workers gain a sense of themselves in the world at large.

Sangeeta, a dynamic woman in her mid-twenties completed her degree in communications and started working at Cueservice two years before I met her. She works for a banking process and has advanced from being a customer service representative to being a team leader. Taking back-to-back calls from customers is stressful, Sangeeta explains, and with few breaks, night work and constant monitoring, turnover amongst agents is high. Given the time differences between India and the US, agents are required to work entirely or partially during the night. For herself, she notes:

it can be very, very boring to work like that but the point is if you can stick it out there ... if you can learn ... not just stick it out, learn along with that and I have learned this over the years ... that is if you can smile when you are bored ... if you can smile even when you are irritated ... then you go forward.

Having gone forward herself, though, Sangeeta is not sure she will remain in her job. She says she spends a lot of her time making sure her team is productive, as team performance is comparatively assessed. She finds it stressful to manage the multiple requests for sick leave she receives from team members each day. Although her job is to monitor call centre agents, she is sympathetic to the stressful nature of their work and notes,

most of them haven't done this job before. It's the first time they are doing it. From the very beginning we have to tell them – no you can't make that mistake. You have to get it right in the first time in first call. You have to make so many sales when you are taking calls.

Sangeeta also trains workers in language and accent. Customer service agents are required to speak in 'neutral' accents. She herself is a convent-educated urbanite and expresses frustration at the fact that she is expected to 'neutralize' Indian accents through very short training sessions. She says:

when they speak you can feel that drawl they have ... They will miss out the ss they will miss out the l. They will miss out the n s kind of things. It's very difficult trying to teach them how to speak English. We can teach them if they don't know the product ... we can teach them what to do with the account. If they don't know how to speak English it's very difficult to make them learn how to speak English ... And people there [in the US] get very irritated.

Sangeeta says women customer service workers face special challenges because of the required night-time shifts which male family members often do not approve of. She describes a recent experience when the father of a female employee came to the office to request a female rather than male supervisor for his daughter, and when he was informed this was not possible, he made numerous calls to the office during the day to check on his daughter. Although about half of all customer service agents are female, there are few female managers. Sangeeta notes that this is not because women are less capable of

the work but rather because the long hours and night-time shifts are not considered feasible for women in the long term. Sangeeta's own parents are working in New York, and as a single woman she faces no such restrictions. Overall, Sangeeta is ambivalent about whether her experience in the sector will allow her to shift jobs but she also wonders if she should stay with Cueservice until her assessment, when she hopes she will be promoted to managerial work.

Karthik, Veeresh and Saini are young men who also work at Cueservice. They each earn between a quarter and one third as much as Sangeeta and work as service workers providing housekeeping, transportation and security services. They are responsible for maintaining the luxurious organizational settings which Cueservice prides itself on, which include pristine marbled floors, spotless washrooms, heavily guarded entrances, and organized transportation facilities. Like Sangeeta, all work long and rotating shifts because their company is part of the global economy and their organizations operate 24 hours a day. Unlike Sangeeta, however, all three are employed through contractors and hold no direct employment relationship to Cueservice.

Karthik completed his 9th grade education and migrated from his village in another state one and a half years ago. His family owns land and they meet their food needs through farming. He left his wife and two young children in the village with his mother. Like his father, who works as a security guard at Cueservice, Karthik migrated for work because of the lack of local employment opportunities and the need to support his family as well as contribute towards the expenses of his sisters' weddings. He says that his father arranged his job, although did not inform him that he was to do housekeeping work. When he arrived at Cueservice, he was shocked to discover that his job involved cleaning, which is traditionally considered low caste, low class and feminized work. He found the work stressful and demeaning and looked for another job but was unable to earn enough to support

his family and so returned to Cueservice. He describes the nature of his work:

We have to do floor washing; in floor cleaning knowledge about various liquids as well as which liquid to be used and its purpose, quantity of water required for mixing, proportion of liquid and water, etc. these things are essential. In the cleaning of washrooms information related to paper rolls is essential like how to put paper rolls, how to change is required.

Cleaning logs are maintained throughout the company and all housekeepers are required to log their work as they complete it. Karthik says his work and logs are monitored continuously by supervisors.

Although Karthik works at Cueservice, he is in fact employed by a contractor. He has no written contract and can be redeployed to another location if needed. He is required to work in a rotating shift, day and night. He receives overtime pay if he does not take holidays so he tries to maximize his work time, often taking very few days off every month. He is fined if he does not maintain the appropriate appearance at work. He says, 'daily shaving is necessary, hair should be short and properly cut, uniform and shoes should be clean'. He plans to bring his wife and two children to the city and to educate his children so that their prospects are better.

Veeresh, too, works at Cueservice through a subcontractor. He has completed school and a technical certificate but was only able to obtain a low-paying factory job. He therefore migrated from his village to the city and sought work as a security guard together with his brother. His father manages their family farm. Veeresh reflects, 'Farming requires lot of hard work and the percentage of profit is less. One cannot take out time for study ... People working in [Cueservice] are much more qualified than me. I learn many things from them'. Realizing the importance of education, he is currently studying for his bachelor's degree and is competing his second year. In the future, he hopes to become a police officer and says:

Security guard's job is limited to the company only whereas police job is government job. There is no

progress in security guard's job and on the contrary in a government job there are lot of facilities.

Veeresh works 12-hour shifts at Cueservice and, like Karthik, says that the company is very strict about guards' bodily appearance and demeanour. He says:

we should not fight with anyone. Our behaviour should be proper. If we see any costly item worth lakhs of rupees we should deposit it [with lost and found]. Our clothes should be clean, shoes should be polished ... Uniform should be properly washed and pressed. Cap is compulsory and shoes should be polished.

Even though his job involves monitoring employees and visitors, he is expected to be deferential in his demeanour. Karthik's job involves monitoring closed-circuit television screens and checking-in visitors. He hopes to improve his job prospects through his education and sleeps just 4–5 hours a night so that he can accommodate his studies.

Saini is much more disheartened about his future prospects than Veeresh. He also has a grade 12 education and works as a driver for Cueservice through a contractor. Unlike both Veeresh and Karthik, he does not receive any pension contributions or government benefits because his contractor is a small entrepreneur. When asked about how he feels about working at Cueservice, he says that the company 'does not issue ID cards to us. We don't have any contact with the company'. Unlike housekeepers or security guards, drivers do not enter the corporate buildings and their jobs involve transporting company employees from their homes to corporate offices. He is told not to interact with his passengers and to simply follow the driving route he is given by his supervisor. Drivers follow a strict schedule and face fines if they do not ensure that employees arrive on time. Saini works a 12-hour shift during the night which he says he finds difficult: 'I feel tired, I don't get proper sleep and also I can't give time to my family'. Saini complains that he has few other employment options but given the cost of living finds that he does not earn enough to live. He says. 'It is hard to manage in the

salary ... as there is no other job to do I am continuing this work'.

The narratives of these workers reveal that neat dichotomies between fulfilling and oppressive work do not often easily capture the experiences of service workers. Relatively well-paid jobs of call centre workers can also involve dealing with a constant stream of abusive callers and facing health dangers associated with changing night-time shifts. Those engaged in low-wage and routinized work may be frustrated by their poor wages, but also appreciate the opportunity to work in environments which value creative work and entrepreneurship. Because all service workers are required to do emotional and aesthetic work as part of their jobs, work is integrally tied to worker identities and workers attempt constantly to enhance, or make plans to enhance, their lives. Given the embodied nature of service work, the connections between the material and symbolic value of jobs cannot be ignored.

FUTURE RESEARCH

A diverse range of tasks and activities comprise service work. Service workers, however, are also consumers of services and documenting connections between the groups of workers who are engaged in service provision would provide important insights. Exactly such a project is at the centre of work on the global care chain, and through detailed ethnographies, researchers writing in this area have produced fascinating and important analyses. These studies have shown that highly paid female executives have made significant headway into managerial occupations, but continue to confront assumptions about the gendered divisions of domestic labour. Despite the rhetorical support for women and girls to enter professional, highly paid jobs, there has been little systemic state or organizational effort to challenge women's assumed responsibility for social reproduction. In this context, women hire other women

to care for their children and households and, as Parreñas cogently argues, ‘the globalization of service work generates unequal relationships between women across nation-states’ (2008: 137).

As the case study in the section above reveals, diverse groups of service workers are interdependent. Future research on the connections between these workers and the various forms of labour they are engaged in would offer valuable insights on the systemic practices which structure the organization of service work globally. In call centres in India, for example, employees expect housekeepers and guards to follow norms of time discipline and bodily management, but do not advocate for their direct employment by their organizations. Hierarchies between service workers are enacted on a daily basis. At the same time, there is a potential for the development of relationships in service encounters and there may be common strategies for advocacy.

Labour advocacy in the service sector depends on relationships between workers, employers and customers. In her ethnography of the nail salon industry in New York, Kang (2010) poses the question of whether settings which require particular kinds of body labour allow for solidarities amongst workers, business owners and customers to emerge. She notes that successful collective action within the service sector depends on the recognition of work as involving a ‘complex social exchange’ whereby the ‘exchange of body labour often blurs, conceals and justifies inequalities in the workplace and poses barriers to organizing’ (2010: 240). Kang compares nail salon workers engaged in routinized body labour at discount salons, pampering body labour at high-end salons, and expressive body labour at salons which cater to a racially diverse clientele. Her analysis reveals that when work interaction ‘focuses less on pampering and more on creating aesthetic nail designs while exhibiting community respect and reciprocity in the process’, there is greater potential for solidarities and better working conditions to emerge (2010: 167).

CONCLUSIONS

There has been a growing recognition that the ways in which service work is organized in terms of its geographical, normative and contractual diversity give rise to the need to develop new ways of organizing workers. Atzeni’s ethnographic research with bike couriers in Buenos Aires shows, for example, that these informally employed workers engage in a variety of collective activities in order to improve their working conditions; these activities do not occur in the context of a union or association. Bike couriers (*motoqueros*), for example, were employed by multiple small vendors in a highly competitive industry. Atzeni (2013) notes, however, that for couriers:

working in the street on top of a motorbike, while individualizing their work experience, allowed *motoqueros* to be extremely mobile, always interconnected via mobiles and radio and visible to each other. This led [them] initially to organize in small groups, formed spontaneously in the street during rest and lunch hours and based on networks of personal relations. This informal organizing based on shared common complaints was then reinforced every day in the streets. Thus, even in the absence of a physically delimited workplace, that no doubt is a condition for organizing workers collectively, *motoqueros* have been able to organiz[e]. (2013: 13)

In contrast, workers like Saini, Veeresh and Karthik, do not have particularly strong occupational identities as they may shift from one service occupation to another. Hired by contractors, it is not unusual for them to shift from workplace to workplace. Some of their work challenges overlap with those of higher paid service workers such as Sangeeta, but caste and class dynamics allow for limited solidarity across various service groups within transnational corporations. At the same time, they are allied in their participation in India’s economies of progress. As workers who are neither fully included, nor fully excluded from the elite spaces of transnational corporations, these women and men draw attention to the urgent demand for new models for organizing diversely located service workers to enable

advocacy for better working conditions, pay and legislative protection.

Indeed, the most significant factor organizing service work globally today is the vast social and economic differences amongst those providing service. Workers in the industry include a large number of the top 1 per cent of worldwide income earners, who have been the centrepiece of recent global protests. Other service workers have jobs which are deeply informalized and, despite engaging in long hours of work-related activities, they remain below the subsistence line. In the case of India, despite economic growth since the early 1990s and the success of companies such as Cueservice, income inequality remains high and the number of people who are living in poverty has hardly declined in the past three decades (Jhanvala and Standing, 2010). Dreze and Sen (2013), for example, document that inequality has grown alongside India's past two decades of high growth. Vast economic discrepancies are not unique to the service sector. However, given that elite and precarious service workers are often in service relationships which involve interaction and a sharing of self as part of the work, the need to challenge economic discrepancies shifts from remaining in the shadow to occupying the limelight.

NOTE

- 1 In order to protect the identities of the individuals interviewed, pseudonyms have been used for the company and the respondents. Information on the company is based on newspaper reports and journal articles. This research was supported by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (Grants 410-2001-1901 and 410-2002-0554).

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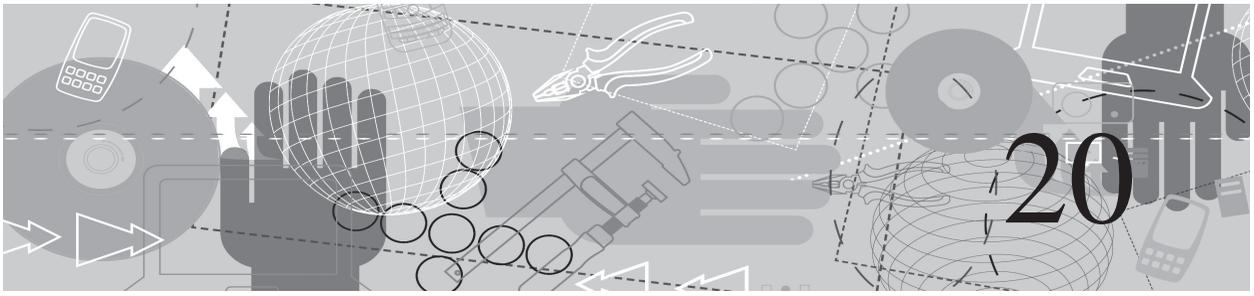
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Employment Uncertainty and Risk

Vicki Smith

As many chapters in this volume attest, a series of national and international trends have created considerable challenges for social scientists who want to study work and employment today. Work structures have become decentered and destabilized, external labor markets have expanded, and employment relationships have become more precarious and unstable (Beck 2000; Cappelli 2008; Gottfried 2013; Kalleberg 2011; Smith 2010; Weil 2014). Throughout the world, paid work activities are carried out, not just in centralized factories and offices, but in a variety of decentralized settings (private households, fields, third spaces such as coffee shops and ‘co-working’ spaces, hastily erected then dismantled sweatshops, public spaces where vendors sell food and goods, and planes, trains, and automobiles [Dunn 2014; Felstead, Jewson and Walters 2005]). Work informalization and casualization is a salient part of twenty-first century neoliberalism (Standing 2014), fueled, no doubt, by large numbers of the long-term

unemployed¹ and discouraged² workers. Both groups, we would expect, may need to resort to informal economic activities to support themselves.³ Indisputably, the experience of insecurity and precarity is worldwide (Allison 2014; Standing 1999; Tweedie 2013).

As the national and global economy go – embodied in the complicated and sometimes contradictory transformations noted above – so has gone sociological research on work. Sociologists have followed and kept abreast of these trends and transformations, providing a rich and penetrating view of structural, industrial, and economic restructuring. In particular, an emergent field focuses on experiences and perceptions of uncertainty and risk in work and employment. The field examines these trends from a variety of viewpoints, few of which focus on workplaces alone.

The power and richness of this field stems from the fact that sociologists have studied these trends from very close range, digging beneath surface appearances and critically

deconstructing people's lived experiences. They have accessed contemporary work and employment at ground zero – interviewing people who share occupational and employment status, and participating in employment organizations, social settings (like networking events) where unpaid work is performed, and communities. Thus sociologists have been well positioned to discern the meaning of uncertainty and risk in distinct populations of workers, cultures of employment, the difficulties of finding and keeping jobs, strategies for interpreting and navigating labor markets, and changes in people's aspirations and personal mobility projects. They have served as first-hand witnesses to occupational and industrial restructuring and succeeded in explaining why many people go along with structural and institutional changes that seem to weaken their economic and professional interests. In this, sociologists of risk and insecurity in employment have advanced Weber's call for *verstehen*, or understanding action from the actors' point of view.

In this chapter, I review findings from projects that constitute the sociology of employment risk and uncertainty, organizing the review around a handful of themes: dimensions of uncertainty in work and employment, the way social structural location shapes how people can manage employment risk and determines who is likely to appreciate uncertainty, the attribution of responsibility for economic and occupational change, and where people learn new rules and norms about employment. After reviewing the contributions of extant literature, I discuss what's missing from it. The rise of casualization and irregularity raise a host of problems for social scientists, including how to measure occupations, workforces, and labor markets, how to define populations of workers – if not by work itself – and how to access people and their work communities. Because of invisible, off-the-books work in the informal economy; significant misclassification schemes in the formal economy; and blurred boundaries between work and home, paid and unpaid

work hours, it is important to acknowledge the less measurable, hard-to-reach, and more fluid nature of labor, work and employment. I focus primarily on studies of the US context and will discuss in the conclusion parallels with other countries and the need for cross-national research.

THE CONTEXT: DIMENSIONS OF UNCERTAINTY

The signs of precariousness, turbulence, and unequal opportunity in the US economy are multiple. Data about whether job tenure – an important indicator of job security – has declined is inconclusive (Neumark 2000; Newman 2008). Yet national surveys report that people in the US perceive employment to be insecure (Gallup Economy 2013; see also Fullerton and Wallace 2007; Jacobs and Newman 2008; Kalleberg 2011). More people work on a contingent, temporary, freelance, and contract basis, comprising a considerable nonstandard, irregularly employed workforce (Kalleberg 2011). Many more must personally absorb the risks of employment (they experience more time on the job market looking for work; they pay for their own training, health care, and retirement costs [Hacker 2006; Silva 2013; Smith 2010]). Long-term unemployment rates are unprecedented (with one-third of the unemployed being measured as long-term) (Schierholz 2014).

Many unemployed job seekers (including managers and professionals) expect that they will experience a decline in earnings if and when they manage to find another job (Holzer, Lane, Rosenblum, and Andersson 2011; Sharone 2014) and white-collar and professional workers experience unemployment rates that would have been unimaginable in the 1980s and 90s (Lane 2011; Sharone 2014). Emergent evidence about the truly marginalized indicates the proliferation of employment relationships that leave people trapped in low-wage (Osterman and

Shulman 2011), often transient and unregulated jobs, for example, day laborers (Purser 2006, 2009) or itinerant seasonal warehouse staff (Kasperkevic 2014; Woo 2011), as well as oil (Klimasinska 2013; Yasalavich 2014), sweatshop (Gordon 2007), and seafood industry workers (Grass 2011). Many of these seasonal workers move about the country, settling in encampments, opportunistically taking jobs when available.

Who benefits and who loses as a result of these trends and arrangements? How do people perceive employment irregularity and precariousness? To better understand these intertwined and unsettling issues, sociologists have turned their attention to people's perceptions of, reactions to, and strategies for gaining control over the turbulence and unpredictability of jobs and careers. Specifically, this field focuses on subjective experiences of risk, employment, and unemployment. Research that coheres around these issues enables us to explain how people rationalize and redefine risk, minimize, appropriate, and control it, adjust their emotional and cognitive frameworks, and resist and embrace it. The sociology of employment risk and insecurity yields data about how people come to understand labor market dynamics and position themselves to look for jobs or other sources of income. It also explains why we observe individualized rather than collective responses to shifting economic currents. Finally, it consistently shows the power of an ethos of individualism, and the ways in which Americans tend to internalize blame for job loss and lack of mobility rather than attribute it to structural causes.

SOCIAL STRUCTURAL LOCATION AND THE MANAGEMENT OF WORK, EMPLOYMENT, AND RISK

Structural variables, such as education, occupation, and industrial history, shape distinct orientations and enable different resources

with which people can manage employment instability and risk. For example, focusing on the upper tiers of the labor market, studies of privileged workers who deliver knowledge and information-based services – high-technology and internet-based jobs (Barley and Kunda 2004; Bergvall-Kåreborn and Howcroft 2013; Cooper 2014; Lane 2011; Neff 2012; Osnowitz 2010); banking and Wall Street workers (Ho 2009); editors (Osnowitz 2010) – show that well-compensated, educated, skilled workers have richer and deeper toolkits for minimizing the financial, temporal, and reputational costs of employment fluctuations. They have greater control over managing the terms of their labor market participation and ability to engage in ‘well-planned autonomy’ (Lane 2011: 45). They are more likely to choose to frequently change jobs in the pursuit of new and better opportunities. They are able to buffer themselves with savings during extended periods of unemployment and terminate contracts that have become problematic. Typically, they have the cultural and social capital that enables them to gain information quickly, including referrals for new jobs. They have the financial resources to engage in ongoing employability activities (such as paying for technical training to acquire new skill sets or return to higher education for additional degrees and credentials). On the whole, they are more likely to embrace risk and equate it with freedom from constraint.

Workers in industries which have dramatically downsized or are in decline, or who have minimal levels of education, often have to reconfigure and re-craft themselves without the benefit of financial reserves to tide them over, transferable skills, or the hope and optimism that one might feel if part of a growing and profitable industry. People undergo shifts of identity and character: they must reconcile their histories as industrial and production workers with their prospective, often compromised, futures as members of the service class or the unemployed (auto workers [Chen 2015; Dudley 1994;

Milkman 1997], Gulf Coast shrimp fishers [Harrison 2012], logging industry workers [Sherman 2009], and other working-class adults [Silva 2013]). Their irregular employment is quite unlike the irregular employment of privileged workers, whose job-changing is often a result of their own volition and demand for their skills and services, not the result of industrial restructuring and job displacement.⁴

Instead of surfing the waves of employment and industrial restructuring, less advantaged workers are pulled down by the churn and the undertow. Their educational backgrounds are more limited, their bank accounts smaller, their identification with single-company or -industry communities can stretch back generations (making job loss and plant closings a disruption of incomparable proportions), and their networks are limited to other similarly disadvantaged individuals. Compounding this may be the challenge to traditional gender relations and identities, as jobs previously available to men and definitive of their identity disappear and opportunities for women in the service sector expand (Chen 2015; Harrison 2012; Sherman 2009). In such cases, men must struggle to redefine their work identities as well as their relationships to their partners, children, and extended family.⁵

Combined, displaced and unemployed working-class and production workers' hidden injuries of risk run deep (Silva 2013). For example, Silva argues that working-class young adults have been enmeshed in a culture of fear. Trapped in the web of limited opportunity, they wouldn't leave low-paid jobs for which they were overqualified because they feared not being able to find a replacement job (2013: 135). Yet declining opportunities can give rise to unexpected responses. Harrison (2012) and Milkman (1997) found that while many (mostly male) workers exited industries that were reconfigured by globalization (shrimp fishing and automotive work, respectively), others in their studies adapted to industrial restructuring, staying in their fields, albeit under dramatically transformed circumstances.

UNDER WHAT SOCIAL STRUCTURAL CONDITIONS ARE EMPLOYMENT RISK AND UNCERTAINTY PERCEIVED AS AN OPPORTUNITY BY SOME?

In-depth interview studies reveal the complex processes in which American workers engage to interpret, calculate, and strategize around risk and uncertainty in employment. People variously appropriate particular elements of neoliberal entrepreneurial ideology, re-craft themselves, rethink mobility projects and careers, make material, emotional, and ideological adjustments in their families, and strive to act as empowered agents in the midst of uncertainty (Cooper 2014; Harrison 2012; Pugh 2015).

For sociologists of work, a core puzzle has been why some individuals and groups are positive about employment risk and turbulence, even seeming to favor it to the point of endorsing popular 'free agent' and 'entrepreneurial' ideologies. Many sociologists decry the free-agent rhetoric that is so prevalent in business magazines and mass market books for job seekers, viewing it as evidence of a not-so-subtle attempt to persuade people to think of exploitation as freedom, constraint as choice. One of the intriguing findings in the research on employment risk is that, indeed, some groups prefer continual job changing and are willing to live with ambiguity about their employment futures. Are they irrational, incapable of understanding how they are being used by employers? Do they fail to recognize that corporations will callously dump free agents at a moment's notice?

Research that analyzes these intricate experiential calculations shows that people's willingness to embrace risk and unpredictability – to view uncertainty and constraint as opportunity – is conditioned by institutional context and material practices. The literature identifies at least three: layoff practices, compensation practices, and the organization of jobs (specifically, employment by temporary project rather than by ongoing job). For example, companies' layoff strategies for

their professional and managerial employees can veil ongoing structural instability in the industry and make such instability seem normal, just business as usual. Ho (2009) found that Wall Street banking firms continually and quietly engaged in modest layoffs. In so doing, firms created an employment culture that repeatedly reminded their employees that their jobs were short term and that change was constant. This steadily enforced structural and cultural practice, according to Ho, created a habitus of *liquid lives* for employees: shifting to an orientation toward the short-term and continual fluctuation which served to get current employees to regularly update their résumés, stay apprised of alternate job opportunities, and move on (2009: 224). Here, employment practices normalize the experience of risk, leading job-holders to take employment turbulence and a short-term outlook on employment for granted and to prefer impermanent employment. In this culture long-term employment is a liability, a source of stigma.

A willingness to take risks in employment choices can be psychically and financially nurtured by compensation practices which likewise reward a short-term outlook toward employment. Some high-end employees have spectacular earning power that motivates them to take risks that may yield similarly high payoffs in the future (Neff 2012). Neff's study of Manhattan's Silicon Alley found that new media workers saw their decisions about where and how much to work as a series of investments which could result in the market success of their firms and their potential enrichment through stock offerings. The workers she studied adapted their outlooks and behaviors in a number of ways (resembling the liquid mentalities identified by Ho): they risked their reputations by taking jobs with little-known start-up companies, hopped from job to job, deferred compensation, worked in unpaid internships, or worked insanely long hours. By investing what Neff calls 'venture labor', media workers fueled the profits and growth of the industry, profits which then cycled back to workers'

bank accounts, ideologically reinforcing the belief that their choices were justified and appropriate.

Experiencing turbulence and unpredictability from such an advantaged location makes it possible to emphasize positive discourses about the advantages of risk and opportunity, praising and seemingly embracing it: to rationalize away fears and concerns about periods of unemployment; to view oneself as being in control of one's destiny; and to maintain individualistic perspectives on personal successes. In other words, these workers profit from insecurity; they are better able 'to convert uncertainty into opportunities for wealth and advancement' (Neff 2012: 37). They don't need to change themselves because it is a seller's market and what they sell is highly marketable.

In some project-based, 'sunrise' occupations (creative industry jobs such as social media, entertainment, modeling, programming [Bergvall-Kåreborn and Howcroft 2013]), workers prefer and seek out short-term job tenure and 'role disjointedness' (Damarin 2006). By moving from project to project, workers gain the opportunity to associate with new, 'cool' jobs in 'hot' companies and with leading-edge technologies (Bergvall-Kåreborn and Howcroft 2013; Neff, Wissinger, and Zukin 2005); learn new skill sets; join new networks; and generally participate in professional communities that are not reducible to one job or one employer (Damarin 2006; King 2014; Neff 2012). Competition for these jobs is stiff and short-term job tenure is normative; creative workers of many different types devise strategies to ensure their employability and maintain their careers across the long-term (Christopherson 2002; Lingo and Tepper 2013; Neff, Wissinger, and Zukin 2005; O'Mahoney and Bechky 2006). All these activities increase people's marketability and earning power.

Project-based workers accept the costs and risks of irregular, insecure employment, taking for granted that they will pay for their own health insurance, training, and

self-promotional materials (portfolios, websites, and so forth). They will work without pay to gain experience. They accept the reality of ‘foreshortened careers’, knowing their time in the occupation or profession will be brief (Neff, Wissinger, and Zukin 2005). These workers eschew attachment to one firm or one employer, undermining conventional sociological arguments that job stability and commitment alone can explain why workers work hard and put in quality effort. Their experiences also undermine conventional expectations that workers prefer long-term jobs and continuity.

In other cases, a positive short-term outlook toward the employment contract stems from the underbelly of corporate practices associated with seemingly long-term employment. Osnowitz (2010) showed how independent contractors’ preference for irregular employment was forged in their prior work experiences of so-called stable jobs in formal organizations. As ‘permanent’ workers they experienced blocked mobility, organizational politics, management abuse, and restructuring (mergers and acquisitions, downsizing) that increased their feelings of vulnerability and insecurity. Contracting gave them an ‘illusion of security’, Osnowitz argued (2010: 50): contract work, over which they could exert a feeling of control, came to appear more stable and dependable, even if irregular. Like other populations of workers with marketable skills, Osnowitz’s contractors had comparatively greater leverage to minimize the risks entailed with downtime between jobs, to generate new jobs (contracts), and to take time to acquire new skills and areas of expertise.

Lane (2011) identified a similar dialectic between employment policies in corporations and high-tech workers’ choice to work on a self-employed or contractor basis. Moving from permanent jobs to contracting, Lane argued, was a defensive strategy to distance themselves from routine layoffs and offshoring. Corporate restructuring practices in previous jobs led them to enact strategic cultural risk-embracing performances, endorsing

ongoing career management outside corporations, and proudly establishing themselves as ‘companies of one’ (Lane 2011: 61 [a dialectic confirmed in Pugh 2015]; Sennett 1998).

WHO DO AMERICAN WORKERS BLAME FOR INSECURITY AND RISK? ANYONE BUT EMPLOYERS

A surprising and suggestive finding from the many studies of work, employment, and risk is that across the occupational board and quite apart from social structural location, American workers embrace free-market ideology and don’t blame employers for taking actions that undercut employment stability and opportunity. Study after study confirms that Americans are very likely to endorse neoliberalism and market logic (or ‘market-centered assumptions’ [Ho 2009: 238]). They identify with corporate management’s interests and endorse the idea that when employers lay off people, downsize, and close plants they are simply making rational and justifiable economic decisions to ensure their profitability (Dudley 1994; Lane 2011; Padavic 2005: 125–126; Silva 2013). They let employers off the hook with respect to actions that lead to job loss and heightened employment insecurity (Pugh 2015).

It is easy to understand how people who richly profit from the industries of the new economy – such as investment banking or new social media – maintain allegiance to the way their firms do business (including the way they institutionalize systems of flexible labor). With the fervor and wealth to be found in the social media industry, for example, it is not surprising that people view their labor (long, long hours, many of them uncompensated, often with firms that are unknown commodities) as ‘venture labor’, a current investment that may later yield a payoff when a firm goes public or is acquired (Neff 2012). Nor is it surprising that young, Ivy-League educated Wall Street workers will submit to regular layoffs in an industry that *might*

generate annual multimillion-dollar bonuses (Ho 2009).

But sociological research finds that even when living with a high degree of precariousness, a low number of employment alternatives, and no visible financial payoffs (or having witnessed their parents living under such conditions [Silva 2013]), people decline to blame employers when they can't reposition themselves in new occupations or labor markets. This is a significant finding for sociologists: workers accept often-times degraded conditions (of job security, of compensation, of benefits), many of which are determined by employers, without challenging these conditions. Moreover, people are highly likely to blame themselves, viewing themselves as incapable of adjusting or unfit for the turbulent economy. They endeavor to adapt individually and in groups to economic transformation (Garrett-Peters 2009; Pugh 2015). People rationalize to themselves that they weren't really happy in previous jobs and try to turn unemployment into an opportunity for personal growth (Sharone 2014). Others come to believe that their lack of a job or failure to move up the mobility ladder is a result of their personal failing: a problem with their appearance, body language, or attitude, or their inept networking practices (Sharone 2014; Smith 2001); a product of poor choices made in one's past (Dudley 1994); a reflection of deeper psychological troubles or family dysfunctions (Silva 2013); or their complacency and inability to take risks in their jobs (Sennett 1998). Some blame peers for their dysfunctional and maladaptive character (Silva 2013) and for being 'incompetent and lazy' (Purser 2009).

Researchers studying church-based job search organizations have found that members are likely to attribute responsibility (although not blame) to the intentions of a higher-order deity, believing that unemployment and layoffs reflect a script from God intended to instruct in the ultimate meaning of life (Garrett-Peters 2009). For these individuals, hard times in the labor market are tests to endure and circumstances to overcome;

passing these tests will prove their faith. All of these cognitive, emotional, and spiritual orientations erode the potential for people to recognize their shared interests with others in similar positions, for collectively mobilizing against capital. They fuel, instead, individual mobilization of the self to adjust to market turbulence.

WHERE DO PEOPLE LEARN THE RULES OF THE PRECARIOUS ECONOMY?

Given the dimensions of employment uncertainty, irregularity, and ambiguity outlined above, it is important to look at the larger field of employment in order to explain people's subjective and individualistic assessments of trends and transformations. As noted earlier, a spectrum of corporate practices – layoff practices, compensation strategies, project-based work organization, and the legacy of corporate treatment of permanent workers – directly shape labor market participants' individualistic outlooks and behaviors. But there are other, extra-labor market forces that explain why American workers struggle to adapt, why they tend to turn blame inward toward themselves, and decline to act collectively on structural critiques of employers and corporations.

The Role of Labor Market Intermediaries

A partial explanation for why people endorse market logics, and for the individualization of responsibility for success and failure comes from research on organizations that mediate labor market experiences. Labor market intermediaries (LMIs) are organizations that help people find jobs and navigate labor markets: job search organizations, training agencies, temporary help service agencies, head hunting firms, and hiring halls. These LMIs create a triangular relationship, existing in

the interstices between job seekers and labor markets and connecting the two.

Job search organizations (JSOs) are significant in the contemporary field of employment because they reproduce dominant (and self-injurious) explanations for personal mobility (or lack thereof). At a general level they communicate to participants the shifting norms of employment and distribute information about where people should look and how they should search for jobs. They provide the tools and resources with which participants try to manipulate their emotions, adjust their mindsets, and engage in identity reconstruction. Researchers repeatedly find that the mission of JSOs is powerfully ideologically coded: labor market intermediaries reinforce meritocratic, individualistic explanations for job loss, unemployment, employment risk, and how to manage it. They also find that people who utilize JSOs experience much anxiety and self-doubt as they confront changing norms and reflect on limited opportunities. Their meritocratic frameworks coincide with the individualistic, self-blaming or self-congratulating orientation identified by so many researchers.⁶ Across the board, JSOs are rich and fruitful sites in which to understand work and employment today.

Public job search organizations typically are funded, staffed, and monitored by counties, states, and the US Department of Labor, Employment, and Training Administration. They are free and open to the public and primarily focus on enabling individuals to identify their skills and understand how to conduct successful job searches. They don't place people in specific jobs. State-sponsored job search organizations in theory are inclusive; however, research shows that they are stratified by occupation and class. Organizations oriented to the general population (versus, for example, specific occupational groups such as managers and professionals) are more limited in resources and in the array of aspirations they encourage members to entertain (Smith, Flynn, and Isler 2006). Church-sponsored job search organizations also are accessible to people from a broad range of

occupations and incomes (Garrett-Peters 2009; Lane 2011). For-profit job search firms such as the nationwide Forty-Plus (Newman 1988), CorpsSeek (Garrett-Peters 2009), or Haldane Career Guidance Centers are mostly utilized by more advantaged professionals and managers because they require substantial fees and thus raise the barrier to entry (Lane 2011).

Sociologists who have observed JSOs' organizational rituals, training workshops, and staff presentations find that themes of unpredictability and insecurity – whether woven into discussions of how people explain and interpret their employment histories, of their perceptions of the opportunity structure, or their inability to understand why they cannot find a job – have become normalized and routine in the minds of organizational participants. In other words, job seekers appear to absorb the discourse of unpredictability. They regularly echo and accept the master narrative about changing employment models: that the stable, permanent employment structures of the post-World War II era have given way to the impermanent, unstable, un dependable employment structures of the twenty-first century. Despite acknowledging this broader structural transformation, LMIs transmit highly individualistic explanations for unemployment or job loss, as well as individualistic explanations for how to overcome it, such as how to market and brand oneself (Lane 2011; Sharone 2014).

Individuals who lead workshops and give talks on constructing résumés, interviewing, and negotiating with employers, emphasize that we live in a free-agent society. We can do anything we want, go anywhere we want, take on any enterprise we want. Structures are not the problem; on the contrary, job seekers are their own worst enemies. The only thing blocking them is their fearful or insecure attitude, their adherence to outdated work conventions, their inability to experiment and innovate, or their complacency. Inability to obtain a job can boil down to job seekers' ignorance about the right clothes to wear, the benefits of networking, the necessity of

branding oneself, or the imperative to engage in employability activities. Importantly and perhaps unsurprisingly, job seekers internalize messages that are circulated in JSOs which blame individuals for inability to find a job and for long-term unemployment (Sharone 2014; Smith 2001; Smith, Flynn, and Isler 2006). One of Sharone's job seekers succinctly conveys this sentiment:

The message [from the self-help discourse taught at the job-search club] is that if you execute the process properly, you can do anything you want to do. There is something very empowering in that message ... [But] there is a downside to this: *the high expectations make people feel like there is something wrong with them*. Speakers come in and say that it's easy and a universally applicable process, like anyone can do it, and when you can feel 'I can't do it,' then what's wrong with me? There is a boomerang effect. You feel you have failed yet again. If it does not work for you, what does it say about you? (Sharone 2014: 68, italics in original)

Discourses that are presented to participants as truths about how the labor market works and why people can't find work mystify and obscure the structural determinants of job loss and downward mobility. In these ways, JSOs serve as vehicles for reproducing meritocratic views of the world that explain success and failure as dependent on one's ambition, initiative, and enterprise.

Consistent with this, Garrett-Peters (2009) found that support groups for unemployed workers primarily helped displaced workers engage in 'self-concept repair': focusing on psychological adjustment so that they could return to – rather than question the structure of – the world of work. Political discussions or efforts by group members to question structural forces, such as economic recession or the proletarianization of professional jobs, were squelched by group leaders and redirected to the main business at hand: finding jobs (Garrett-Peters 2009: 575). While rational and practical for job seekers, this systematic silencing about the structural causes of job loss, declining mobility opportunities, and personal trauma – a silencing which has

been observed in a variety of job search organizations – strongly suggests that such LMIs reinforce an individualistic response to the turbulence of the 'free market' and play a role in eroding collective bases for challenging it.

Other labor market intermediaries – such as contract and temporary help service agencies – similarly reproduce individualistic, free-agent thinking about employment and labor markets. In a vicious cycle, their actions lessen the costs of job seekers' employment risks, all the while institutionalizing risk in their hiring practices and normalizing irregular work experiences.

Barley and Kunda (2004) conducted many months of participant observation in staffing agencies in the Silicon Valley to understand agencies' role in facilitating the widespread use of contract workers: mostly highly educated and well-compensated developers, engineers, and programmers. Staffing agencies brokered the market, both for contractors and for the firms in which they were placed. Agencies marketed contractors, channeled advice and information to them, worked to develop them professionally, and made it possible for contractors to maintain steady employment experiences. In this way, staffing agencies' work regularized contractors' employment, buffering them from the vagaries of short-term contracts and unpredictability. Agencies' active manipulation of the market for contract workers helps explain why the latter are so willing to live with and even embrace risk and uncertainty. Head-hunting agencies also socially construct turbulent labor markets (including workers' commitments to them) by seeking out job applicants, encouraging them to job hop, training them in the etiquette of navigating the job market, and rewarding them for taking risks (Finlay and Coverdill 2002).

Operating in a different tier of the temporary labor market, agencies that place low-paid temps often strive to construct 'good temporary workers' and in so doing, smooth the rough edges of temporary employment for the typically disadvantaged workers who use their services (Smith and Neuwirth 2008).

Some agency staff try to persuade temp job applicants that there are benefits to these insecure, low-wage, and unpredictable positions; try to maximize continuity of jobs for temps who are deemed to be good workers; and endeavor to make sure that working conditions are humane and safe for temps. Through these actions, agencies construct a labor market in which applicants for temporary jobs come to feel that this employment is viable, and perhaps even preferable to other low-wage jobs that lack the protection of agency management.⁷

At the lowest rung of the temporary labor market, where some of the most vulnerable workers are employed, agencies blatantly mystify the structural determinants of impoverishment and degradation by manipulating vulnerable job applicants through their sorting and hiring mechanisms (Purser 2006, 2009). Agency workers ‘objectively orchestrate uncertainty’ (Purser 2006: 16), leaving applicants anxiously hoping for day laboring positions: patiently waiting, demonstrating good worker behavior, and directing their frustration, not at the agency, not at the system of capitalism which has generated such exploitative hiring practices, but at their fellow job applicants (Purser 2009). Such structural practices have the effect of disciplining temporary workers, maintaining them as a reserve labor force, and keeping the country’s most disenfranchised wage laborers (typically poor people, people of color, and immigrants) from collectively organizing against the conditions of their employment.

Research on LMIs, as sites where people learn the rules of the new economy, adds to our understanding of some of the institutional determinants of uncertain and risky employment: how this type of employment is socially constructed and maintained, and who generates the cultural themes and representations about precarious work that have emerged historically. Studying LMIs reveals organizational practices that draw job seekers in, attempt to construct them as precarious workers, and otherwise shape the institutional terrain within which phenomena like

temporary and contract work have become an intractable part of the labor market.

The Role of Culture

Culture plays a role in explaining where people learn new employment norms and expectations, and why people individualize and internalize responsibility for success and failure. Many scholars have cynically noted the rise of an ‘enterprise discourse’: a culture of entrepreneurialism, risk, and personal flexibility (du Gay and Salaman 1992; Vallas and Cummins 2014). This culture has been promulgated in self-help books, in popular manuals about the contemporary labor market and job search experience, and by corporate culture consultants (Sharone 2014; Smith 1990). Sociologist Nancy DiTomaso (2001) was one of the first to foreshadow this cultural turn in her early prediction that more and more people – including professionals and managers – would be encouraged to adopt a short-term mindset about their employment. Everyone, in her view, would come to think of themselves as subcontractors, even if they had a so-called permanent job. The need for people across the occupational and industrial spectrum to think of themselves as entrepreneurs, free and flexible agents, no matter what kind of skills or experiences they possess, is now a mantra, espoused in the LMIs discussed above and in thousands of popular books, including Richard Bolles’ (2014) best-selling *What Color is Your Parachute?*

Enterprise discourse ‘idealizes flexible employment, invites the worker to construe employment uncertainty as emancipatory, and conjures the labor market as an arena in which individual freedom and self-fulfillment can be won’ (Vallas and Prener 2012: 339). While putting a positive spin on the tumultuousness of the precarious economy, the discourse ignores social structural constraints, such as lack of financial resources to undergo training or become an entrepreneur, to support oneself while coping with

unemployment, or to refashion oneself for a 'cool' job in a 'hot' industry. It also encourages individualized approaches as people are cautioned to market themselves, promote their brand, and commodify themselves and their 'products' (as Win [2014] found in a study of marketing seminars for artists who wished to sell their art).

The self-help industry, broadly defined, has played a major role in propagating the positive, pull-yourself-up-by-your-bootstraps mindset (Ehrenreich 2010; McGee 2005; Sharone 2014; Vallas and Cummins 2014). Several studies emphasize how people draw on tenets associated with the 'power of positive thinking' to manage how they think about job and income loss, unemployment, and unpredictable employment futures. Drawing on positive, self-help discourses, they attempt to persuade themselves that job loss and uncertainty present an opportunity, a silver lining. Through complex processes of emotion work, people of diverse socioeconomic statuses construct narratives that allow them to shift their mindsets, viewing job loss and even downward mobility as a time to develop new ways of thinking, new ways of doing, new ways of living (Cooper 2014; Pugh 2015).

All these studies point to the practice of self-governance, through which people engage in self-disciplinary work that allows them to live with uncertainty, invest themselves in acquiring new skills and contacts, organize their ongoing job searches as work and a career, and search for positive explanations for employment outcomes (Sennett 1998: 130–131).

The Role of Networking

Finally, researchers studying employment risk find that people learn the rules of the new economy in networking and networking events which are considered nearly compulsory in many occupational fields (Barley and Kunda 2004; Damarin 2006; Garrett-Peters 2009; Lane 2011; Neff 2012; Osnowitz 2010; Sharone 2014; Smith 2001). In the course of

networking, labor market participants' views and ideologies are affirmed, examples of successful risk-takers are absorbed, and emotional fortification for forging along the path of unpredictable and risk-laden employment is acquired. In part, people are working when they're networking. They're gathering vital information related to their work and their jobs and they're making contacts that will enable them to multiply that information (Barley and Kunda 2004; Neff 2012). Networks and networking events are alternate locations (to formal workplaces) for various 'itinerant' workers (Barley and Kunda 2004). Here, they form supportive communities, learn about technological and industry developments, develop reputations, and enforce professional standards. Neff, Wissinger, and Zukin (2005) argue that networking is compulsory for cultural industry workers: when they network they learn about new projects, continually self-promote in order to find more work, and generally maintain their employability.

Through networking, people learn to espouse the discourse of the entrepreneur, do identity work, and talk the talk of the risk-taker. Participating in networking activities also serves as a substitute for having a job: when networking, job seekers can feel like they are working, that hours spent at events is part of their job and can be counted as hours clocked in (Sharone 2014). Networking therefore serves as part of the bundle of activities that channel individuals' job-seeking energy and effort. It can help sustain their hope that there will be a payoff to coping with employment ambiguity.

CONCLUSION

I have outlined numerous dimensions to work and employment in the turbulent economy and discussed a burgeoning literature on how people think about and manage insecurity, precariousness, and employment risk. Much research remains to be done on these

issues, both to further explore how different groups experience them and to examine additional domains within which people enact and learn new rules for employment, employability, and economic survival.

A significant limitation in our knowledge is that millions of workers in the national and global economy are invisible and inaccessible, their status fluid and ever-shifting. Sociologists and other social scientists face a serious measurement and counting problem: we don't know the exact (or even close to exact) size of diverse populations of workers who labor outside formal organizations and whose positions defy narrow occupational classifications. This, in turn, makes it difficult to gather representative samples of workers and to ascertain, and generalize about typical experiences of distinct groups. Measurement and counting problems stem from a variety of features of work and employment today.⁸

People who work in the informal economy (marginal and vulnerable workers who are paid under the table and are considered to work underground) can be hard to contact because they lack telephones or fixed addresses which researchers could use to follow up and schedule interviews. If they are undocumented immigrants they may refuse to be interviewed because they fear that researchers work for the Immigration and Naturalization Service or that participating in a study will bring them to the attention of authorities (Barnham and Theodore 2012; Valenzuela 2003).

Undercounting and imprecise measurement occur for other reasons, making generalization difficult. Certain jobs consist of a range of fine-grained occupations (*domestic*, for example, includes nannies, housecleaners, and elder care workers; Goldberg 2014). People who seek work as day laborers and frequent day labor sites (a popular venue through which researchers try to access workers and to estimate the size of their population) may show up one day but not the next. Day laborer sites form at empty lots, street corners, and store-front parking lots, but disappear if workers fear they will be targeted (by

the police or by angry citizens [Valenzuela 2003]). Such sites can also be secluded and hard to find. Sweatshops are highly mobile: they can pop up one week and decompose the next (Gordon 2007). Work populations fluctuate daily and seasonally. Some transient workers are continually on the move, making them hard to reach (see Sampson's [2013] study of contracted workers in the global shipping industry; Amazon warehouse workers and oil encampment workers would fall into this category as well). A vendor is both a small-business owner and a member of the precarious workforce (Dunn 2014).

The statuses of people in the larger precarious economy more generally may defy measurement. Someone who is employed through a temporary help placement agency or finds work as a day laborer may simultaneously hold a 'regular' paid job in the formal labor market. An individual may be temporarily employed but simultaneously a job seeker. How do we define a workplace when work is dispersed across multiple job sites, as is the case with people who engage in landscaping, construction, domestic, and various types of project work? How do we define a workplace that is 'delimited', not bound to a formal work organization but takes place at home and in public spaces, and during leisure or non-paid hours? And how do we systematically define and categorize the millions of independent workers who have become a fixture in the American economy (Horowitz, Calhoun, Erickson, and Wuolu 2011)?

Bernhardt, Spiller, and Theodore (2013: 12) argue that 'noncompliance with employment and labor laws is becoming a key feature of employers' competitive strategy at the bottom of the US labor market. In a range of industries, the evasion and outright violation of minimum wage, overtime, and other laws is creating new industry conventions that normalize substandard jobs' (2013: 21). Subcontracting processes can deepen the invisibility of labor law violations because illegal practices are hidden in the subterranean layers in which employers can hide who they hire and under what terms (see also

Weil 2014). How can researchers find hard-to-access workers in contexts where employers violate labor laws (fail to pay minimum wage or overtime; fail to pay for all hours worked; fail to pay at all), abuse workers whom they employ off the books, and otherwise fail to comply with pay and hours regulations? A new report on the misclassification of millions of contracted workers (labeling them as independent contractors rather than employees) suggests that this problem may go deeper than anyone could imagine (Thames 2014; see also Theodore, Valenzuela, and Meléndez 2006).

Researchers have suggested a variety of ways for overcoming these measurement and conceptual problems. Bernhardt, Spiller, and Theodore (2013) have devised a respondent-driven sampling procedure that allows them to develop broader, more representative populations of individuals working in distinct industries and occupations. Respondent-driven sampling has the added benefit that a greater number of study subjects may be more willing to participate in surveys or interviews because they may be more confident that they will not come to the attention of immigration or tax authorities. Coupled with random sampling frames through which researchers choose representative hiring sites in a given region (Theodore, Valenzuela, and Meléndez 2006), social scientists may be better positioned to fully understand the extent and dynamics of these informal labor markets. The challenges of measuring, counting, and accessing hard-to-target populations and worksites make the use of multi-methodological approaches all the more valuable. Hantrais (2005), for example, calls not simply for combining qualitative and quantitative approaches but for utilizing as many diverse methods as possible, including surveys, interviews, observations, and archival analysis. Hodson (in his 2001 book and in numerous articles with colleagues) has mined the riches of combining quantitative and qualitative data by coding and reanalyzing ethnographic studies on work, power, cooperation, and dignity.

Related to these issues, there is a great deal of additional ground to cover outside formal workplaces in understanding how people try to find jobs and how they feel about their opportunities. I have discussed labor market intermediaries and networking venues. Investigating other organizational domains and intermediaries that are part of the field of employment practices and institutions would enable researchers to grasp the complexities, richness, and contradictions of employment today, including: the way meritocratic principles are communicated; how new rules about job searching and opportunity are purveyed; and the varied and multiple sites in which employment risk and insecurity are playing out.

For example, we need in-depth knowledge of employment boot camps, for-profit career guidance and placement agencies, personal coaches, and personal career counselors (the personal coaching industry is estimated to make over one billion dollars annually). We also need to understand, to a much greater degree, how college students are guided and advised by counselors in career and internship centers: organizational units through which millions of students are processed in anticipation of joining the labor market.

More empirical research on external labor market relationships and activities (of the sort conducted by Osnowitz [2010] and O'Mahoney and Bechky [2006]) would fill in the picture of the variegated world of work and employment and its inherent risks. Research on this topic would shed light on how different occupational groups engage in employability activities (networking, training, etc.); sustain careers outside the walls of the workplace; maintain professional standards; and protect against labor market vulnerabilities, including abusive employer practices against which contractors, freelancers, and seasonal and transient workers lack formal occupational protections. Such research could encompass careers in multiple external markets up and down the occupational structure and could examine how

these markets structure and condition the hiring, legal regulation, wage structure, and participation of diverse occupational groups. All such investigation should be attentive to inequalities across different groups and the ways in which the social construction of labor markets enables and constrains opportunities for different populations (for example, comparing the way external labor markets work for, or fail, more and less advantaged workers).

Based on the existing literature, we would hypothesize that external labor markets are loosely held together by referrals, informal distribution of information about market wages for specific jobs, norms about employers' 'best practices' (with respect to managing, training, and retaining workers), and workers' norms about quality work, the craft of particular jobs, and standards for acceptable and unacceptable employer behavior. Researchers should investigate how members of shared occupational fields – whether programmers, web developers, graphic artists, or domestic workers, gardeners, or itinerant warehouse workers – circulate information (conversation, text, social media and other types of electronic communication, or observation). What associational spaces do people use to network and share information? What forms of collective support and solidarity do they engage in? Are there associative benefits derived from participation in external labor markets, advantages to members that would not be possible to those outside these communities?

Finally, more research on employability activities is greatly needed. While there is a well-developed literature on skilled, professional knowledge, and creative industry workers' employability activities, we lack comparably rich and deep research on marginal, transient, and other low-wage workers (Halpin and Smith n.d.). What do these workers do to expand their skill sets, enhance market-appropriate human capital, and create networks that might enable them to access more desirable employment opportunities? What strategies do they use to move up and out of the low-wage labor market?

How do they strive to reduce the uncertainties associated with a sector characterized by precariousness and unpredictability? Where relevant, what household strategies do workers use to minimize economic insecurity? These are critical topics for sociologists who hope to understand an economic and social era that defies easy summary and generalization.

US scholars have far to go in developing cross-national comparisons of these issues. Studies from other countries (Germany, Japan, Canada, Spain, Sweden, Korea, and others) make clear that trends in the use of temporary, part-time, and subcontracted workers, the income gap, labor law violation, and gendered and racialized patterns of labor force participation are shaped by prevailing regulatory regimes (the strength or weakness of the welfare state, industrial relations systems, varieties of capitalism, political rhetorics of neoliberalism and deregulation) (Gottfried 2014; Gottshall and Wolf 2007; Hantrais 2005; Kwon and Lim 2014; Sharone 2014; Shire, Mottweiler, Schönauer, and Valverde 2009; Vosko 2006). While US trends can be observed in other leading industrialized societies, important variations exist which, in turn, provide a basis for thinking about how the US could care for its citizens more humanely and about possibilities for social transformation. Of major importance is the question: in societies in which the state protects and defends its citizens against the ravages of free-market individualism, do people experience risk and uncertainty in less fraught ways than people in countries like the US, many of whom have been thrown onto their own resources to cover their health care, periods of unemployment, training, and the welfare of their families? Are industrial societies destined to move in the direction of Japan, whose precarious society is characterized by a high degree of social isolation, disconnectedness, and loneliness (Allison 2014)? The sociology of risk and insecurity is a growing field, ripe with possibilities for further research to answer these and other questions.

NOTES

- 1 People who are unemployed for 27 weeks or more and still seeking jobs.
- 2 As of May 2014, Schierholz (2014) estimates that there are 6.2 million people in the 'missing workforce', consisting of discouraged workers who have given up looking for jobs in the formal economy. She estimates that the unemployment rate would be about 10.3% (compared to just under 7%) if it included discouraged workers.
- 3 See Hsu (2014) for popular press coverage of how unemployment and underemployment lead adults to street vending activities.
- 4 Even many middle managers and some professionals are forced to reconstruct their employment identities. Their fates are more uncertain than the fates of specialized professionals such as engineers, programmers and financial service employees; the former are more vulnerable to across-the-board layoffs (Garett-Peters 2009; Sennett 1998; Sharone 2014; Smith 2001).
- 5 Lane (2011) discusses a similar process for male high-tech workers.
- 6 Importantly this anxiety and self-doubt is not universal. Sharone (2014) points out the cultural specificity of unemployment experiences. People in other cultures do not always internalize blame to the degree that Americans do. Rather than blame their 'flawed selves', they blame their 'flawed systems', the social structural circumstances that led to and perpetuate unemployment.
- 7 This is not to argue that temporary agencies always engage in paternalistic management of this sort or that most temporary jobs are good jobs. On the contrary, research has documented the capricious and abusive behavior of agency staff. The point is that, historically, the temporary help placement (THS) industry has had some reason to try to create good temporary workers and engage in practices that are more beneficial than often depicted (Smith and Neuwirth 2008).
- 8 This discussion builds on observations and critiques found in the following studies: Barnham and Theodore 2012; Bernhardt, Spiller, and Theodore 2013; Gottschall and Wolf 2007; Hantrais 2005; Sampson 2013; Theodore, Valenzuela, and Meléndez 2006; Valenzuela 2003.

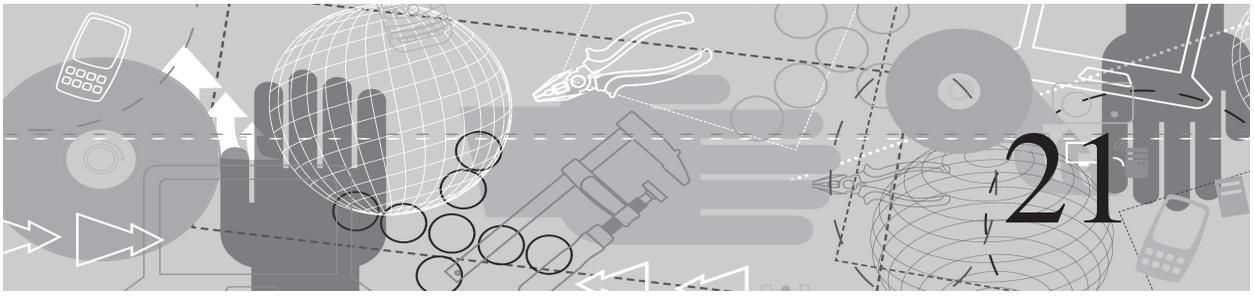
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Destandardization: Qualitative and Quantitative

Françoise Carré

WHAT IS DESTANDARDIZATION?

‘Destandardization’ of employment implies there is, or has been, a standard for employment in place, from which particular processes have caused employment to diverge. The term destandardization also implies that there is a growing lack of uniformity in employment – in all its key dimensions. Destandardization is thought to occur along several important dimensions: the employment relationship (contractual dimension) (Appelbaum 1987; Piore 1980); work scheduling/amount (temporal dimension) (e.g. Beechey and Perkins 1987; O’Reilly and Fagan 1988); and place (spatial dimension) (Beck 1992: 142; 2000; Castells 1996; Edgell 2012). The primary dimension is the employment relationship because the legal norms that structure it tend to drive scheduling and, to some extent, location. Thus, the destandardization of the employment relationship is the place to start in order to understand destandardization of employment as a whole phenomenon. Primary debates center on whether there

is a uniform growth in nonstandard employment across countries and whether nonstandard employment automatically indicates that there is destandardization of employment overall. The phenomenon matters greatly for understanding the shape of societies to come, specifically their socio-economic dimensions (e.g. Beck 2000). Work and employment structure earnings, asset accumulation, and private lives but they also reflect the ways in which individuals and their communities relate to the state, corporations, and worker movements.

The chapter first explores the destandardization of the employment relationship, concentrating on nonstandard employment. The second and third sections review qualitative dimensions of destandardization and ambiguities in definition and measurements. The fourth section then presents cross-national statistics on some of the main forms of nonstandard employment. The fifth section analyzes forces that have driven the process of destandardization: firm strategies and how

they shape labor demand; enabling conditions for destandardization; the role of the state and labor organization; and labor supply factors. In closing, the chapter notes the limits of existing evidence, raises research approaches most likely to foster understandings of destandardization and identifies the challenge posed by this phenomenon for social science thinking about class structure.

DESTANDARDIZATION OF THE EMPLOYMENT RELATIONSHIP

Most visibly, the evidence for destandardization has been the growth, since the mid-1970s at least, of nonstandard employment arrangements, particularly in advanced industrialized countries (Western Europe, North America, Japan).

Defining Nonstandard Employment

The definition of nonstandard employment is contingent on the definition of *standard* employment; the latter is to a large extent country-specific as it is shaped by national institutional parameters – legal ones in particular, reflecting power differentials between capital and labor. Furthermore, in many countries, the definition of standard employment is also, in part, a matter of custom, convention, and practice (human resources, employment relations), rather than legal norms, and these vary significantly across industrial sectors (manufacturing, financial services, construction, and retail).

The definition of standard employment is also historically contingent. Notably, what has been considered standard employment in recent decades emerged in the early twentieth century in large modern corporations and became a norm in the decade following World War II in developed countries. First associated with the coupling of standardized mass production and Fordism, it spread through

major industrial sectors. It was more of an ‘aspirational’ norm in developing countries. The first half of the twentieth century also saw the establishment of a clear demarcation between wage/salary employment (dependent employment) and self-employment (‘independent’ employment), and the predominance and expected continued growth of wage employment.

Bearing in mind the ambiguity of standard employment, nonstandard employment has come to be defined and understood as including all forms of employment that diverge along at least one dimension from year-round, full-time wage employment with a single employer, at the employer’s worksite and with the expectation of durable attachment (some say ‘permanent’). Nonstandard arrangements most often do not entail an implicit expectation of durable employment; in fact, many have an explicitly stated limited duration. Thus, intermittent or on-call employment is episodic and therefore nonstandard. Fixed-term or limited duration contracts/hiring is considered nonstandard. Triangular employment relationships – as in temporary agency work – are nonstandard both because employment is not expected to be long-term and because the worker is on the agency’s payroll yet is supervised by the user employer (which in turn has a contractual relationship with the temporary agency).

Standard employment, itself a historically contingent notion, has been the basis around which employment law, labor (representation) law, and social protection have been built – albeit with a primary male breadwinner of local national origin in mind. Thus, the expectation of a durable employment relationship/attachment has driven the regulatory systems that govern disciplinary discharge, layoffs and other dismissals. Hence ‘durable’ is to be understood to mean something akin to being governed by law, regulation, and custom regarding entering and exiting employment.

Not all countries, or within a country not all industrial sectors, have adhered strictly to this definition. The norm was not universally

applied; it passed over entire categories of workers (notably in agricultural labor, craft, and domestic work in some countries) and was weakened and/or amended in practice, if not law, in female-dominated activities. Nevertheless, within each setting, a norm – in law, policy or practice – has been in place against which nonstandard employment arrangements are contrasted. Some would say this norm has been challenged and even eroded – hence the process of destandardization.

The historically contingent nature of standard employment also means that the boundary between standard and nonstandard employment is porous – shifting as regulations and practices change. The boundary also is porous because nonstandard arrangements themselves constitute a variety of employment arrangements governed by regulation and/or custom (displaying significant cross-national variation and variety in the degree of worker-driven scheduling flexibility for instance), whose terms change over time as well. Their meaning and implications for workers are governed by the institutional context in which they occur, that is, the institutional rules that govern employment relations but also those that govern social protection. For example, the implications of fixed-term employment are vastly different in countries with employer-based protection (e.g. health insurance) as compared to those with universal systems.

Nonstandard arrangements themselves are often depicted as experimentation with the norms of employment, accommodation to new production arrangements, or ‘exit options’ from the regulatory framework for employment (Gautié and Schmitt 2010). ‘Exit options’ are by-passes, violations, and experimentations by firms to avoid legal and practice norms. They are *de jure* and *de facto* ‘exemptions, exceptions, or loopholes’ to avoid legal norms (Bosch et al. 2010). They include, among other options: the ability of employers to withdraw from national collective bargaining agreements; the opportunity for firms to outsource parts of their activities to sectors and firms with lower (or no)

collective bargaining standards; the existence of sub-minimum wages for young people; and nonstandard work arrangements. In some cases, exit options result from the lack of enforcement of existing laws (e.g. minimum wage violations or hiring undocumented immigrants) (Appelbaum et al. 2010; see industry case studies in Gautié and Schmitt 2010).

Why is standard employment ‘standard’ and why the need for a norm? Norms of employment have developed over time with, first, the experimentation with employer-based ‘welfare/protection’ (in the US for example) and, later, with the rise of the modern, bureaucratic, corporation (see Jacoby 1982, 1997 for a US account), but also with the development of social welfare systems (Esping-Andersen 1990). This history is not elaborated upon here but the paths through which each country has developed its brand of employment norm and state-private sector relations go some way toward explaining patterns of destandardization at the national level.

Ambiguities

Definitional ambiguities that are inherent to the employment relationship, the shifting terrain of employment regulation, and the resulting shifting and porous boundary between standard and nonstandard employment underlie the lack of agreement about whether the growth in nonstandard employment is generalized across countries; and whether nonstandard employment automatically indicates an overall destandardization of employment. In addition, the definitional ambiguities and reciprocal relation between nonstandard and standard employment (at least, definitionally) result in making cross-national comparison difficult, and in turn make it a challenge to resolve the debate on whether nonstandard employment has grown uniformly across countries.

Destandardization is also one manifestation of broader changes in the employment relationship and the social compact that has

undergirded it, at least in developed countries. It may lead, according to some, to a broad reconfiguration of the class structure within countries as well as on a transnational scale to mirror the global organization of production and labor markets (Edgell 2012; Standing 1997, 2011). Before addressing these broader issues, the next section defines and illustrates the main dimensions of destandardization and why they matter for worker experience, for states, and for our understanding of the structure of employment.

NONSTANDARD EMPLOYMENT: MULTIPLE DIMENSIONS

Employment may be nonstandard in several ways: contractual, for example with short-term, temp, or on-call work; temporal (qualitative, as with shift work, fluctuating hours, nonstandard/night hours, or quantitative as with part-time); and spatial as with off-site, at home, in another company's locale (Beck 1992; Castells 1996).

Clearly, these dimensions can intersect with some work arrangements. In the United States, part-time work most often has been associated with a nonstandard employment relationship (little expected duration, restricted or no employer-based benefits). Working from home has rarely been associated with wage employment (that is as a 'work-family' company benefit), and most often has been turned into own-account self-employment.

The Employment Relationship: Important Contractual Distinctions

Destandardization in the employment relationship may mean differentiation in employment arrangements, often referred to in European writings as 'forms of employment' (*formes d'emploi*), that is, the set of explicit or implicit contractual arrangements that govern the duration, terms, and conditions of

employment. The best-known cases include short-term, limited duration/fixed-term hire, intermittent employment, and seasonal contracts. Contractual arrangements often govern the form of compensation, ranging from wage/salary employment (standard) to varied forms that are not 'standard'; compensation based entirely on commission pay being considered at the most extreme end. Perhaps the shared feature of nonstandard contractual arrangements is that deviation from standard employment – *de jure* or often *de facto* – yields the absorption of market risk by the worker to a greater extent than with standard employment.

A significant facet of destandardization has been the rise and establishment of triangular arrangements – such as temporary agency work (TAW), brokered employment, employee leasing – in which the employer-employee relationship is replaced with a mix of employment and business contractual relationships. In TAW, there is a business relationship between the temporary agency and the user firm, a supervisory relationship between the user firm and the worker, and a 'payroll employer' relationship between the temporary agency and worker. The payroll employer has some legal responsibilities for payroll taxes, some shared responsibilities for work safety, but few of the other conventional – if not mandatory – employer responsibilities for training, supervision, and building career paths (see Bidwell and Fernandez-Mateo 2008). The decision about duration of employment is split from the employment relationship; it is directed by the user firm (as part of a business relationship) and implemented by the temporary agency.¹

Contractual destandardization also results from the shifting nature of self-employment and its increasing use as an employment arrangement within production chains and outside its traditional environments of small-scale entrepreneurship or professional occupations (lawyers or high-level accountants). Instead, 'self-employment' of a kind where the legal arrangement is that of an independent worker (rather than a waged/salaried

worker), but the economic position is somewhat dependent on the ‘customer’, or the work is performed with little autonomy in an organized process, has grown in some countries. In short, these arrangements sit uneasily between self-employment and wage employment (Carré and Heintz 2009). The policy and legal frameworks of most countries have, for the most part, not kept up with this phenomenon.²

Within self-employment as a whole, the share of own-account self-employment has grown faster than independent/entrepreneurial/employer self-employment in some countries over the past 10 to 15 years (ILO-WIEGO 2013; OECD 2000).

Contractual and Spatial Dimensions

Arrangements by which workers are ‘contracted in’ the workplace present a variant of the triangular relationship – although one that is less legally clear-cut than TAW. Contracting companies – historically janitorial and service contractors but now including slightly higher level work such as data entry or document sorting and coding – remain the primary employer of the worker contracted in. The firm at whose location the work is performed *de facto* sets the compensation, the setting (working conditions, schedule, pacing) in which work is performed, and, indirectly the duration of employment. (This latter effect is indirect because the contractor could redeploy the worker to another contract, should such option be feasible, without interruption of employment.)

Of growing importance in developed countries is the systematic organization of production in inter-firm ‘networks’, which has enabled major brands (for example, hotels, restaurants, retailers) to substitute business-to-business relationships with contractor companies for employment relationships with the workforces that deliver the firm’s products. This type of organization enables lead

corporations to devise employment norms and policies (as well as collective bargaining agreements where they are present) governing employment conditions for their narrowly defined core wage/salary workforce; distinct from (usually lower quality) norms and policies governing work conditions of workforces of subcontractors and franchisees. We return to this issue below. In turn, these patterns lead to observed within-sector/industry dispersion of wages and working conditions (Barth et al. 2014; Freeman 2014; Marchington et al. 2005).

Spatial Dimensions, with Temporal and Other Consequences

In developed countries, the distribution of work across central workplace, home, and other remote locations has accelerated due to extensive availability of telecommunication technologies and the difficulties of commuting to central business districts. Implications for employment are multi-pronged and are contingent upon the institutional and market context in which this spatial distribution takes place.

On one hand, the ability to work remotely has directly affected employment conditions for professional and managerial workers, increasing expectations that they should be available to work requests on a ‘24/7’ basis. The work-life literature is rich in analyses of the difficulty of managing the lack of boundaries between work and life outside of work, including care responsibilities. On the other hand, the ability to organize work remotely from a central, shared workplace has different consequences for categories of workers lower down the job ladder. Entire categories of tasks may be relocated to the worker’s home, as is the case with telephone or online ordering and customer service for catalog retail, or with record processing for medical or insurance industries. The location of work within the home triggers, or is often accompanied by, a contractual arrangement entailing greater distance between worker

and employer. The worker may be working part-time, or on-call. (S)he may be paid piece rate or on a commission basis, thus having contingent pay. (S)he may be self-employed rather than a wage/salary worker and, if a wage worker, the pay rate may be lower. Rental costs for production equipment may not be absorbed by the employer or customer. These workers also experience pressures from the lack of boundary between work and life/home. In low-income countries, notably India, domestic garment and textile production, for example, has moved out of factories and into workers' homes. Simultaneously, the workforce has almost universally been categorized as self-employed and working on piece rates (Chen chapter 22, this volume).

Work within private households is not new, nor, strictly speaking, a form of destandardization. Yet how services performed in the home are organized (with dispatched wage workers or self-employed) affects the pattern of destandardization. For example, in recent years, the ability to perform medical services within the home has shifted some activities (e.g. phlebotomy) from health care settings to private household settings, thus potentially removing these activities from some norms and regulations governing work sites.

Temporal Dimensions

In addition to all the ways in which temporal dimensions of employment vary according to contractual arrangements and/or spatial location, they also vary simply in terms of the scheduling of work. Temporal variation occurs both in the scheduling of work hours and in their total amount over the week or the month. Production workers in manufacturing have historically experienced nonstandard work schedules (night shifts, swing shifts) due to the 24-hour operation of plants and equipment. In-person service workers (food, custodial health care, services to households) similarly have operated with schedules far different from the norm of five weekdays of 7–8 hours. The effects of these nonstandard schedules

have raised concerns about the implications for family and the caretaking responsibilities of workers, as well as their health.

Beyond this 'baseline' of nonstandard schedules, other kinds of destandardization affect categories of workers and work settings that had hitherto experienced 35–40-hour weeks of daytime employment over the whole year (standard employment). In the retail trade, particularly in the US, part-time schedules have come to mean a very low level of expected weekly hours (about 15) combined with the expectation that workers be available on-call for the remainder of hours up to 40 weekly hours (when the overtime mandate kicks in) (Carré and Tilly 2012; Lambert and Henly 2012). Restaurant work – an activity of fluctuating hours historically – has witnessed heightened hours variability and unpredictability with the systematic adoption of scheduling systems within a cost-cutting environment by fast food chains (e.g. Hayley-Lock 2011). On-call employment (where workers only work when called in, with no expectation and no guarantee of work) entails diversification of the worktime regime but, in reality, entails significant contingency in the employment relationship because the volume and the scheduling of work are both variable. Any implicit reciprocal commitment to maintain something akin to a predictable volume of work is removed by making the baseline of weekly work hours virtually nonexistent. Very visibly, the UK has implemented in recent years 'zero-hours' contracts, according to which people work and are paid only when 'called in/upon'. These contractual arrangements are emblematic of an extreme form of hours rationing and variability, and the weakest form of employer commitment in terms of work hours (Eurofound 2015).

Destandardization Along Several Dimensions

Employment arrangements are usually 'destandardized' along more than one dimension. The particular dimension – say 'work

hours' – may be driven less by the scheduling strategies of firms and more by the goal to exclude workers from a social protection feature whose guidelines for implementation hinge on an hours threshold. Importantly, the implications of nonstandard arrangements for workers vary across arrangements, that is, arrangements differ in quality, in the degree of risk exposure (from economic fluctuation or other sources) shifted onto workers, and in the potential 'positives' for workers in terms of flexibility (when, where to work) and rewards (Bernhardt 2014; Carré et al. 2000; Kalleberg et al. 2000). Illustratively, the occupations and gender-composition of jobs affected by particular types of nonstandard arrangements vary cross-nationally. For example, throughout the 1980s into the mid-1990s, TAW jobs were mostly clerical/white-collar and pink-collar (and female dominated) in the US, while they were mostly blue-collar (and male dominated) manufacturing and construction jobs in France (Carré 2003). In the decades since, TAW in the US has grown in manufacturing and the gender composition of TAW has also shifted.

'Contracting out' or subcontracting is in a category of its own; it is a complex and ambiguous phenomenon. Sometimes characterized as an inter-firm pattern (network of contracts) and sometimes as a work arrangement, contracting out often results from firms' intent to cut costs or to source specialized (non-core) activities and services. Its implications vary widely depending upon its use and, as a result, so do the implications for jobs and workers. Contracting out activities can be as specialized as clinical research trials or legal compliance research and as unspecialized as laundry, food service, or telemarketing, with consequent diversity in job quality, security, and compensation (Bernhardt 2014: Table 3, p. 17, for US data).

Implications of nonstandard work are not uniformly 'good' or 'bad' and cannot be automatically derived from the 'letter' of a particular arrangement because so much of the consequences depend upon the circumstances in which the arrangement is used and

the purposes to which it is put by particular industries and employers. For example, many have observed over time that short-term or long-term employment labels are not in and of themselves significant. Long-term, stable employment of low quality (e.g. low earnings, demanding hours) generates insecurity just as short-term employment might. Job quality has sometimes been argued to be driven by wage levels rather than employment arrangements per se.

Within a nonstandard employment 'label' there also can be significant heterogeneity of actual employment conditions and occupations affected. Most notably, self-employment – described by some as nonstandard – entails both professional 'higher end' occupations and low-end domestic work or other services to households. A range of occupations, and specific jobs within them, are staffed on the basis of temporary agency work. Studies find that stratification and hierarchy based on gender and race-ethnicity-immigrant status are manifest in these two categories as well as several other forms of nonstandard employment. (For example, racial-ethnic minorities are over-represented in blue collar and pink-collar temp agency work in the US.) Nonstandard jobs, the manifestation of destandardization, have varied with historical patterns of labor market stratification and hierarchy: sometimes perpetuating these and other times accentuating them. The next section reviews the broad patterns of nonstandard arrangements, their gender distribution and cross-national variation, which are partly – but not only – a function of institutional differences across countries.

QUANTITATIVE DIMENSIONS OF DESTANDARDIZATION

Qualitative changes in employment – contractual, time, or spatial – matter in that they point to directions of change in norms that govern employment. Additionally, they have a demonstration effect; the use of a

nonstandard arrangement can spread across companies and sectors following the practice of early adopters. Thus, qualitative changes in employment may point to future threats to existing aspects of employment that benefit or protect workers (or conversely, but less likely, to changes that would improve terms of employment).

Change in the distribution of employment across types of arrangements clearly is important. But statistics only measure the employment arrangements that are known, that have long enough standing to warrant documentation by statistical offices. Quantitative changes provide a partial picture of employment destandardization; they may not capture all facets. This section reviews those for which measurements are most readily available.

What is Measured in Developed Countries³

Differentiation in employment arrangements is documented with cross-national measures of commonly recorded forms of nonstandard employment: temporary work (fixed-term and temporary agency work combined), own-account self-employment, and part-time work.

Contractual Dimension

Most notably, fixed-term employment – that is, employment with an explicitly stated duration – and temporary agency work have been tracked over the past 40 years. From the late 1970s through the 1990s, the labor force surveys of Western European countries and Japan showed growing trends in limited-duration hires and temporary agency employment, as did the Canadian labor force survey. Statistics were incomplete or non-existent in the United States with the exception of a growth trend for the temporary help/agency industry (Edgell 2012: Table 7.3, p. 184). Reports on employment patterns in specific sectors and occasional surveys of employer practices (e.g. Houseman 2001) pointed to changes in staffing patterns and the growing

use of nonstandard employment during those decades.

Across OECD countries, as of 2011, the incidence of fixed-term and temporary agency work combined ranged from a high of 27 percent of *waged and salaried employment* in Poland to a low of about 6 percent in the UK; of 27 countries with data in 2011, temporary employment accounted for over 20 percent of *wage and salary work* in four countries, from 10 to 18 percent in fourteen countries and from 6 to 9.6 percent in nine countries (ILO-WIEGO 2013: Table 3.1). Destandardization, to the extent that these two forms of employment are the most indicative of it, is by no means a universal phenomenon. Its level varies across countries, reflecting different economies (industry and occupation mix), different levels at the beginning of the period, and, importantly, different regulation and definitions of what standard (and therefore nonstandard) employment entails.

Countries with the greatest increases of temporary employment over the 1990–2011 period are Italy (8.2 percentage points) and the Netherlands (10.8 points). In Poland temporary employment increased from 12 to 27 percent of wage and salary employment between 2000 and 2011. In some countries – Greece, Spain, Iceland, Turkey and Denmark – the incidence of temporary employment declined by 2 to 5 percentage points from 1990 to 2011.

In most of these countries the share of temporary employment in women's employment exceeds the corresponding share for men, except in Poland. In Japan, Korea and Finland, temporary employment is much higher among women than men. Only four countries have incidences above 20 per cent for men (Poland, Spain, South Korea, and Portugal). Estimates⁴ show that the share of involuntary temporary employees accounted for 60 percent of temporary employees in 2007, and increased by 2 percentage points to 62 per cent in 2010 for the EU as a whole (ILO-WIEGO 2013).

Another contractual destandardization consists of forms of employment that sit uneasily

between wage and self-employment. Due to their ambiguity, these forms of employment are not easily quantifiable in national statistics. A common proxy is to track the ‘own-account’ self-employed, that is, those without employees. Across the 28 OECD countries for which statistics are available, in 2008 own-account self-employment was as high as 21 and 20 per cent of the *total employment* in Greece and Turkey respectively. For 11 of the countries it ranged from 10 to 19 percent of *total employment*, and for the remaining 15 countries, it comprised 4 to 9 percent of total employment (ILO-WIEGO 2013: Table 3.3; Vanek et al. 2014).

In 2008, own-account self-employment ranged from about 20 per cent of total employment in Greece, the Republic of Korea (South Korea), and Turkey to a low of 4 per cent in Luxembourg. These rates were relatively stable for most countries. From 1990 to 2008, own account self-employment declined significantly in only four (of the 28) countries with data: Belgium, Greece, Ireland, and Spain. The Czech Republic and the Slovak Republic reported a significant increase over the whole period. During the recent period, 2000 to 2008, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Korea, Poland and Turkey experienced declines (2 to 4 points); six countries experienced small increases; while Slovakia experienced large increases.

Compared to men, women have lower rates of self-employment but, *within* self-employment, they are more likely to be own-account workers and less likely to be employers. In 2008, own-account self-employment was relatively high in Greece, Portugal, and the Republic of Korea (South Korea), accounting for over 12 percent of total *women’s* employment. Over the past two decades – from 1990 to 2008 – in Belgium, Japan, and Spain, women’s own-account self-employment declined significantly. But in the last decade – from 2000 to 2008 – in most countries, there was little change in women’s own account self-employment (except for a 3-point increase in Slovakia and a 4-point decrease in Poland) (ILO-WIEGO 2013; Vanek et al. 2014).

Limits of Cross-national Quantitative Measures on Contractual Arrangements

The overview of cross-national patterns in temporary employment illustrates the difficulty and limitations of cross-national comparisons of patterns of destandardization that are solely based on aggregate, national, statistics. Difficulties of interpretation occur because each country includes different non-standard arrangements under the general categories of nonstandard work commonly reported. Countries capture the nonstandard arrangements deemed likely to expose workers to economic risk; therefore there is some inconsistency in measurement across countries. For example, the US includes contract company workers under this cross-national measure of temporary employment, while EU countries tend not to. While some countries have a contract for ‘intermittent’ employment and count these workers separately, other countries do not.

Economies differ, making it difficult to find consistent trends across countries. For example, recessions tend to trigger increases in the incidence of temporary employment as a proportion of total wage employment, either because temporary employment grows faster than total employment, or, conversely, it declines more slowly than total employment. For example, in Canada, temporary employment as a proportion of wage employment increased between 2008 and 2009 because permanent employment declined faster during the global crisis (Galarneau 2010).⁵ Yet data from Spain show the reverse; nonstandard employment dropped significantly between 2007 and 2010 because these workers were laid off more frequently than regular workers (ILO-WIEGO 2013: Box 3.2).

The Temporal Dimension

The temporal dimension intersects with the contractual dimension and with status of employment (wage/salary and self-employed). The differentiation of working time is represented most emblematically by the incidence

of part-time employment – a short-hour schedule which, in some countries, entails a significant difference in the terms of employment. For example, Japanese employers use different kinds of part-time arrangements, some of which entail a different status within the firm than that of regular workers (Houseman and Osawa 2003). In the US, part-time workers experience lower pay and benefits and greater unpredictability than full-time workers (Kalleberg et al. 2000). Temporary agency work is associated with part-time and other forms of shorter hours (Kalleberg 2011).

As already noted, part-time is the most easily measured cross-national statistic in OECD countries. The OECD defines part-time as working less than 30 hours per week in a main job. In 2011, the incidence of part-time employment was 20 percent and over of *total employment* in nine of the 32 OECD countries with data, with the highest incidence (37 percent) in the Netherlands; between 11 and 20 percent in sixteen countries; and under 10 percent in seven countries. The share of part-time employment as a percentage of total employment was more than 25 percent in five countries (ILO-WIEGO 2013; Vanek et al. 2014).

Part-time work is often associated with lesser coverage under employer-based and even socially provided insurance and other forms of social protection. In many countries it can also be associated with lower hourly pay. The OECD reports that part-time workers have lower hourly wages, fewer advancement prospects, and less long-term employment than workers in full-time jobs – even after taking account of individual and job characteristics.⁶ Limited working hours are a source of economic risk for the self-employed as well as wage workers.

Since the 1990s, as a share of total employment, part-time grew in many OECD countries (ILO-WIEGO 2013: Table 3.2). Across the OECD countries as a whole, the incidence of part-time work in total employment increased from 10.8 percent in 1990 to 16.5 percent of total employment in 2011.

The long-term trend did not change during the recent ‘great recession’. The share of part-time in total employment increased by 0.9 percentage point from 2008 to 2011 in OECD countries as a whole; in most countries with data (25 out of 32), the share of part-time employment increased over this period. The highest increases were registered in Ireland (nearly 5 percentage points) and the Republic of Korea (4 percentage points).

Part-time work affects women’s employment to a greater degree than men’s. Social context, social norms, and the extent (or lack) of public support of childcare constrain the degree to which women actually ‘choose’ their work hours (see the section below on the forces driving destandardization). As of 2011, the share of part-time in women’s total employment was highest in the Netherlands (60.5 percent) and Switzerland (45.5 percent). In 2011, in all selected OECD countries, the share of part-time work was higher among women’s employment as compared to total employment.

Other temporal dimensions of destandardization include variable hours or very low hours. For example, US workers in temporary work and in self-employment reported a higher incidence of variable hours than the average for all workers (according to an analysis of the 2005 Current Population Survey supplement in Carré and Heintz (2009)).

The Spatial Dimension

Working from home, for part or the entirety of one’s schedule, is measured in some countries. A complication arises from the multiple situations that are reflected in statistics on working from the home (e.g. US DOL 2004). Working from home as part of a telecommuting arrangement (a ‘flexibility’ benefit) is a different contractual arrangement than working full-time from home as a job requirement (as some customer service jobs), or working from home as part of own-account self-employment activities. For example, US reports on home-based work cover wage/salary workers and do not draw a distinction between those working exclusively at home

and those bringing work home from a workplace beyond observing paid and unpaid hours (US DOL 2004).

What is Measured in Developing Countries

In most developing countries, the bulk of employment is in unregistered economic units and takes multiple forms of casual employment (Chen, this volume). Thus, the issue of destandardization takes on entirely different meanings and implications. A minority of employment – in large, ‘modern’, formal (registered) sector firms – has been affected by destandardization. This pattern mirrors changes in higher income countries over the past 30 years, but with a lag. In some middle-income countries, formal sector firms have differentiated employment arrangements, making greater use of arrangements such as fixed-term hiring, temporary help, (brokered) employment, and contract labor. Cases have been documented in China, Mexico, South Africa, and, to a lesser extent, India. This pattern reflects the migration of corporate practices – and resultant forms of destandardization – transnationally. Furthermore, the recent practices of employment destandardization within transnational supply chains (e.g. extensive use of labor brokers) that are driven by the imperatives of multinational corporations are just beginning to be documented.

FORCES DRIVING DESTANDARDIZATION

Forces driving destandardization include firm strategies and their resulting labor demand, and workforce participation/labor supply, as these drivers are embedded within the nexus of state-employer interactions, state-labor relationships, and employer-worker compacts. The history of economic life entails differing regimes organizing such

relationships. In Western industrialized countries, during the post-World-War-II years until the 1970s, the dominant production regime, Fordism, was anchored in standardized mass production and a form of labor accord which entailed some sharing of productivity gains with labor as well as somewhat predictable employment constructed around a male primary breadwinner household norm. The recent period is associated with less predictable employment than in the previous 30 years. Its characterization remains in flux, including characterizations such as neo-liberal and post-Fordist regime, or emergent neo-Fordism (e.g. Gottfried 2000; Murray 2010).

Demand-driven: Long-standing Practices

As many have noted, the norm of standard employment was first experimented with by large ‘modern’ firms in the 1920s to provide management with stability in the retention of workforces (and was constructed upon a male primary breadwinner model). It was later consolidated with legal norms, negotiation (collective bargaining), and firm practices throughout manufacturing (blue-collar) and service employment during the post-World-War-II period. Nevertheless, the norm was not universally held and applied; it usually ‘came up short’ for women workers, African-Americans and Hispanics (in the US), and, broadly, those not employed in industries operating within a Fordist mass production model (e.g. agriculture, services to households).

Differentiation in employment is not entirely new. Historical practices of differentiation within the ‘modern’ firm (manufacturing in the nineteenth century) included the tier-ing of employment arrangements, even involving systems where a ‘supervisor’ organized the production process of a crew while crew members were self-employed or wage employees (Cobble and Vosko, 2000, citing Montgomery 1979). Until the mid- to

late 1970s, some form of differentiation of employment was present in large firms but not widespread. For example, some French manufacturing plants, even unionized ones, had a layer of short-term workers working alongside workers in standard, long-term, employment arrangements (Rozenblatt 1988). Importantly, the general trend toward standardized wage employment through regulation, collective bargaining, and employer practices was not universal within and across countries. For example, US key employment regulation, such as minimum wages or overtime pay, excluded domestic and agricultural employment. Part-time employment accounted for a comparatively large share of women's employment, and characterized women's incorporation, starting in the 1960s, into paid work within modern corporations⁷ (Beechey 1987; Gottfried 2000; Tilly 1996). Starting in the 1970s, developed countries' employers again revisited and systematized these patterns of differentiation – leading to destandardization. Practices of differentiation, leading to the destandardization of employment grew rapidly in the 1980s and 1990s (Carré et al. 2000; Houseman 2001).

At the macro-economy level, forces that have pushed for destandardization and, often, the debasing of the norm of employment, are the broad economic and socio-political changes which became visible in the late 1970s but started earlier in many countries. The ability of firms to organize production and exchange with ease on a transnational scale increased greatly due to an intricate combination of accessible information-communication technologies and multilateral trade agreements. With it, workforces from countries with widely different social wages (a combination of wage levels and social and economic rights) were put in direct competition for similar tasks, particularly in manufacturing but, increasingly from the 1990s, in low- and mid-level white-collar activities (e.g. Murray 2010; Standing 1997). Socio-political changes – in on-going interaction with these apparent 'economic' changes – entailed a loss of power for worker

representation organizations, unions, and labor parties. (The exact causes of this loss of power are still debated but most agree that the power balance has shifted in favor of firms and capital mobility.) In turn, this shift had implications for working conditions but also for the social wage; for example, reduced social welfare benefits (e.g. reducing access to unemployment insurance) in turn lowered workers' reservation wage, that is, the ability to wait for appropriate, desirable employment and therefore the ability to 'bargain' over job quality. Many of these changes have taken hold and in some cases accelerated during the last two decades.

These over-riding demand-side forces pushing for destandardization are most directly observed in competition based on cost-cutting, which is driven by competition through low pricing. In all sectors where labor is a significant share of production costs (primarily but not exclusively labor-intensive sectors such as those entailing in-person services), cost-cutting translates into cutting labor costs as a primary managerial goal. Cost-cutting can be achieved in other ways (reorganization of production leading to greater productivity and reduced unit costs), but firms have tended to seek labor cost cuts. In effect, firms have sought to implement multiple ways to achieve quantitative flexibility in labor deployment. In contrast, qualitative flexibility entails using the workforce composition and multi-skilling to achieve flexibility in productive capacity. Some view qualitative flexibility as less damaging to workers while others nevertheless argue that qualitative flexibility, if it leads to multi-tasking and work intensification, may erode job quality (Standing 1997).

Thus, quantitative flexibility has been achieved through differentiated employment (the volume of workers can change over time, hours of work can fluctuate) and through contracting out of so-called periphery activities (domestic sub-contracting, offshoring). Intermediated, or brokered, employment arrangements have been instrumental in this process of quantitative flexibility, and with

clear consequences for labor. When core firms substitute a business-to-business relationship for an employment relationship, they gain the ability to insulate themselves from some labor costs.

Demand-driven: Recent Patterns

Beyond the ‘re-ushering’ and systematic use of practices of employment differentiation through which firms tap into structures enabling them to cut labor costs, practices of destandardization have sprung from changes in how firms organize themselves. Recent arguments point to the reconfiguration of the firm, specifically a thorough and systemic organization of the firm relying to a greater extent than previously on business-to-business relationships to perform the core production activities of the organization. The language has shifted from ‘supply chain’ to inter-firm network production or value chains (Gereffi et al. 2005).

In manufacturing, the (partial) shift from mass production to small-run flexible specialization has also made possible the use of extensive productive capacity outside of large organizations, with their structured internal labor markets and the systems of employment that support them. Smaller-scale units can take over pieces of the core production activities but have employment systems – compensation, benefits, training and overall terms of employment – that are distinct from those of the large firm with which they have a contractual relationship. The core firm retains branding and quality control, and ‘orchestrates’ a network of domestic and international suppliers and distribution networks. It does so both to control total costs (labor and non-labor inputs) and to retain substantial flexibility in the mix of inputs and even in the type of outputs. Savings are sought and often achieved because the core firm can substitute business contracts for employment relationships, and introduces substantial distance between its internal employment practices and those of the suppliers whose output it uses.

Weil (2014) provides a recent and accessible account of the motivations and production organization that have led to employment destandardization – in his terms, ‘fissuring’:

The large business of today looks more like a small solar system, with a lead firm at its center and smaller workplaces orbiting around it. Some of these orbiting bodies have their own small moons moving about them. But as they move further away from the lead organization, the profit margins they can achieve diminish, with consequent impacts on their workforces. (Weil 2014: 43)

While this account focuses on the strategies of firms within the US context, a highly ‘unregulated’ environment (that is, lacking protective regulation for the labor and reproductive spheres), it is not unique to the US. The firms at the center of these production constellations or networks are leading multinationals, US-born but also European and Asian. They establish a pattern of organization which is adopted elsewhere, albeit with variations driven by national context (see e.g. Vanselow et al. 2010 on hotel chains).

In these production networks, profit margins achieved by ‘outer ring’ firms are lower, generating substantial pressure on labor costs and working conditions, and thus generating a mosaic of employment arrangements within a production system or product market (Freeman 2014; Weil 2014). In manufacturing, the emphasis is on the core firm’s control of quality and cost through a production network of (often) tied suppliers (Berger 2014). In other industries, the core firm may control the ‘branding’, as well as quality, and may establish standards for service performance along with as control costs, while relying upon extensive use of externalized labor as well as inter-firm contracting.

The combination of conditions, factors, incentives and strategies that have generated this type of production organization is complex. Weil (2014) summarizes them as follows. Firstly, pressures from financial capital have increased significantly over the past 30 years. The ‘tyranny’ of quarterly earnings reports and their impacts on managerial

imperatives are well known. More broadly, several factors have made for more ‘demanding capital’: institutional investors’ operations (managed pension funds, 401Ks, mutual funds) ‘breed little patience for low performance for stocks of a given risk level’ (2014: 46); private equity firms’ investments in some sectors (e.g. retail, hotels) have created tremendous pressure on core firms to yield high profits (Appelbaum and Batt 2014); and executive compensation rewards strategies for increasing a firm’s valuation on the stock market.

Secondly, Weil (2014) notes, managerial practice has adhered extensively to the pursuit of ‘core competency’ – an imperative promoted in the management literature in the name of efficiency and long-term sustainability, but also one clearly motivated by the search for cost savings. It entails stripping core firms of the operation of support activities (e.g. cafeteria, maintenance, mailroom), which are outsourced, then of central ‘operational support’ units such as payrolling and human resources management (outsourced to specialized firms), and eventually severing logistics and distribution activities from the core of the firm’s activities (manufacturing, agriculture production, and retail (2014: 57)). Thus, as core firms cut deeper into their production activities and sever growing numbers of workers from their own internal employment systems, the potential for variability across workers within a set of related, coordinated operations increases. The further from the lead firm, the greater the likelihood that employment conditions will be worse than those in the lead firm.

Thirdly, and importantly, the availability of information and communication technologies (ICTs) has enabled many of the above changes, and accelerated core firms’ moves toward coordinated – outsourced – activities. ICTs have triggered rapidly falling costs of coordination, making it possible for the core firm to orchestrate these production systems.⁸ They have also made it much easier to control and manage inventories (a crucial function in retail), to coordinate a network of suppliers

and outsource warehousing. This pattern has become visible in the United States with the highly publicized warehouse workers’ movement, strikes, and court cases against giant retailer Wal-Mart. These cases have argued that Wal-Mart, the core firm, was responsible for injuries and accidents (and more generally working conditions) taking place inside warehouses operated by warehouse specialty companies, which, in turn, hired temporary help supply companies to provide the labor force.⁹

This ‘solar system’ organization of production systems is now at the root of destandardization of employment domestically but also internationally. Global supply chains for firms from North countries color the type and variety of employment in low-income countries. Where a country’s production fits within global supply chains for a particular product, the market affects the types of export production units (Gereffi et al. 2005) and types of jobs accessible to most workers. It also generates substantial external pressures, even constraints, on the ability of national governments of low-income countries to regulate employment conditions.

This pressure occurs because core firms – particularly North countries’ core firms – not only shed labor, outsource activities, and ‘coordinate’ activities that are important to their production model, they also have the ability to set explicit and detailed standards of quality as well as the power to enforce these norms of production. Once exerted within national production chains (e.g. automobile production in the US in the 1960s–1980s), the power to demand norms of production, and exact reductions in the cost of supply contracts, has extended globally. Offshoring of core production first affected manufacturing (in the 1980s and 1990s), and moved to white-collar work in the 2000s for routinized clerical work and some higher-end office work.

Of course, the implications of this type of organization of production and deployment of labor differ across national contexts. The particular patterns of divergence from the national norm for ‘regular’ employment

and the mix of types of nonstandard forms of employment used are affected by the national regulatory contexts in the productive and reproductive spheres.

Yet not all destandardization is triggered by changes in the production model or enabling technologies, even though the use of the latter is shaped by the dogged pursuit of labor cost savings. All too frequently, in the US and in other countries with low regulation or weak enforcement, firms, large and small, have sought to evade employment standards, and sometimes violate them. Evasion – setting up arrangements not anticipated by regulation – or seeking other ‘exit options’ from employment regulation have been the hallmark of low-wage industries in most rich industrial countries (Gautié and Schmitt 2010). Labor standards violation is particularly salient in service sectors where workplaces are scattered (though tied into a concentrated corporate structure) and often small, and where conventional forms of enforcement through audits or labor inspections are ineffective. Bernhardt, Boushey and Tilly (2011), and Milkman et al. (2012) provide US evidence for the pervasiveness of labor standards violations in some sectors.

The consequences for labor of networked production organizations with centralized power are that employment conditions vary across firms, across regions, and across countries. Variation in employment conditions across firms increases with, but also fosters, difficulties with enforcing labor standards. Variation across regions similarly reflects differences in regulatory regimes and worker bargaining power – as is the case across US regions. Variation across countries reflects differences in national regulations and is further accentuated with the destandardization of employment.

Enabling Conditions for Demand to Drive Changes in Employment

Demand-driven changes in employment are enabled by other institutional factors and

social phenomena. The availability of workforces with weak or limited bargaining power makes it easier, or even possible, to not only implement employment destandardization within the firm but also realize cost savings, thanks to contractual relationships with businesses with lower labor costs. Such workforces include those compelled to work under public assistance work requirements in some countries, or new arrivals to the country who may be economically vulnerable and less informed about labor standards and labor rights. Weaker bargaining power in the workplace is also caused by regulatory changes such as those making it harder for workers to join a union, or harder for unions to secure recognition as a bargaining agent, or harder for unions to achieve gains in collective bargaining or resist ‘give backs’. For example, in the 1990s and 2000s, the US witnessed the signing of so-called two-tier collective bargaining agreements which allow firms to pay newer cohorts of workers (recent hires) a lower wage and reduced benefits from those of earlier cohorts. Regulatory changes that overlook certain employment arrangements – thus exempting them from labor standards coverage, or that weaken enforcement of labor standards – for example, making it rare to monitor working conditions in small, scattered workplaces, as is the case with some service activities – create conditions in which differentiation in employment conditions can consolidate and generate varied standards for employment.

Other enabling conditions on the workforce side include the availability of workers with constrained options, for example people with care responsibilities (primarily women) seeking options other than full-time work, or experiencing the consequences of a track record of short-term, part-time, work or of interrupted work careers. In this way, demand-driven patterns make use of socially shaped gender roles (Gottfried 1992, 2009; Vosko 2003). In countries with few explicit commitments to changing structures in order to separate gender from role prescription, existing structures (governing

reproduction as well as production) make it difficult for women to fully participate in the labor market. In contrast, some societies have adopted policies that aim to make it possible to meet care responsibilities while also partaking in the labor market, as for example, Norway, where gender equality at work has been conceived as the precursor to gender equality in the private/domestic sphere.

According to some, a slack labor market (high unemployment or low employment to population ratio) makes the implementation of firm strategies all the easier. While this is certainly true, destandardization is a long-standing pattern that does not appear to abate. It has been exacerbated during the 'great recession' because each economic crisis offers firms/employers an opportunity to reset employment conditions.

Neither Enabling Nor Fully Countering: Unions and State in the Face of Destandardization

Destandardization of employment has not been a continuous process, nor one even embraced consistently and universally by employers, let alone unions. It is difficult and risky to paint union stances and strategies with a broad brush, because of the large variety of unions and of nonstandard employment arrangements. Unions have had a complicated and somewhat ambiguous set of strategies around nonstandard arrangements, and approaches vary cross-nationally. As noted, prior to the 1980s, unions had in some instances tolerated differentiated employment, for example, temporary workers alongside workers with standard arrangements. They also organized far fewer workers relatively speaking in casual and short-term arrangements. As with other forms of employment diverging from the norm (e.g. work for households), nonstandard arrangements were often perceived as marginal (or not seen), particularly when they concerned women and other subordinate groups in the labor market. Nevertheless, the noticeable growth

and implantation of short-term employment during the 1980s, 1990s and 2000s triggered concerted union attention – in countries where unions had a significant presence in the workplace and a role in policy. The stance of most unions was to negotiate at the industry level and advocate at the national level for the outright prohibition of temporary agency work in particular, but also other forms of short-term employment. Most approaches sought to control the conversion of regular jobs into ones staffed with fixed-term contracts, and to limit the repeated use of such contracts for the same worker or the same position. When this approach led to limited legislative change and/or ineffective or impractical enforcement (particularly in periods of low job growth), union federations moved toward negotiating for 'rules' to govern the use of nonstandard arrangements, limit abusive practices, and offer workers equivalent social protection when holding a nonstandard job arrangement meant reduced protection. (At the European level, these approaches led to the adoption of a European directive on fixed-term employment to be ratified by member countries. The adoption of such a directive for temporary agency work has proved far more controverted because of lobbying by the temporary staffing industry.)

Unions' stance and strategies on part-time work options have been varied, in large part because part-time entails a diverse mix of terms and conditions of employment. Where part-time developed as a primary means of entry-level hiring and where women with (or assumed to have) care responsibilities have been concentrated in it, accommodation without activism has mostly prevailed. Where part-time was developed as a worker benefit (albeit one with positives for firms), and where it has been a question of enabling workers in full-time jobs to convert to part-time, unions – and the state – have had a constructive role, and a strategy to argue for worker-centered flexibility. In some countries and regions, the option to work part-time has been conceived in a context where *both* full-time and part-time work should be possible,

if supported by policies fostering greater gender equality in the reproductive sphere, primarily the family.

In these cycles of passivity, resistance, and accommodation, the national state has played an important role; indirectly, with regulating contextual factors within which employment relationships occur (labor and immigration laws, reproductive sphere policies), and directly, with addressing (or not) destandardization. Most governments, playing ‘catch-up’ with the proliferation of nonstandard arrangements in the 1970s and 1980s, either sought to prohibit (e.g. Germany’s early ruling on labor brokers), or to limit the use of contractual deviations from the standard employment norm. Yet, controlling and enforcing restrictions also meant devising norms for some arrangements, for example, establishing a legal status for fixed-term employment. In so doing, the state has played an ambiguous role; on the one hand, providing legal standing and norms for a floor of protection for workers with nonstandard arrangements, and, on the other hand, effectively legitimating such arrangements and, importantly, relying upon existing forms of gender and racial-ethnic hierarchies and further consolidating them. On the side of proactivity, examples such as the 1980s French government compelling collective bargaining in the temporary staffing industry has achieved some equivalency in the treatment of temp workers relative to the norm (nondiscrimination in pay, in access to credit, or housing). On the side of enabling the perpetuation of the gender division of labor in the market and home, state action has allowed nonstandard arrangements to spread (e.g. as the primary arrangement for parents) without, or with limited, concurrent policy efforts to alter the terms and conditions within which (primarily) women and others with care responsibilities engage with, and are incorporated into, the labor market. Some have argued that the policy attention to specific nonstandard arrangements, and the degree to which worker access to social protection has been facilitated by state action,

have been shaped by population groups’ relative position in the socio-economic hierarchy, as was the case of women workers (Adams and Deakin 2014; Gottfried 2000; Vosko et al 2009). The same holds for immigrants and others whose engagement with the labor market has historically been ‘hemmed in’ in ways that narrow occupational options and work experience. In the US, a low regulation country where little social protection is universal and state-based, very few attempts have been made to extend by mandate any of the employment-based social protections (a recent national health insurance law aims for universal coverage but excludes those working under 30 hours a week from the employer mandate). In some countries the general political-economy climate favored the removal of protective regulation, the weakening of rights under standard employment and the proliferation of nonstandard arrangements.

Supply-driven

Beyond the availability of workforces with constrained options, and/or limited availability to bargain on their terms of employment, are supply-side factors. Over the past 30 years, some workers have also sought arrangements enabling them to maintain a more tenuous relationship to the firm than has been conventionally understood with standard employment. Arguments have been made that so-called freelancers who work as contract workers choose to do so in order to maintain flexibility as to when they work (over the course of the year), with whom, and how they carry out their tasks. Own-account self-employed workers – that is, self-employed workers without employer responsibility for any others – have always existed but have become visible because they are connected to large firms with internal employment systems and deliver tasks performed by wage employees in standard employment in earlier times. Most notably, in North America these workers carry out tasks such as desktop publishing, editing, and

media related work which supports the activities of the firm (finance, insurance). Whether such activities remain the purview of own-account workers or eventually get re-grouped and are either subsumed into a contracting company (providing services under a business contract with wage employees) or are brought back inside the lead firm remains to be seen. And whether such patterns of own-account employment are driven by worker life choices or mere adaptation to the employment opportunities in their field of choice continues to be debated (Freelancers Union and Elance-oDesk 2014).

Importantly, however, there has been a movement toward demands for greater choice for workers, particularly around the scheduling of work hours, and the inter-spacing of periods of non-work across the course of the work career. The counterpart to destandardization being demand-driven, is destandardization of lesser size that has been caused by policies to provide greater choice over the work career. Most notably, policies to provide higher quality part-time work options, or the ability to be sent on project assignment to another firm, or to interrupt one's career, contribute to the movement away from a norm of full-time, year-round, employment with a single employer and with expectation of durable attachment.

In sum, whether or not forces toward destandardization are understood to be primarily demand-driven or supply-driven in large part derives from when changes in employment take place (when worker individual or collective bargaining power is ascendant or weakening), as well as the particular national institutional setting (enhancing/weakening worker power) from which employment arrangements diverge (whether protective or not) and within which new arrangements are implemented (for example, whether parental employment is supported).

CONCLUSION

The process of destandardization is broadly shared across advanced industrialized

countries, but the incidence of nonstandard arrangements varies across countries. This variation underscores the important role that national institutions (regulating the productive and reproductive spheres) play in employment even as firms have, on the whole, sought similar changes in employment.

Overall, the different forms of nonstandard contractual arrangements, schedules, and work locations act as the 'canaries in the mine' of destandardization, the manifestations of likely deeper change in how firms are organized, in the bargains that they exact from workers, and in the extent to which workers have alternatives or a degree of choice in contractual, schedule, or spatial arrangements. Thus, destandardization underscores how norms of employment evolve, are undermined, altered, even improved in some cases, and how historically contingent and country specific they are.

In the debates about how much and which parts of destandardization are driven by labor supply changes (composition or patterns of labor force participation), as opposed to demand-side factors, it has become increasingly clear that the organization of production and employment drives many of the changes that have yielded nonstandard employment arrangements, as well as fluctuating and unpredictable working hours in some sectors.

Because destandardization is a process, and firms' experimentation with forms of employment is on-going, statistics incompletely track the growth and distribution of such employment arrangements, in turn making it difficult to systematically analyze the implications for workers. Existing statistics only give partial information on some but not all arrangements. Even for those that are documented, time series are short and longitudinal data permitting the analysis of worker trajectories (in and out of nonstandard and regular jobs, and in and out of unemployment) are only available in some countries. Countries with legal coding of employment contracts are better able to document nonstandard employment, whereas those with common law governance of employment are

less able to generate reliable statistics without extensive diagnostic survey questions (that are quite possible but resource intensive). Two priorities for statistical documentation are particularly salient: operationalizing definitions for arrangements not well tracked so far (e.g. on-site contractor workforces), and implementing criteria for capturing economically dependent self-employed workers.

Understanding the dynamics and possible directions of destandardization requires industry-specific case studies grounded in particular national contexts. Such a case study approach enables us to analyze the interactions among institutional contexts for product markets, the productive and reproductive spheres, firm strategies as embedded in their institutional contexts, and workforce agency. Case studies surface the important role of the state, worker organizations, and choices of firms. Furthermore, they yield textured accounts of firm strategies and implications for workers, taking account of regional variation in the regulatory frame (within country) and of spatial dimensions of destandardization that tend to be less visible in national, aggregate analysis.

The state and unions – where they have power and influence – will continue to confront the process of destandardization as new forms of nonstandard arrangements develop and older ones are tapped into and repurposed. Salient emergent patterns challenge the boundary between wage/salary and self-employment. Certain forms of own-account employment, particularly those affecting jobs at the bottom of the occupational ladder, have already caused concern because they represent a significant shift of economic risk onto workers with few means and little autonomy to affect their economic fortunes (through entrepreneurship). Web-mediated forms of work present new challenges. Web platforms are now used to broker matches of customers with ‘tasks’ and ‘bidders’ who are self-employed. ‘Work on demand’ exposes individuals to fluctuations in demand, yet their opportunities to act autonomously, to accrue resources, and to shape their trajectory in the ‘market’, is unclear and much debated.

For example, the web-based company Task Rabbit has had to contend with the ambiguities of coordinating service, providing some task standardization and quality control (e.g., providing guidelines on behavior and setting expectations) and a wage floor while maintaining an arm’s length relationship with the workers, describing them as micro-entrepreneurs or contractors (TaskRabbit website 2015). These and other arrangements that straddle existing legal categories for wage and self-employment have prompted legal and policy debates on how labor and social protection rights might be extended.

Whether destandardization will lead to the thorough reconfiguration of main socio-economic strata, or classes, remains unclear. How socio-economic stratification will get reconfigured within national borders, and globally, is not settled and is very much part of the research agenda in sociology, economics, and political science. How much of the class reconfiguration – beyond the established fact of growing income and asset inequality – will be shaped by, respectively, capital concentration, the geographic location of production, the allocation of risk and insecurity, the distribution of opportunity, and labor power is the work facing social sciences going forward.

NOTES

- 1 Historical instances of temporary agency work were circumscribed to specific occupations (e.g. stevedores) or situations (see Canada’s labor brokers in early immigration in Vosko (2000)).
- 2 A failed UK courier company did not give advance notice of their job loss to 1,000 ‘self-employed’ drivers of their job loss (Neate and Butler 2014).
- 3 This section on quantitative dimensions draws heavily upon Chapter 3 in ILO-WIEGO (2013) and Vanek et al. (2014).
- 4 Involuntary part-time and temporary workers are defined as those who are engaged in these forms of employment because they cannot find either full-time or permanent jobs.
- 5 Galerneau (2010: Table 1, p. 6); based on the Canadian Labour Force Survey.
- 6 OECD (2010: 3). Involuntary part-time employment accounted for 2.5 percent of total employment

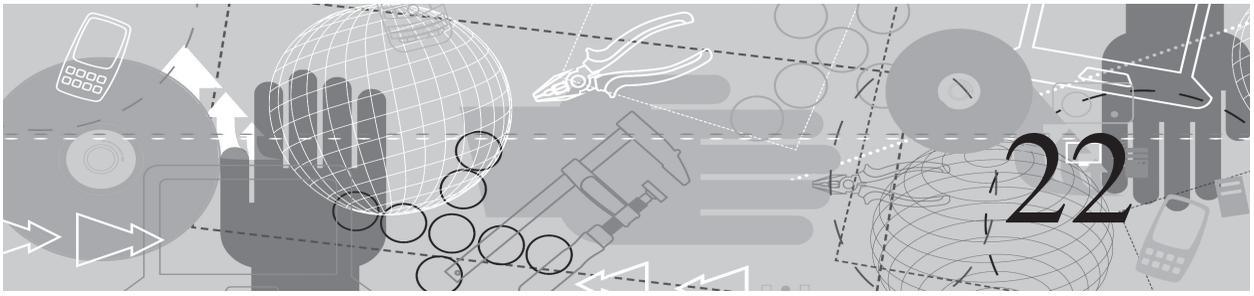
- in 2008 (OECD online: 'Incidence of Involuntary Part-time Workers').
- 7 Women had worked from the home (boarders, childcare, home production for markets) and in small enterprises, often family-owned.
 - 8 The falling information costs in trucking made it possible for firms to give up their own transportation and warehousing operations and facilitated the use of 'independent' contracting for drivers (Weil 2014).
 - 9 ICT has also had a more proximate impact on destandardization of schedules. Witness the increasingly fragmented staffing and scheduling patterns in service industries (fast food, retail) which has been facilitated by nimble software enabling operators to match labor supply to small changes in customer patterns (e.g. Haley-Lock 2011).

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Informal Employment: Theory and Reality

Martha Alter Chen

INTRODUCTION

Today, there is renewed interest in the informal economy worldwide. In part, this is because the informal economy has grown worldwide and also emerged in new guises or in unexpected places. In part, this stems from the significant expansion of informal employment during the recent great recession (Horn 2009, 2011). Today, informal employment represents more than half of non-agricultural employment in most developed regions and over 80 percent of non-agricultural employment in South Asia (Vanek et al. 2014). If data on informal employment in agriculture were included in these estimates, the proportion of informal employment in total employment would be even higher, especially in still heavily agricultural regions like sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia.

This renewed interest also stems from the recognition of the links between informality and growth, on the one hand, and the links between informality, poverty, and inequality on the other. Much of the informal economy

today is integrally linked to the formal economy and contributes to the overall economy; and supporting the working poor in the informal economy is a key pathway to reducing income poverty and inequality. Also, women tend to be concentrated in the more economically vulnerable forms of informal employment, so that supporting working poor women in the informal economy is a key pathway to reducing women's poverty and gender inequality (Chen et al. 2004, 2005).

Today, the informal economy is a field of study in its own right, drawing an increasing number of scholars from multiple disciplines ranging from economics, sociology, anthropology, and industrial relations to gender studies, political science, and urban planning. Recent scholarship on informality focuses variously on the size and composition of the informal economy; what drives or causes informality; what the consequences of informality are in terms of welfare or productivity; and what linkages exist between informality and formality, growth, poverty and inequality. This resurgence of interest in the informal

economy has generated significant rethinking of the concept and improvements in official measurement of the phenomenon.

The challenge now is to retool the standard disciplinary approaches to work and employment to reflect the reality of informal work today. This chapter seeks to contribute to this retooling. The chapter opens with an overview of the historical debates, recent rethinking, and recent data on informal work and, then, highlights important empirical and conceptual issues related to it. The chapter is divided into four parts. The first part provides a brief historical overview of the informal sector concept and related debates. The second summarizes recent rethinking of the concept, including the expanded concept of informal employment and holistic models of the causes and consequences of informality. The third part presents recent official estimates of the size and composition of the informal workforce. The fourth part describes two key forms of informal work – own-account self-employment and home-based industrial outwork – which challenge standard notions of labor and capital, autonomy and risk, the workplace, and the labor process more generally. The concluding section reflects on key challenges posed by the persistence and pervasiveness of informal work for theories of work and labor, including the sociology of work and employment.

HISTORICAL DEBATES

Over the years, the debate on the large and heterogeneous informal economy has crystallized into four dominant schools of thought (bridging the disciplines of anthropology, economics and sociology) regarding its nature and composition, as follows:

- The *Dualist* school sees the informal sector of the economy as comprising marginal activities – distinct from and not related to the formal sector – that provide income for the poor and a safety net in times of crisis (Hart 1973; ILO 1972; Sethuraman 1976; Tokman 1978).

- The *Structuralist* school sees the informal economy in terms of subordinated economic units (micro-enterprises) and workers that serve to reduce input and labor costs and, thereby, increase the competitiveness of large capitalist firms (Castells and Portes 1989; Moser 1978).
- The *Legalist* school sees the informal sector as comprised of ‘plucky’ micro-entrepreneurs who choose to operate informally in order to avoid the costs, time and effort of formal registration and who need property rights to convert their assets into legally recognized assets (de Soto 1989, 2000).
- The *Voluntarist* school also focuses on informal entrepreneurs who deliberately seek to avoid regulations and taxation but, unlike the legalist school, does not blame the cumbersome registration procedures (Maloney 2004).

Each school of thought subscribes to a different causal theory of what gives rise to the informal economy.

- The *Dualists, both economists and anthropologists*, argue that informal operators are excluded from modern economic opportunities due to imbalances between the growth rates of the population and of modern industrial employment, and a mismatch between people’s skills and the structure of modern economic opportunities.
- The *Structuralists, mainly anthropologists and sociologists*, argue that the nature of capitalism/capitalist growth drives informality: specifically, the attempts by formal firms to reduce labor costs and increase competitiveness and the reaction of formal firms to the power of organized labor, state regulation of the economy (notably, taxes and social legislation), to global competition, and to the process of industrialization (notably, off-shore industries, sub-contracting chains, and flexible specialization).
- The *Legalists, mainly economists*, argue that a hostile legal system leads the self-employed to operate informally with their own informal extra-legal norms.
- The *Voluntarists, mainly economists*, argue that informal operators choose to operate informally – after weighing the cost-benefits of informality relative to formality.

From yet another perspective – more common in the Global North than in the Global South – the informal sector is seen as a *shadow*

economy with illegal or hidden/underground production. Illegal production refers to production activities which are forbidden by law or which become illegal when carried out by unauthorized producers; while *underground production* refers to production activities which are legal when performed in compliance with regulations, but which are deliberately concealed from authorities (United Nations Statistical Commission 1993). Any type of production unit (formal or informal) can engage in any type of production (illegal; legal underground; legal, not underground).

Given the heterogeneity of the informal economy, there is merit to each of these perspectives as each school reflects one or another ‘slice of the (informal) pie’. But the informal economy as a whole is more heterogeneous and complex than the sum of these perspectives would suggest. Some informal entrepreneurs choose, or volunteer, to work informally. Yet informal employment tends to expand during economic crises or downturns, suggesting that necessity – in addition to choice – drives informality. Also, informalization of employment relations is a feature of contemporary economic growth and the global mode of production. Further, in many developing countries, most workers never had a formal job and are engaged in either traditional or modern forms of informal work. The empirical and policy question is: what is the relative size – in terms of units, workers, and output – of the different components of the informal economy in different countries?

RECENT RETHINKING

Over the past two decades, there has been a good deal of rethinking about the informal economy, including efforts to take into account all aspects of informality and all categories of informal workers. Statisticians and informed users of data have focused on statistical definitions and measures in order to improve official labor force and

other economic data on informality. Other observers have focused on understanding the composition of the informal economy and what drives its different components, as well as the linkages of the informal economy with the formal economy and formal regulations.

Expanded Statistical Definition

The International Labour Office (ILO), the international Expert Group on Informal Sector Statistics (called the Delhi Group), and the global network Women in Informal Employment: Globalizing and Organizing (WIEGO) worked together to broaden the concept and definition of the informal sector to incorporate certain types of informal employment that had been excluded from the definition adopted by the International Conference of Labour Statisticians (ICLS) in 1993.

The expanded definition, adopted by the International Labour Conference in 2002 and the ICLS in 2003, focuses on the nature of employment in addition to the characteristics of enterprises and includes all types of informal employment, both inside and outside informal enterprises.

Informal employment, so defined, is a large and heterogeneous category. For the purposes of analysis and policymaking it is useful to, first, sub-divide informal employment into self-employment and wage employment,¹ and then within these broad categories, into more homogeneous sub-categories according to status in employment, as follows:²

- 1 Informal self-employment including:
 - employers in informal enterprises
 - own-account workers in informal enterprises
 - contributing family workers (in informal and formal enterprises)
 - members of informal producers’ cooperatives (where these exist).³
- 2 Informal wage employment: employees hired without social protection contributions by formal or informal enterprises or as paid domestic workers by households. Certain types of wage work

are more likely than others to be informal. These include:

- employees of informal enterprises
- casual or day laborers
- temporary or part-time workers
- contract workers
- unregistered or undeclared workers
- industrial outworkers (also called homeworkers)
- paid domestic workers.

To sum up, there are three related official statistical terms and definitions which are often used imprecisely and interchangeably: the *informal sector* refers to the production and employment that takes place in unincorporated small or unregistered enterprises (1993 ICLS); *informal employment* refers to employment without legal and social protection – both inside and outside the informal sector (2003 ICLS); and the *informal economy* refers to all units, activities, and workers so defined and the output from them. Together, they form the broad base of the workforce and economy, both nationally and globally.

Holistic Conceptual Models

There are different theories of what comprises, characterizes and gives rise to informality.

Historically, the focus has been on the self-employed, both entrepreneurs and survivalists. More recently, there is growing recognition that informalization of employment relations is a feature of contemporary economic growth and the global economy, and that informal wage workers hired by formal firms or households are growing in numbers in many countries. Many mainstream economists subscribe to the notion that the informal economy is comprised of informal entrepreneurs who choose – or volunteer – to work informally (Maloney 2004). Yet other economists recognize that informal employment tends to expand during economic crises or downturns, suggesting that necessity – in addition to choice – drives informality. But there is also increasing recognition that different factors drive different

segments of the informal economy. In recent years, several sets of observers have posited models that seek to capture the different components of informality and the different factors driving informality.

WIEGO Network

The global action-research-policy network, Women in Informal Employment: Globalizing and Organizing (WIEGO),⁴ has developed and tested a multi-segmented model of informal employment defined in terms of status in employment.⁵

In the late 1990s, WIEGO commissioned two reviews of the links between informality, poverty, and gender: one of available literature (Sethuraman 1998), the other of available statistics (Charmes 1998). Both reviews found a similar hierarchy of earnings and segmentation by status in employment and by sex. These common findings provided the basis for the WIEGO multi-segmented model illustrated in Figure 22.1.

In 2004, WIEGO commissioned data analysts to test this model in six developing countries – Costa Rica, Egypt, El Salvador, Ghana, India, and South Africa – by analyzing national data in those countries (Chen et al. 2005). Data for casual day laborers and industrial outworkers were not available in these countries. But the available data allowed for a comparison of employment status (measured at the individual level) and poverty (measured at the household level), making it possible to estimate the percentage of workers in specific employment statuses who were from poor households (what WIEGO calls ‘poverty risk’). In all countries, average earnings went down and the risk of being from a poor household went up as workers moved down the employment statuses in the WIEGO model.

World Bank Latin America Division

In 2007, the Latin America Division of the World Bank published *Informality: Exit and Exclusion*, a book co-authored by Guillermo Perry, William F. Maloney, Omar Arias, Pablo Fajnzylber, and Jaime Saavedra. The co-authors

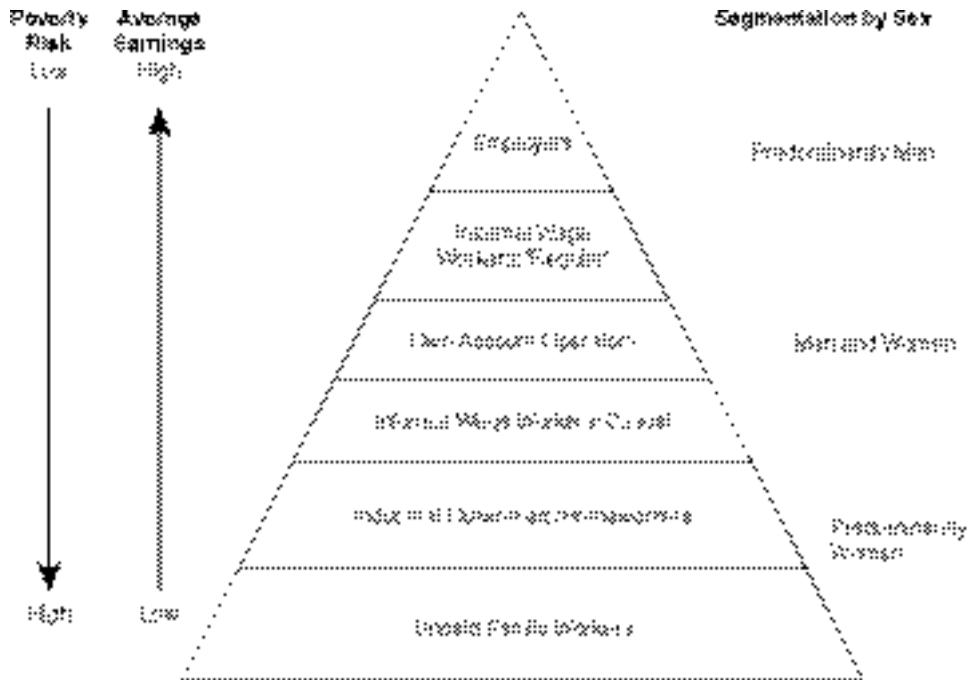


Figure 22.1 WIEGO model of informal employment: hierarchy of earnings and poverty risk by employment status and sex

Source: Chen et al. (2004, 2005).

proposed a holistic model of the composition and causes of informality. In regard to the composition of informality, the authors specified ‘three pairs’ of economic agents. In regard to what causes or drives informality, the authors specified different forms of both Exit (voluntary informality) and Exclusion (involuntary informality); see Box 22.1.

Ravi Kanbur

In 2009, development economist Ravi Kanbur posited a conceptual framework for distinguishing between four types of economic responses to regulation by the self-employed, as follows:

- A – Stay within the ambit of the regulation and comply.
- B – Stay within the ambit of the regulation but do not comply.
- C – Adjust activity to move out of the ambit of the regulation.

D – Outside the ambit of the regulation in the first place, so no need to adjust.

Under the Kanbur framework, category A is ‘formal’. The other three categories are ‘informal’. B is the category that is most clearly ‘illegal’. According to Kanbur, regulations do not apply to either C or D, but for different reasons. Consider, for example, when existing regulations are binding for a specified minimum size of enterprise. Category C will adjust its size to come below the minimum size, while category D was below the minimum size in any case so the regulation does not affect it at all (Kanbur 2009).

In sum, most causal theories are valid – but only for certain segments of informal employment; and no single causal theory can explain each segment of informal employment. Further, the four dominant causal explanations – *exit* from, *exclusion* from, and

Box 22.1 World Bank 2007 Model of Informality: Composition and Causes

'Three Pairs' of Economic Agents

- **Labor:**
 - those with insufficient human capital to get a formal job
 - those who quit a formal job in order to: be their own boss, make more money, avoid taxes, and/or enjoy flexibility.
- **Micro-firms:**
 - which have no intention or potential for growth and, hence, no intention of engaging with the state
 - which are stymied by high barriers to entry.
- **Firms:**
 - which are avoiding taxation and other regulations
 - which are partially registering their workers and sales.

Causal Theory #1: Different Forms of Exit

- **Opportunistic evasion:**
 - tax evasion

- illegal activities
- avoidance of labor codes:
 - unprotected workforce
 - sub-contracted production
- **Defensive evasion** in response to:
 - burdensome state
 - captured state
 - weak state
- **Passive evasion and state irrelevance:**
 - pre-modern or bazaar economy
 - informal or non-state institutions

Causal Theory #2: Different Forms of Exclusion

- **Labor market segmentation** – prevents workers from getting formal jobs
- **Burdensome entry regulations** – prevents enterprises from formalizing
- **Hiring practices of firms** – in response to excessive tax and regulatory burdens

Source: Perry et al. (2007).

entry barriers to formal regulations, as well as *exploitation* by formal firms (the 'Four Es') – are not a sufficient set of causal explanations. Wider structural forces and informal regulations also drive informality. Some of the self-employed choose – or volunteer – to work informally in order to avoid registration and taxation. Others do not choose to work informally but do so out of necessity, social conditioning, or tradition. Many of the self-employed would welcome efforts to reduce barriers to registration and related transaction costs, especially if they were to receive the benefits of formalizing. The recent rise in informal wage employment is associated with the decline in formal wage employment and the informalization of once-formal jobs. Informalization is due, in large measure, to the hiring practices of employers, who opt to retain a small core regular workforce and hire other workers on an informal basis in order to avoid payroll taxes, employer contributions to social security or pensions, or

other obligations as employers. In some such cases, payroll taxes and social security contributions are avoided by mutual consent of the employer and employee.⁶

RECENT DATA AND ESTIMATES

What follows is a summary of recently available data on the size and composition of the informal economy in developing countries, and six cities in China, as well as non-standard work in developed countries.⁷ The national data from 47 developing countries were compiled by the International Labour Organization using a tabulation plan developed with the WIEGO network (ILO and WIEGO 2013). The regional estimates for developing countries and the compilation of national data for developed countries were prepared by James Heintz and Françoise Carré, respectively (Vanek et al. 2014).

Developing Countries

Size of Informal Employment

Informal employment comprises more than one-half of non-agricultural employment in most regions of the developing world – specifically 82 percent in South Asia, 66 percent in Sub-Saharan Africa, 65 percent in East and Southeast Asia and 51 percent in Latin America. In the Middle East and North Africa informal employment is 45 percent of non-agricultural employment. Eastern Europe and Central Asia have the lowest level – at 10 percent – which reflects the legacy of a centrally planned economy where informal activities were considered illegal and even forbidden. Estimates for six cities in China show that 33 percent of non-agricultural employment is informal.

However the regional estimates hide great diversity within a region: see Table 22.1.

Composition of Informal Employment

Informal employment is a large and heterogeneous category. Many different types of employment belong under the broad umbrella ‘informal’. This includes employment in informal enterprises as well as outside informal enterprises – in households or in formal enterprises. It also includes the self-employed and the wage employed and, within these

broad categories, the sub-categories according to status in employment. Status in employment refers to the *allocation of control* over work and its output as well as the *allocation of associated risk*. This classification is used by national statistical services in collecting and tabulating national labor force data.

Informal Employment Inside and Outside the Informal Sector

Informal employment *inside the informal sector* is comprised of all employment in informal enterprises, including employers, employees, own-account workers, contributing family workers, and members of cooperatives. Informal employment *outside the informal sector* includes: (a) employees in formal enterprises (including public enterprises, the public sector, private firms, and non-profit institutions) not covered by social protection; (b) employees in households (e.g. domestic workers) without social protection; and (c) contributing family workers in formal enterprises.

In all regions, with the exception of Eastern Europe and Central Asia, and in urban China, informal employment in the informal sector is a larger component of non-agricultural employment than informal employment outside the informal sector. It ranges from a high of 69 percent of non-agricultural employment to 7 percent for Eastern Europe and Central Asia: see Table 22.2.

Table 22.1 Informal employment as a percentage of total non-agricultural employment, 2004–2010

South Asia: 82%	Range: 62% in Sri Lanka to 84% in India
Sub-Saharan Africa: 66%	Range: 33% in South Africa to 52% in Zimbabwe to 82% in Mali
East and Southeast Asia: 65%	Range: 42% in Thailand to 73% in Indonesia
Latin America: 51%	Range: 40% in Uruguay to 75% in Bolivia
Middle East and North Africa: 45%	Range: 31% in Turkey to 57% in West Bank and Gaza
Eastern Europe and Central Asia: 10%	Range: 6% in Serbia to 16% in Moldova

Source: Vanek et al. (2014).

Wage and Self-Employment

In three of the five regions with data, plus urban China, non-agricultural informal employment is almost evenly split between wage and self-employment. However, wage employment dominates non-agricultural informal employment in Eastern Europe and Central Asia while self-employment is dominant in Sub-Saharan Africa: see Table 22.3.

Self-Employment

Self-employment is comprised of employers, employees, own-account workers, and

Table 22.2 Informal employment inside and outside the informal sector as a percentage of total non-agricultural employment, 2004–2010

South Asia	69% informal sector, 15% outside informal sector
East and Southeast Asia	57% informal sector, 14% outside informal sector
Sub-Saharan Africa	53% informal sector, 14% outside informal sector
Latin American and the Caribbean	34% informal sector, 16% outside informal sector
Urban China	22% informal sector, 13% outside informal sector
Eastern Europe and Central Asia	7% informal sector, 16% outside informal sector

Source: Vanek et al. (2014).

Note: Due to the possible existence of some formal wage employment in the informal sector, the sum of informal sector employment and informal employment outside the informal sector (Table 22.2) may be slightly higher than the estimates of total informal employment (Table 22.1).

contributing family workers. Across the regions own-account workers are the largest category, comprising from 53 percent of informal employment in Sub-Saharan Africa to 33 percent in East and Southeast Asia (excluding China). The second largest category is contributing family workers who comprise from 5 percent of informal

Table 22.3 Informal wage employment and informal self-employment as a percentage of informal non-agricultural employment, 2004–2010

Latin America and the Caribbean	48% wage employment, 52% self-employment
South Asia	47% wage employment, 53% self-employment
East and Southeast Asia (excluding China)	49%, wage employment, 51% self-employment
Urban China	47% wage employment, 51% self-employment
Eastern Europe and Central Asia	59% wage employment, 41% self-employment
Sub-Saharan Africa	33% wage employment, 67% self-employment

Source: Vanek et al. (2014).

employment in Eastern Europe and Central Asia to 12 percent in South Asia.

Few informal workers are employers – only 2 percent in Sub-Saharan Africa, Eastern Europe and South Asia to 9 percent in East and Southeast Asia (excluding China), but as high as 16 percent in urban China.

Developed Countries

In developed countries, concepts such as non-standard or atypical work are often used to refer to employment arrangements that would be identified as informal employment in developing countries. The arrangements in question are generally referred to as non-standard employment because they tend not to afford workers the protections and benefits built around the norm of regular, full-time, year-round wage employment. The term ‘non-standard work’ includes: *own-account self-employed* workers without employees; *temporary* (or fixed-term) workers, including temporary help agency and on-call or contract company workers; and some *part-time* workers. The significance of non-standard employment arrangements in developed countries is shown in 2008 data for OECD countries:

- Own-account self-employment is as high as 21 and 20 percent of *total employment* in Greece and Turkey respectively; for 11 of the 28 countries with data it ranges from 10 to 19 percent of *total employment*, and for the remaining 15 countries, 4 to 9 percent of *total employment*.
- Temporary or fixed-term work ranges from a high of 29 percent of *waged and salaried employment* in Spain to a low of about 4 percent in Slovakia and the United States; of the 28 countries with data, temporary employment is over 20 percent of *waged and salaried work* in 4 countries, from 10 to 18 percent in 12 countries, and from 4 to 9 percent in 12 countries.
- Part-time employment is over 20 percent of *total employment* in 8 of the 29 countries with data, reaching a high of 36 percent in the Netherlands; between 11 and 19 percent in 13 countries, and under 10 percent in 8 countries (Vanek et al. 2014).

TWO ILLUSTRATIVE GROUPS

This section examines two key groups of informal workers – own-account self-employed and home-based industrial outworkers – to illustrate how informal work complicates standard notions of labor and capital, autonomy and risk, the workplace and the labor process more generally. By the second half of the twentieth century in the Global North, self-employment and industrial outwork were widely viewed as obsolete remnants of past forms of economic organization: both forms of work were expected to disappear with mass production and modern capitalist growth. Contrary to predictions, self-employment has grown in developed countries, especially own-account self-employment which represents anywhere from 4 to 21 percent of total employment in OECD countries (Vanek et al. 2014). Meanwhile, in the Global South, where mass production in large firms never became a dominant form of production, informal employment continues to represent the major share of the workforce, and self-employment represents a significant share of informal employment. And, in both the Global North and South, industrial outwork has become a key feature of modern global production.

Own-Account Self-Employment

Self-employment in the informal economy represents a large share of total employment in developing countries. The recent estimates, presented above, suggest that one-third to one-half of workers in informal employment in developing countries are self-employed, women more so than men in most countries (ILO and WIEGO 2013; Vanek et al. 2014). Evidence indicates that average earnings are low among the informal self-employed, except those with paid employees (Chen et al. 2005). Indeed, those who have paid employees are the only informal self-employed who are non-poor on average (Chen et al. 2005). Further, informal

enterprises are exposed to high levels of entrepreneurial risk: like formal enterprises, they experience fluctuations in demand, prices and competition; but compared to formal enterprises, they experience a particularly uncertain and hostile policy and regulatory environment and are less able to bargain or negotiate effectively.

According to the official International Classification of Status in Employment (ICSE), the self-employed include:

- *employers*: owner-operators of informal or formal enterprises who hire others;
- *own-account workers*: owner-operators in single-person units or family businesses/farms who do not hire others;
- *unpaid contributing family workers*: family workers who work in family businesses or farms without pay; and
- *members of producer cooperatives*: members of either formal registered or informal non-registered producer cooperatives.

This classification is a useful and telling way of disaggregating self-employment. Among the informal self-employed, as the data presented above show, the vast majority are own-account operators and unpaid contributing family workers. The Conclusions to the General Discussion on Decent Work and Informal Workers at the 2002 International Labour Conference acknowledge that own-account workers ‘often remain trapped in poverty’.⁸ Together with contributing family workers, own-account workers are considered by the International Labour Organization, and the UN system more generally, to be ‘vulnerable’ workers. So much so that ‘the proportion of own-account operators and contributing family workers in total employment’ was used as an indicator for monitoring progress (or the lack thereof) in reducing poverty and hunger under Millennium Development Goal #1 (UN Statistics Division).

Labor and Capital

By definition, self-employment involves ‘investment’ of human capital (skilled or unskilled labor) and economic capital (fixed

assets and working capital) as well as (often) social capital, unlike waged employment, which involves the 'sale' of human capital/labor capacity to an employer. By definition, self-employment also involves engagement with the market and taking on associated risks, which, in turn, requires management or organizational skills. In some cases, self-employment involves the recruitment and management of workers (paid and/or unpaid).

Traditional self-employment, whether in single-person or family units, is often embedded in social relationships: whereby workers (paid or unpaid) are recruited from networks of family, kinship, and community; intra- and inter-firm relationships are non-contractual; household and enterprise accounts are not separated; and/or entry into self-employment often involves inheriting a parental business or carrying on the kinship group's line of work (Arum and Müller 2004). These features reflect what some observers call 'family-embeddedness' and the 'intergenerational inheritance' of self-employment (Arum and Müller 2004). Societies with high levels of family-based social capital – for example, with a large share of extended families with parents living with adult earning children – are more likely to have large shares of family-embedded self-employment. This is true in developed economies, such as Italy, Japan, and Taiwan, not only in developing economies (Arum and Müller 2004).

Location of Work

The conventional view of the place of work, in economics and in policy circles, has been of a factory, shop, or office, as well as formal service outlets such as hospitals and schools. But this notion of the workplace has always excluded the workplaces of millions of people, more so in developing than developed countries, who are informally employed. Some informal workers, notably those who work for formal firms, are located in conventional workplaces such as registered factories, shops or office spaces. But most informal workers, notably the self-employed, are located in non-conventional workplaces,

including: private homes, open spaces, and unregistered shops and workshops.

Private Homes

Significant numbers of people work in other people's homes as cooks, cleaners, home care or childcare providers, gardeners, and security guards. Significant numbers of people also work from their own homes, blurring the distinction between 'place of residence' and 'place of work'.⁹ Among the benefits of working in one's own home, one which is often mentioned by women, is the ability to simultaneously do paid work and watch children, care for the elderly, or undertake other domestic tasks. This multi-tasking, which may be seen as a 'benefit' in terms of enabling women to fulfill multiple expectations, also imposes concrete costs in terms of interruptions to work, affecting productivity and hence lowering income. When a home-based worker has to stop her market work in order to look after a child or cook a meal, her productivity drops.

Those who work at home face several business-related disadvantages. Some of the self-employed who work at home are engaged in survival activities or traditional artisan production for local customers. But others try to compete in more distant markets but with limited market knowledge and access. The size, condition, and infrastructure of their homes also affect what kind of work they do and how productive they are, including: the amount of space that can be used for work and for storage, the overall condition and cleanliness of the home, and whether or not the home has electricity and water supply. In Ahmedabad City, India, poor women who would like to undertake piece-rate garment work at home, but who live in dilapidated shelters on the streets, report that no one is willing to give them this work because of the status of their housing. Where would they store the raw material and finished products? Won't they get damaged? In spite of having the sewing skills needed to undertake garment work, they have had to resort to work as casual laborers or as waste pickers (Unni and Rani, 2000).

Public Places

Streets, sidewalks, and traffic intersections are the place of work for many fixed-site and mobile traders, who provide goods and services to consumers at all times of the day. Other commonly used public places are parks, fairgrounds, and municipal markets. The same public spot may be used for different purposes at different times of day: in the mornings and afternoons it might be used to trade consumer goods such as cosmetics, while in the evenings it converts to a sidewalk café run as a small family enterprise. It should also be noted that street vendors who sell goods that they make at home have two places of work: their home and a public space.

The benefits of working from public spaces are evidenced by the demand and competition for them. In the competitive jostle for sites close to transport and commuter nodes, city authorities have different options for action, ranging from outright prohibition of street trade, to regulated and negotiated use of sites, to relocation to alternative sites. Which policy option is chosen has different costs for informal traders (and their customers). Harassment, confiscation of merchandise, imposition of fines, physical assault, and evictions – all these costs affect the bottom line for traders. Given these costs of operating informally, many street vendors are willing to pay licence fees or other operating fees provided that the procedures are simplified, the fees are not too high, and the benefits of doing so are ensured. Most critically, street vendors would like city governments to recognize and protect the ‘natural markets’ – where they have worked for decades, if not centuries – as these are areas where there is a guaranteed flow of pedestrian customers. Formal retailers often ‘encroach’ on these natural markets of the street vendors.

Other Open Spaces

Other significant places of work are agricultural land, including pastures and forests (e.g. for farmers, agricultural laborers, subsistence producers), and fishing areas,

including ponds, rivers, and oceans (e.g. for fishing communities and shippers). There are often both class and gender dimensions to the access to and control over these places, and a gendered division of labor in the work itself. Construction sites are the temporary place of work for construction workers, as well as for suppliers and transporters of materials, and these sites may attract other informal providers of goods and services – such as street-food vendors – while the site is being developed.

Costs and Benefits

The consequences of self-employment vary, depending on the type of self-employment. The consequences may include some mix of benefits and costs, as follows:

- Benefits
 - being free to choose one’s type of work
 - having autonomy over one’s work and output
 - having flexibility in hours of work and in where/how one works
 - being free to turn down work or to not work at all for desired lengths of time
- Costs
 - being trapped in low-return work
 - having limited autonomy over one’s work and output
 - working more hours than the average wage worker
 - continually searching for work and needing more than one can find.

Depending on the mix of consequences, self-employment may carry connotations of independence, agency, and self-fulfillment, or of hardship, drudgery, and uncertainty (Hotch 2000). As a general rule, however, the self-employed are exposed to market risks and market control by more powerful actors, in addition to common core contingencies, but remain unprotected, as they often cannot afford to insure themselves against illness, accidents, death, property loss, breach of contracts or bankruptcy, and do not enjoy employer-contributions to social protection, employment-linked worker benefits, or unemployment insurance.

In terms of average earnings, among the self-employed in developing countries, the micro-entrepreneurs who hire others fare better than the own-account workers who do not employ others; and the own-account workers, in turn, fare better than sub-contracted units or individuals (Chen et al. 2004, 2005). Indeed, the only group of self-employed that are not poor, on average, are the employers who hire others (Chen et al. 2004, 2005).

Available data suggest that the only group of informal workers who are not poor, on average, are those who have paid employees (Chen et al. 2005). And yet employers represent less than 5 percent of informal workers in most countries and less than 10 percent in all countries where data are available (ILO-WIEGO 2013). Still other observers point out that some informal firms and workers are subordinated to or exploited by formal firms; and some informal workers are pursuing hereditary occupations or are conditioned by cultural norms to work informally. For instance, many women are conditioned by gender norms not to work outside the home.

Class Identity and Interests

The self-employed are thought to have ambiguous or contradictory class or social identities, economic interests, and political orientations: only partly aligned with either capitalists or workers. Some observers consider the traditional self-employed to be petty bourgeoisie; others consider them to be more aligned with the proletariat or working poor; while still other observers feel that some of the self-employed fall in an intermediate zone between capitalists/bourgeoisie and workers/proletariat (Hotch 2000).

Another way to conceptualize this seeming ambiguity or contradictoriness among the self-employed is to see each category of the self-employed as having its own class identity, economic interest, and political orientation. The self-employed who hire others can be seen as petty capitalists or bourgeoisie; the self-employed who do not hire others can be seen as either entrepreneurs (the more skilled) or the working poor (the less

skilled); and the professional self-employed can be seen as belonging to a professional-managerial class (together with managers of formal firms).

What is important, to use a key Marxian notion, is that some self-employed appropriate the surplus of others, while other self-employed appropriate only their own surplus; and still others do not appropriate their own surplus. There are, for example, sub-contracted industrial outworkers who might be considered self-employed but who make products (e.g., sew clothes) or perform services (e.g., enter data) for one or more companies that appropriate their surplus labor (i.e., the company pays a wage and then sells the products at a price greater than the costs of the labor and the constant capital used up in production); see discussion below.

Considered another way, self-employment spans a range from fully dependent arrangements in which the owner-operator controls the process and outcomes of work and absorbs the risks involved, to semi-dependent arrangements in which the operator does not control the entire process or outcome of his/her work but may absorb all of the risks involved. Some self-employed persons are dependent on one or two clients or on a dominant counterpart, such as the merchant from whom they buy raw materials (if they are producers) or merchandise to sell (if they are traders). Ostensibly self-employed street vendors may be selling goods on a commission for a merchant; and ostensibly self-employed farmers may actually be landless sharecroppers or contract farmers.

In sum, many self-employed are not truly independent but rather are economically dependent self-employed or disguised wage workers: including, in the manufacturing sector, sub-contracted producers for large firms or their intermediate suppliers; and, in the construction and transport sectors, so-called independent contractors or drivers.

Given these differences, it would be difficult for the self-employed *as a group* to become conscious or to organize as a class. Rather, the *different groups* of self-employed

should be seen as having different class interests in some issues (such as access to resources and markets, and which laws are binding) and joint interests in others (such as access to social protection). This includes distinguishing between the truly independent self-employed; the seemingly-independent self-employed who are linked to and, therefore, dependent on only one client; and the disguised wage workers who are not really self-employed. It also requires distinguishing between the self-employed who appropriate the surplus of others (i.e., employers), those who only self-appropriate (i.e., own-account workers), and those whose surplus is appropriated by others (i.e., sub-contracted firms or individuals). And it requires determining whether the intermediate grey categories should be seen and treated more like self-employed or wage employed.

Home-Based Industrial Outworkers

Industrial outworkers fall in a grey intermediate zone between fully independent self-employment and fully dependent wage employment. They work under sub-contracts for a piece rate without secure contracts or any real bargaining power. The contractors provide the work orders and raw materials, specify the product(s) to be made, inspect the quality of finished goods, and sell the finished goods or supply them to firms further up the chain. In most cases, the home-based worker goes to the contractor to receive raw materials and deliver finished goods; in a few cases, the contractor comes to the home-based worker's home or lives/works nearby. Their low and insecure earnings are further undermined by the fact that they have to pay for most of the non-wage costs of production: they provide the workplace, pay for utilities, buy or rent and maintain their own equipment, and, in most cases, cover the transport costs. They do so with limited bargaining power, compounded by their limited knowledge of the markets and of prices for

raw materials and finished goods. As a result, they have little control over the volume or timing of work orders, the quality of raw material supplied to them, or when they are paid. Many of these sub-contracted workers produce goods for brand-name firms in foreign countries. In today's global economy, there is a huge imbalance – in terms of power, profit, and life-style – between the woman who stitches garments, shoes, or footballs from her home in Pakistan for a brand-name retailer in Europe or North America and the chief executive officer (CEO) of that brand-name corporation.

Labor and Capital

Many industrial outworkers produce goods from within or around their own home. These home-based industrial outworkers (called 'homeworkers') may stitch garments and weave textiles; produce craft products; process and prepare food items; assemble or package electronics, automobile parts, and pharmaceutical products; among other activities. Historically, home-based industrial outwork has been associated with pre-modern manufacturing. But today, many homeworkers produce under sub-contracts for global value chains and are, thus, a feature of the modern global economy (Barrientos et al. 2004; Carr et al. 2000).

Debates around home-based industrial outwork center on what drives it and how to extend labor protections to homeworkers, most of whom are women. In some societies, gender norms restrict the physical mobility of women, conditioning them to not seek paid work outside the home. In many societies, the gender division of labor – whereby women are seen as the primary housekeepers and caregivers – conditions women to work at home in order to juggle paid work with unpaid domestic and care work. But it is also the case that, to cut costs and maximize profits, many firms decide to outsource production to homeworkers, especially women. Further, advances in technology have facilitated the outsourcing of production to homeworkers (Balakrishnan 2002; Balakrishnan

and Sayeed 2002; Bose 2007; Chen et al. 1999; Raju 2013).

In other words, industrial outwork, including home-based outwork, in its modern form is driven in large part by changes in production associated with the global economy. Outsourcing of work to home-based outworkers and the associated lack of power of these workers are both inextricably linked to recent shifts in how global production is organized. In 1996, the International Labour Organization (ILO) adopted an international convention on homework – Convention 177 – which has been ratified by 10 countries. And, in recent years, some corporate social responsibility initiatives have expanded their oversight to encompass homeworkers, the lowest links in global value chains: for instance, the Ethical Trading Initiative in the UK has a working group on homeworkers. There is growing understanding of how homeworkers are inserted into global value chains, from labor-intensive industries such as garment making to high-end industries such as

automobile production (Balakrishnan 2002; Carr et al. 2000; Unni and Rani 2008).

Clearly, homeworkers are neither fully independent self-employed nor fully dependent employees: see Table 22.4. They typically have to absorb many of the costs and risks of production, including: buying or renting and maintaining equipment; providing workspace and paying for utility costs; buying some inputs; and paying for transport – often without legal protection or help from those who contract work to them. Also, they are not directly supervised by those who contract work to them. However, they are subject to factors beyond their control, namely: irregular work orders; strict delivery deadlines; and quality control of the products or services they deliver. But someone does control these factors through the terms of sub-contracting – either the contractor or the firms higher up the chain. For these reasons, home-based and other industrial outworkers are neither fully independent nor fully dependent and should be considered semi-dependent. They also

Table 22.4 Home-based industrial outworkers on a continuum of independent to dependent work arrangements

<i>Categories/ characteristics</i>	<i>Independent self-employed</i>	<i>Home-based industrial outworkers (homeworkers)</i>	<i>Dependent employees</i>
Contract	With commercial counterparts – legally protected (if formal enterprise)	Sub-contracted work orders – not legally protected	Employment contract with employer – legally protected (if formal employee)
Remuneration	From sale of goods/services	For work done (typically piece rate)	For work done (time or piece rate)
Means of production	Provided by self	Provided by self	Provided by employer
Workplace	Rented or owned premises	Own home	Premises of employer
Supervision	Self	Indirect by firm/intermediary (through work orders/ quality control)	Direct by employer
Access to capital/ resources	High (if formal) Low (if informal)	Low	NA
Knowledge of/access to markets	High (if formal) Medium (if informal)	Low	NA
Exposure to production risks	Medium (if formal) High (if informal)	High	Low
Protection from production risks	High (if formal) Low (if informal)	Low	High (if formal) Low (if informal)
Bargaining power	High (if formal) Low (if informal)	Low	Medium (if formal) Low (if informal)

Source: Chen (2014).

have limited leverage over public policies and services that are crucial to their productivity, such as land allocation and housing policies, as well as basic infrastructure and transport services (Chen 2014).

Historically, around the world, the ‘employment relationship’ has represented the cornerstone – the central legal concept – around which labor law and collective bargaining agreements have sought to recognize and protect the rights of workers (ILO 2003). The concept of employment relationship has always excluded those workers who are self-employed because it is assumed they do not have a dependent relationship with an employer or any other economic actor. Increasingly, some categories of dependent workers have found themselves to be, in effect, without labor protection because their employment relationship is disguised, ambiguous, or not clearly defined (ILO 2003). But home-based and other industrial outworkers represent yet another group, those who occupy a middle ground that uneasily – and often to their significant disadvantage – combines being independent (taking on costs and risks) and being dependent (having limited autonomy or control). Their intermediate status – semi-independent, semi-dependent – is not included in the International Classification of Status in Employment.

In sum, home-based and other industrial outworkers do not fit neatly under labor market theory, labor law, or labor statistics. Yet they represent a significant share of the workforce, especially the female workforce, in many countries and in many global value chains. What is needed is a fundamental rethinking of labor markets and labor regulations, as well as improvements in statistical methods, to incorporate the full spectrum of employment arrangements between fully independent and fully dependent.

Location of Work

A defining feature of homeworkers is that their home is their workplace. The size and quality of their homes-cum-workplaces are significant determinants of their productivity

and, therefore, their earnings. Homeworkers tend to live and work in small, multi-purpose, poorly-lit spaces, often with an irregular supply of electricity. They have to juggle competing demands from other household members for that space and their time. In other words, working from home may have some advantages, in terms of being able to combine paid work with unpaid care work and domestic chores, but this comes with a price.

Costs and Benefits of Work

There is a widespread notion that women homeworkers prefer to work at home as doing so allows them to balance work and life or, more specifically, to combine paid and unpaid work. However, a recent study of home-based workers, both self-employed and industrial outworkers, in three Asian cities (Ahmedabad, India; Bangkok, Thailand; and Lahore, Pakistan) found that the costs of working from home are quite high (Chen 2014). In addition to the costs of working at home, compared to wage workers, industrial outworkers have the added cost of having to cover most of the non-wage costs of production: workplace, equipment, supplies, power and transport (Chen 2014).

For homeworkers, delayed payments are a common problem. Indeed, delayed payments are a common feature of sub-contracted work around the world (Chen et al. 2005). The cost and infrequent supply of public transport also contributes to earnings instability; and the lack of public transport exposes homeworkers to potential losses. Among the total sample of home-based workers in Ahmedabad, Bangkok and Lahore, transport accounted for 30 percent of business expenses; and, among those who had to pay for transport, one quarter operated at a loss.

Homeworkers also are more isolated from other workers in their sector (apart from those in their neighborhood) and have more limited knowledge of markets and market prices. These factors limit their ability to bargain for higher piece rates or on-time payments. Moreover, because they have to cover

most of the non-wage costs of production, other than raw materials, the *net* earnings of sub-contracted home-based workers tend to be extremely low and can fluctuate according to changes in those costs. Finally, much home-based work is seasonal: earnings tend to go down during the rainy season and up during festivals.

It should also be noted that around one-third of the sample in Bangkok and 5 per cent of the sample in Lahore earned more than US\$200 per month, more so the self-employed than the sub-contracted. Among the self-employed in Bangkok and Lahore, those who employed others were the most likely to earn more than US\$200 per month but also more likely to operate at a loss. This finding speaks to both the entrepreneurial risk and the entrepreneurial potential of growing a business.

Class Interests and Identity

It is important to highlight that most industrial outworkers – especially those who work from their own home – are paid very low piece rates and often are subject to delayed payments, rejected goods, or cancelled work orders. Moreover, industrial outworkers – especially homeworkers – own or rent the means of production (workplace and equipment), pay for utilities and depreciation of equipment, and pay for transporting goods to and from the contractors.

Autonomy and the flexibility and control that come with it are, for some observers, central to the notion of self-employment. Are industrial outworkers or homeworkers self-employed? Some observers might consider them to be self-employed because they may work for a variety of contractors and are able to work flexible hours and budget time between paid work and unpaid work. However, many industrial outworkers or homeworkers do not consider themselves to be self-employed. In India, for example, most homeworkers see the self-employed as having an occupation (*danda*) and see themselves as ‘piece-rate workers’ or ‘sub-contract workers’. More often, it is the firms

that outsource work that consider – and want others to consider – homeworkers to be self-employed, in order to avoid their obligations as an employer.¹⁰

The status of another stakeholder in industrial outwork or homework complicates the issue of class identity and interest. This is the status of the immediate contractor who supplies work and receives finished goods from the homeworkers on behalf of the lead firm or its suppliers further up the chain. Often, the contractor fares only somewhat better than the individuals that s/he sub-contracts work to. S/he might earn a bit more, but is also often subject to the arbitrary rejection of goods and delayed payments, and can also be abandoned with a batch of finished goods that have not been paid for. Should s/he be considered independent or dependent self-employed? Like the homemaker, the contractor often uses her/his home as a workplace to store raw materials and assemble and grade finished goods, but invests little (if any) capital in this aspect of the business. Moreover, at least in some countries or sectors, the contractor is often from the same community or neighborhood as those to whom s/he distributes work. Indeed, some homeworkers become sub-contractors: negotiating orders for, bringing raw materials to, and taking finished goods from women in their neighborhood to contractors or firms further up the chain. In some such cases, the sub-contractor works alongside the other women. These arrangements complicate the issue of class identity and the question of whether the immediate contractor or firms further up the chain are responsible – and liable – for the working conditions of industrial outworkers or homeworkers.

INFORMAL EMPLOYMENT: FROM REALITY TO THEORY

In today’s global economy, not enough formal jobs are being created and many existing formal jobs are being informalized.

So, informal employment is here to stay in the short, medium, and probably the long term. It is the main source of employment and income for the majority of the workforce and population in the developing world. The informal economy and workforce need, therefore, to be recognized as the broad base of the global – and national – economy and workforce. Both informal enterprises and informal workers need to be valued for their contributions and integrated into economic planning and social and economic policies, as well as legal and social protection frameworks.

Also, in today's global economy, the power of labor has diminished relative to capital, and income inequality has grown. The increased concentration of power in large corporations, relative to labor, is due not just to mechanization, as Marx (2008) and Braverman (1974) predicted, but also to outsourcing: in other words, not simply to the capitalist mode of *mechanized* production but also to its modern expression, the global mode of *outsourced* production. Outsourced production tends to be labor-intensive, based on the existing skills of the workers, but separates control and production, concentrates power and downloads risks to an unprecedented degree on a global scale. Indeed, industrial outwork represents an extreme example of the appropriation of control and power by firms and the downloading of costs and risks by firms to workers. Further, defying the predictions of both Marxist and neo-classical economic thinkers, self-employment in developing countries has persisted, own-account self-employment in developed countries has increased, and modern wage employment in both developed and developing countries is being informalized. Some self-employment is pre-capitalist but much of self-employment is linked to the formal capitalist economy: for example, street vendors often buy goods from – and serve as a distribution channel for – formal retailers and wholesalers (Roever 2014).

Informal work today, in its various guises, challenges conventional theories of work and the labor process. To begin with, informal

work challenges the common distinction drawn between those who own the means of production and those who provide labor power. The own-account self-employed own their means of production (though that does not allocate much power to them) and also provide their own labor power, often investing more labor than capital. What about contributing family workers in family enterprises or on family farms? Are they self-employed or disguised wage workers? Industrial outworkers own the means of production (workplace and equipment) and cover many of the non-wage costs of production other than design, raw materials, and marketing (including supplies, power, and transport), but do not market their own goods and cannot set prices. Do they sell their labor power to the firm that sub-contracts production to them? Or do they buy raw materials from and sell finished goods to that firm? The contracting firms argue that the industrial outworkers sell their finished goods, not their labor. Casual day laborers sell their labor power – but to different employers on different days or in different seasons. Should they be classified as self-employed because they 'manage' multiple employers or wage employed because they sell their labor power? However construction workers are classified, the firms that contract them on a causal basis are able to avoid payroll taxes, employer contributions to social protection and other responsibilities as employers.

Secondly, informal work challenges conventional notions of industrial relations and the organizational culture of work. The self-employed are, by definition, engaged in their own enterprises or activities – not hired by companies. Industrial outworkers, other contract workers, and casual day laborers are hired by companies through various types of contractual arrangements – ambiguous, disguised, and tripartite – and often do not work at the premises of the company. Existing theories of organizational culture and industrial relations need to be retooled to reflect the reality of informal enterprises and sub-contracted workers.

Thirdly, informal work challenges the common understanding of work instability. Many informal self-employed are engaged in hereditary occupations but face unstable work orders and fluctuating prices and earnings. Many female industrial outworkers are tied to their occupations and, even, to specific contractors or firms, due to their lack of mobility, determined partly by gender-defined roles and responsibilities. But they too face unstable work orders and unstable earnings. Many casual day laborers remain in certain sectors – notably, agriculture and/or construction – but face uncertain contracts and earnings. In other words, for many informal workers, *underemployment* – measured in terms of both days of work and earnings – is more of an issue than unemployment or occupational instability.

Fourthly, informal work challenges the common understanding of good jobs and bad jobs. By definition, virtually all informal wage workers are in bad jobs: without worker benefits or employer contributions to social protection. Industrial outworkers not only lack worker benefits and employer contributions but also have to bear many of the costs and risks of production. But what does good or bad work mean when it comes to the self-employed? The available evidence suggests that only one group of the self-employed, those who hire others, is, on average, not poor; while own-account workers are poor, on average, often earning less than the employees of informal employers (Chen et al. 2004, 2005). The available evidence also suggests that autonomy and flexibility – the right to choose what to do and when to work – are not enjoyed by all the self-employed, and when they are, they often come with the price of low earnings and high risks (Chen 2014; Roever 2014). Further, the available evidence suggests that there are many hidden costs of being informally employed, including not being integrated into economic planning, being treated punitively under the law, facing an uncertain policy environment, experiencing taxation without representation, and lacking

basic services (Chen 2014; Roever 2014). As detailed in the Report of the International Labour Organization on Decent Work and the Informal Economy, the informal workforce faces greater ‘decent work deficits’ than the formal workforce: deficits in regard to economic opportunities, economic rights, social protection, and social dialogue (ILO 2002a).

Finally, informal work challenges standard approaches to worker identity, worker solidarity, and worker organizing. Most informal workers lack – but want – legal recognition as workers: which they interpret in a broad sense to mean being economically active and contributing to gross domestic product, and to include the self-employed, disguised wage workers, and wage workers of various kinds (not just employees). Even the own-account self-employed want to be recognized as workers, not employers: as reflected in the Conclusions to the General Discussion on Decent Work and the Informal Economy at the 2002 International Labour Conference (ILO 2002b). While all informal workers share certain characteristics in common – namely, the lack of legal recognition, legal protection and social protection – they tend to mobilize and organize by occupation or trade: as agricultural laborers, domestic workers, construction workers, garment workers, fisher folk, forest gatherers, home-based producers, street vendors, transport workers, or waste pickers (Chen 2013). The largest trade union of informal workers in the world – the Self-Employed Women’s Association (SEWA) of India – has nearly 100 trades among its membership of over 1.5 million. Indeed, its members are organized by trade, and the democratic trade union structure is comprised of elected representatives from the various trades. While some formal trade unions and federations have begun to organize informal workers, informal workers have been self-organizing for decades, sometimes with the help of outsiders, into trade unions, cooperatives, and associations (Chen 2013).

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, there is a need to rethink existing disciplinary approaches to work and labor relations – in sociology, anthropology, economics, and other disciplines – to take into account the scope, scale, and variety of informal work today and the likelihood that informal work will remain a dominant mode of work in developing countries and a smaller, but likely growing, mode of work in developed countries. There is also a need to rethink standard policy responses to informal work and informal labor relations. Policies need to be comprehensive and flexible enough to meet the specific constraints, needs, and risks of different groups of informal workers, particularly the working poor in the informal economy, for whom existing regulations are often inappropriate, irrelevant, or punitive. There is also a need to monitor the impacts, both positive and negative, of existing economic and social policies on different categories of the informal workforce and to address the negative impacts.

This will require recognizing that the employment effects of economic growth work their way through markets, policies, and institutions (social, economic, and political) in different ways for formal and informal enterprises; for formal and informal workers (in both types of enterprises); and for women and men within each of these categories. This, in turn, will require that informal enterprises and informal workers are visible in official statistics and that informal workers, especially the working poor, have a representative voice in rule-setting and policymaking processes. Current efforts to improve the measurement of informal employment and informal enterprises in official labor force statistics, as well as other economic statistics, need to be strengthened and sustained. Most importantly, current efforts to strengthen organizations of informal workers and to promote the representation of these organizations in rule-setting and policymaking processes need to be increased and sustained.

NOTES

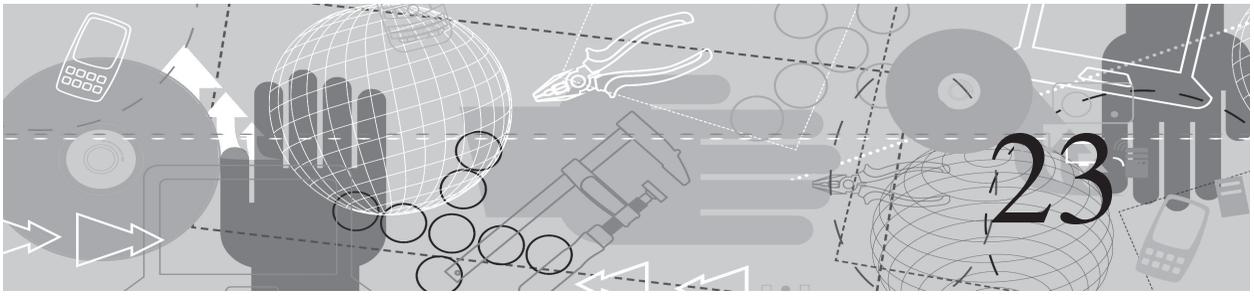
- 1 Another way to disaggregate informal employment is by its location either inside or outside the informal sector: see Vanek et al. (2014) for more details.
- 2 Status in employment is used to delineate two key aspects of labor contractual arrangements: the *allocation of authority* over the work process and the outcome of the work done; and the *allocation of economic risks* involved (ILO 2002a).
- 3 The guidelines also include production for own final use (i.e., subsistence production) as informal. In countries where this is not considered an important category, it is not included in employment statistics.
- 4 Founded in 1997, WIEGO is a global action-research-policy network that seeks to improve the status of the working poor in the informal economy, especially women, by building and strengthening organizations of informal workers; improving research and statistics on informal employment; and promoting fair and appropriate labor, social protection, trade, and urban policies. For more on WIEGO and on the informal economy, please see <http://wiego.org/>
- 5 Statisticians define 'status in employment' by the type/degree of *economic risk* (of losing job and/or earnings) and of *authority* (over the establishment and other workers). The common statuses are employer, employee, own-account operator, unpaid contributing family worker, and member of producer cooperative.
- 6 This may occur when employees prefer to receive a higher take-home pay and/or when social security systems are so poorly managed that workers do not consider social security contributions as being a good investment.
- 7 This is a summary of the main findings in Vanek et al. (2014).
- 8 The reference in Clause 4 of the Conclusions on Decent Work and the Informal Economy reads 'Workers in the informal economy include both wage workers and own-account workers. Most own-account workers are as insecure and vulnerable as wage workers and move from one situation to another. Because they lack protection, rights and representation, these workers often remain trapped in poverty' (ILO 2002c).
- 9 This discussion is focused on people who work in their own homes. People who work in the private homes of others include the (mostly female) paid domestic workers and nurse assistants, (mostly male) security guards, and the better-paid professionals such as bookkeepers who work for home-based consultants.
- 10 In India, when laws were introduced to impose a minimum wage and regulate the working

conditions of workers in the hand-rolled cigarette (*bidli*) industry, many of the employers shut down their factories and outsourced production to home-based workers: in so doing, they made the case that the sub-contracted home-based workers were self-employed and, therefore, not covered by the protective legislation (Jhabvala et al. 2000).

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Precarious Work

Kevin Hewison

In 2012, the iconoclastic Marxist philosopher Slavoj Žižek (2012: 9) observed that, in the contemporary world, ‘the chance to be exploited in a long-term job is now experienced as a privilege’. In a similar vein, *The Economist* (April 12, 2014) magazine lamented that ‘[s]teady jobs ... are hard to find’. The giant sporting goods firm, NIKE (n.d.: 56) acknowledged that:

The global economic crisis [from 2008] has had a devastating impact on worker welfare across the globe. In the apparel and footwear industry, millions of jobs have been lost. For those fortunate enough to maintain employment, many have seen their income decline. ... In an effort to control costs, some factories have eliminated optional benefits.

Not surprisingly, Union Solidarity International (2014) lamented this trend: ‘Precarious work is growing across the world: zero hours contracts, unpaid internships and fixed term, insecure work are becoming the norm. ... We need to unite to ensure we have a future of secure work with dignity’.

Such observations by groups as diverse as unions, civil society activists, companies and financial media commentators have become increasingly common and reflect a shared awareness that significant change is taking place in workplaces. This change is associated with the decline of ‘standard employment’, as work identified as ‘precarious’ has expanded globally. Acknowledging this change, the study of labor and work has increasingly referred to ‘precarious work’ or ‘precarity’ amongst workers. The use of such terminology identifies work that exhibits uncertainty, instability, vulnerability and insecurity where employees are required to bear the risks of work (Kalleberg and Hewison, 2013a; Vosko, 2010). While there has been increased analytical attention to these forms of work, studies of their development and critical policy, political and social impacts, extend over several decades. In that literature, a range of terminologies have been used, including: atypical, irregular or nonstandard work, work that is temporary or seasonal, casualization and part-time work, homeworking, self-employment,

contracting-in, contracting-out and outworking, informalization, flexibilization and contingent employment (see Arnold and Bongiovi, 2013: 289). These related terms, some more descriptive than others, have tended to be subsumed in the concept of precarious work (see Standing, 2011).

A series of studies document the global expansion of precarious work, impacting workers in newly industrializing economies as well as the already industrialized economies of North America and Europe. Examining work in the United States, Kalleberg, Reskin and Hudson (2000) showed that temporary and part-time work is associated with low wages and poor access to employer-sponsored benefits such as health insurance and pensions. Kalleberg (2011) has also detailed the decline in long-term security as precarious work has made workers more vulnerable in the US, identifying a polarization between ‘good jobs’ and ‘bad jobs’. For Britain, McGovern, Smeaton and Hill (2004) found that non-standard employment – part-time, temporary and fixed-term contracts – increase workers’ exposure to the ‘bad job’ characteristics identified by Kalleberg and his associates. Webster, Lambert and Bezuidenhout (2008) demonstrated the use of insecurity to discipline workers in Korea, South Africa and Australia. Several studies have shown the rapid expansion of contract work in Japan (see Allison 2013; Gottfried, 2009; Osawa et al., 2013). For the countries of the Asia-Pacific, Lee and Eyraud (2008) detailed the rapid advance of flexibilization and casualization. Both Vosko (2010) and Gottfried (2014) have indicated that the rise of precarious work has undermined the gendered social contracts that have been foundational for the standard employment relationship. Indeed, many of those who entered the labor market in low-paid casual, part-time and temporary work were women (Kalleberg, 2011: 46–47).

As might be gathered from this listing, and as the ILO (2012: 29) noted in a report on precarious work, ‘the increase in insecurity in employment is ubiquitous’. This ILO report documented significant rises in

‘temporary employment, particularly fixed-term contracts, and agency work’ in OECD countries from 1985 to 2007; for example, in Western Europe, temporary work increased by ‘115 per cent as compared to 26 per cent for overall employment’. The rates observed in 2007 across the countries of Western Europe varied considerably, from about 6 percent in Cyprus to almost 37 percent in Spain (ILO, 2012: 30). Looking beyond rich countries, the report concluded that the available data showed precarious work expanding globally (ILO, 2012: 31–35). At the same time, the ILO observed that the extent, meaning and impacts of precarious work remained under debate, with no agreed definition of precarious employment.

With this brief accounting of the rise of precarious work, this chapter first examines the activist and academic lineages of ‘precarious work’, before turning to a discussion of how precarious work is debated and conceptualized in the academic literature. This is followed by an examination of the relationship between globalizing production and the expansion of precarious work. This leads to a discussion of some of the data on the extent of precarious work and the position of migrant workers. These sections devote particular attention to the Asia economies, where the progress of precarious forms of work has impacted both rich and poor countries. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the debate on whether the rise of precarious work has resulted in the development of a new class identified as ‘the precariat’.

ACTIVIST AND ACADEMIC LINEAGES OF PRECARIOUS WORK AND PRECARIETY

Often when a new term is coined, it is an attempt to capture the essence of social changes in progress. Such terms, often broadly descriptive, will generally encapsulate both the nature of the observed changes

and responses to them. In the case of work, the notions of 'precarious work' and 'precarity' carry with them meanings that identify the development of working situations that lack predictability and security and seem to mean increased vulnerability for workers. In the case of 'precarious work' and 'precarity', the use of these terms in academic work came with a considerable heritage in political struggles and activism, particularly in Europe.

Whilst the first uses of 'precarity' with reference to work have been traced to European responses to poverty and waged work in the 1950s and 1960s, the term gained considerable political traction in its association with the radical *Autonomia* political group that placed workers at the center of an Italian Marxist analysis influenced by Mario Tronti (1966; see also Wright, 2002). This approach identified the emergence of a new working-class politics that, if not opposed to standard, factory-based, work, wanted to reduce, sabotage or redefine it. In its more recent uses, it is argued that 'flexible' labor has moved from the periphery of Fordist production to take a position at the core of post-Fordist capital accumulation where 'immaterial labor' produces services that are not material or durable goods. This movement reflected on the major change in production – economic postmodernization – which recognized that the decline of the bargaining capacity of labor leads to 'old forms of non-guaranteed labor' reconstituted as the dominant form of work (see Hardt and Negri, 2000: 297). The confluence of radical politics and changes to the nature of production, work and social life more broadly, saw the terms 'precarious work' and 'precarity' taken up in European social movements, which used it as a broad cross-cutting issue, traversing work, labor and social life, to organize politically (Casas-Cortés, 2009: 327–329). For example, EuroMayDay is a 'web of media activists, labor organizers, migrant collectives convening each year in a different European city' that organizes around the slogan 'no borders, no workfare,

no precarity!' (EuroMayDay n.d.). Based on its 2004 declaration, the 2005 EuroMayDay adopted the rallying cry: 'Precarious people of the world let's unite and strike 4 a free, open, radical Europe' (EuroMayDay, 2004).

In mainstream academic work, one of the earliest analytical uses of 'precarious work' appeared in a collection edited by Rodgers and Rodgers (1989), and published by the International Labor Organization. This collection began with the observation that 'precarious forms of work' were not new, and concluded that the countries in their anthology had 'made significant progress towards eliminating or marginalizing these phenomena', due to the impact of collective agreements and labor market regulation which had resulted in 'regular, protected jobs' that had 'come to dominate their industrial systems' (Rodgers, 1989: 1). Presciently, however, Rodgers also observed the rise of 'nonstandard' forms of work, defined as 'temporary, casual and part-time work, various forms of disguised or illegal wage employment, homeworking and moonlighting, self-employment and outworking' (Rodgers, 1989: 1). At the time, the trends were uneven across the countries studied. For example, the expansion in France and Germany had been limited, whereas in Italy, some 20 percent of GDP was estimated to come from workers with nonstandard forms of employment (Bettio and Villa, 1989: 173).

The trends identified in this 1989 collection did not emerge in a political or economic vacuum. While the collection does not detail it, the impacts of the first oil price shock in 1973 and the social, political and cultural changes associated with the decline of Fordism were critical factors. So too was the rise of neoliberal economic policies fostered by the administrations of Margaret Thatcher in Britain (1979–90) and Ronald Reagan in the United States (1981–89).

These changes to national and international political economies and to work resulted in a development and consolidation of 'precarious work' and 'precarity' in

activist and academic discourses from the early 2000s. In several Western economies, the first half of the 2000s saw considerable economic restructuring, and this resulted in a deep social and economic malaise, and considerable unemployment, especially amongst young people. The series of financial crises and economic downturns, beginning with the US housing bubble in 2006, leading to the Wall Street crash of 2008, and a series of devastating crises in Western Europe, resulted in massive unemployment. Throughout this period, those who could get jobs found them short term, poorly paid and uncertain. Many felt vulnerable and deserted by trade unions that concentrated on the 'old' working class, devalued by businesses that preferred more 'flexible' workers, and ignored by troubled states that made deep cuts into shrinking welfare systems.

One consequence of this situation was that those impacted by these changes, began to organize and protest. The social movements blamed growing inequality and social vulnerability on elite-dominated politics and neoliberal economic policies. European activists attributed the rise of precarious work to processes of neoliberal globalization, involving remarkable capital mobility, stimulated by a search for enhanced profits and for reduced costs, more privatization, and the erosion of social welfare. These policies were attacked for failing to produce much employment and, where they did, employers and states demanded ever more flexible labor markets, which, in turn, meant fewer benefits and stagnating wages. In the growth of these social movements, the concept of 'precarity' proved useful and emotive in describing the situation faced by those living and working without a safety net and in jobs with no stability or predictability. This approach has tended to view precarious work as associated with the losses and insecurities in welfare, health and housing. Precarious work, especially in Europe, is often linked with the loss of social protections and a rejection or loss of the standard employment relationship.

CONCEPTUALIZING PRECARIOUS WORK

One reason the concept of 'precarious work' resonates with researchers is that it permits a consideration of the changing nature of work and employment in ways that transcend the dichotomies such as the twinning of standard and nonstandard employment. The standard employment relationship was defined by Rodgers (1989: 1) as employment that 'incorporated a degree of regularity and durability in employment relationships, protected workers from socially unacceptable practices and working conditions, established rights and obligations, and provided a core of social stability to underpin economic growth'. Later, Kalleberg, Reskin and Hudson (2000: 257–58) defined it as 'characterized by the exchange of a worker's labor for monetary compensation from an employer ... with work done on a fixed schedule – usually full-time – at the employer's place of business, under the employer's control, and with the mutual expectation of continued employment'. These definitions of standard work give expression to the arrangements associated with Fordist work regimes. Nonstandard work, as standard work's binary opposite, was described as 'employment relations other than standard, full-time jobs', such as 'part-time employment in an otherwise standard work arrangement, day labor and on-call work, temporary-help agency and contract-company employment, independent contracting, and other self-employment' (Kalleberg et al., 2000: 258). The fact that not all nonstandard work was precarious and not all precarious work was nonstandard cut across this binary.

The standard/nonstandard opposition has been utilized with another binary: formal and informal economic sectors. Associated with economic studies that draw on Lewis (1954) and his conception of 'unlimited' labor supplies, the informal sector results as workers leave the 'traditional' agricultural sector and move into urban labor markets.

These urban markets see a ‘coexistence of a small, well-organized formal sector characterized by relatively high earnings and attractive employment conditions with a large informal sector characterized by low and volatile earnings’ (Günther and Launov, 2012: 88). While some orthodox economists also associate the informal sector with the underground economy, it was long considered that the informal sector would decline as labor supplies from rural areas tightened, which in turn would drive higher wages, better conditions and formalization (see Chen in this volume).

Such dichotomies have proven unfit for dealing with the complexities of global production and the changing nature of work, while the use of the term ‘precarious’ has been criticized for its lack of precision and for its incapacity to capture the definitional fuzziness associated with the many forms of work that reduce labor costs, increase flexibility for employers and diminish labor’s capacity for collective organization (see Kalleberg and Hewison, 2013a). In explaining precarious employment, Vosko (2010: 2) defines it as ‘work for remuneration characterized by uncertainty, low income, and limited social benefits and statutory entitlements’. She adds that this kind of work is:

shaped by the relationship between employment status (i.e. self- or paid employment), form of employment (e.g. temporary or permanent, part-time or full-time), and dimensions of labor market insecurity, as well as social context (e.g. occupation, industry, and geography) and social location (or the interaction between social relations, such as gender, and legal and political categories, such as citizenship). (Vosko, 2010: 2)

In both developed and developing economies, modern factories, once the locus of the standard work relationship, now see teams of workers, often supplied by labor contractors, working alongside company employees. These different sets of workers, with diverse employers, receive different contracts, pay and benefits. Those employed by labor contractors may be on short-term contracts, with or without benefits, and lack opportunities for

promotion or progress within the contracting company. Some of these workers may be migrants, trainees or interns, and, according to their status, all subject to different rules and remuneration, such as day rates, piece rates and monthly pay. Others may swap in and out of jobs, switching from the informal to the formal sector when a position opens, and then back again when the job is finished. Work completed in the informal sector – by homeworkers or in tiny workshops – may be critical for the production of parts for factories where other workers assemble the parts (see Unni and Rani, 2008). In some cases, the household becomes a locus of production that produces for the market – even into global supply chains – or supplies services for other individuals and households, often with women at the center of these operations (Chen, 2014). These examples indicate that the long-held binaries in the academic and policy literature cannot adequately conceptualize contemporary work.

These examples point to a further critical aspect of precarious work – the ways in which globalization of production has changed the nature of work. Vosko and Clark (2009: 33), writing about Canada, note that ‘processes of economic restructuring tied to globalization have led to the privatization of state enterprises, the removal of trade barriers, the deregulation of the economy, the decline of manufacturing and resource sectors, and the growth of the service sector’. Writing about Mexico and Argentina, Bayón (2006: 125–26) highlights similar processes and identifies precarious work, unemployment, poverty and inequality as resulting in ‘social precarity’, defined by ‘differential access to ... education, health care and housing opportunities ...’ (Bayón, 2006: 126). Much of the literature on the rise of precarious work identifies these changes and degradations as linked with political, social and economic changes that began in the 1970s and are associated with the neoliberal policies of liberalization, deregulation and privatization that brought profound transformations to regulatory regimes.

While neoliberal policies have been contested, they have established a policy dominance, having displaced the Keynesianism of industrial capitalism, welfare and national models of capitalism. This period – sometimes termed the ‘golden age of capitalism’ – saw Fordist production systems give rise to the conception of a ‘standard work’. Even so, standard work, like the broader social contract of embedded liberalism, was generally limited to the developed countries of the West and to male workers.

GLOBAL PRODUCTION, PRECARIOUS WORK

Essentially, the implementation of neoliberal policies in a context of enhanced globalization has provided a framework for capitalist production to disengage from the spatial ‘locks’ of the period of embedded liberalism and standard work (see Harvey, 2001). The era of neoliberal globalization has been associated with a remarkable expansion of investment that has seen production become spatially diversified through innovations involving the application of capital, knowledge, technology and logistics. These are the drivers of demands for states, business and labor to increase competitiveness, profitability and flexibility. Competition has resulted in a global search for production sites that can provide cost reductions, notably wage cost reductions. Competitive cost reduction within global production networks has, as Humphrey and Schmitz (2001: 12) observe, been ‘unrelenting, leading to a downward pressure on prices. ... The resulting profit squeeze leads buyers to *scout continuously for new producers* who offer lower labor costs’ (emphasis added).

Such competitive pressures lead to the expansion of household-based production, and the expansion of ‘self-employment’ and other ‘informal’ employment, categories which have considerable overlap. According to Chen (2014: 5), home-based workers

‘represent a significant share of urban employment in some countries, particularly for women and especially in Asia’. She cites data for India and Pakistan, where home-based workers account for 14 percent and 4 percent of total urban employment and 32 percent and 31 percent of women’s urban employment respectively. For 2013, the Gallup organization reported that almost 30 percent of the global workforce was ‘self-employed’. By region, the highest rates were in Southeast Asia (41 percent of the workforce), East Asia (39 percent) and Sub-Saharan Africa (36 percent), while the lowest rates were in North America (7 percent) and the European Union (10 percent). Worldwide, the self-employed are poorer and less educated than the population in which they reside. In these circumstances, the Gallup report states that self-employment is likely to be a necessity rather than an opportunity (Ryan, 2014).

Some analysts identify the development of global production networks, and their incorporation of flexible labor practices, as essentially coercive processes (see Chang, 2006). These networks demand that supplier firms and states compete for investment while workers must compete for jobs in more flexible labor markets. As well as markets, raw materials, tax benefits and the like, states advertise their ability to provide a flexible investment environment, and this invariably includes declarations about disciplined, cheap or skilled workers. Such approaches have been implemented so broadly that they are now seen as ‘natural’ policies: considered as essential and even natural. Individual states, declaring their governments investment-friendly, compete with regulatory innovation in labor markets.

States not only compete in areas such as fiscal, tax, investment and industry policies, but also in labor policies. Indeed, such policies are regularly measured for their ‘flexibility’ and ‘business friendliness’, including the World Economic Forum’s (2011) Competition Index. In labor markets, collective bargaining is limited or controlled as ‘market distorting’. Regulated benefits,

worker protections and national labor laws may be identified as ‘rigidities’ and ‘costs’ to be limited, reduced or dismantled, often in the name of generating employment. Importantly, employers also adopt firm- and industry-level practices that constrain unions and collective bargaining. These measures include coercion, often backed by the state; legal actions against unions, labor leaders and workers; the creation of company unions that are indistinguishable from management; and the bribing of union and state officials (see Chang, 2006). The result is often a flexibilization regime encompassing deregulation and re-regulation over all aspects of production and employment relations (Tjandraningsih and Nugroho, 2008: 1–2). This flexibilization regime does not require state deregulation as much as new forms of regulation and institutional arrangements that promote labor markets which are competitive, productive and flexible. In this, states and capital converge in measures that require a thoroughgoing commodification of work, resulting in the advance of precarious work.

It may seem obvious that cost reduction strategies would spur the use of precarious work. Indeed, in many of the earliest studies of contingent work, a term used in the US to denote the use of labor only in response to demand, it was suggested a prime motivation was to control costs by reducing the time that paid workers were idle or working below capacity. Another motivation was to reduce the cost of labor and benefits as well as the cost of laying workers off (see Polivka and Nardone, 1989: 12–13). The desire to better control labor – often portrayed as a search for more flexible labor markets – has also had a significant impact. Levels of unionization, collective bargaining arrangements and workplace regulation have each been identified as important factors affecting investment decisions (see Cooke, 2001). Likewise, Evans and Gibb (2009: 40–41) argue that the rise in precarious work has three motivations: first, hourly wage costs are reduced; second, dismissing workers when product demand

falls reduces fixed costs; and third, beyond costs, ideology is involved.

ASSESSING THE EXTENT OF PRECARIOUS WORK

As already noted, the use of ‘precarious work’ comes with some methodological issues. The very fuzziness of the term, which makes it attractive to activists and analysts alike, also makes measuring the extent of precarious work a difficult task. Not least, these difficulties involve problems using statistics that are collected using definitions of work that carry the conceptual baggage of bygone eras. For example, the data reported above for Western Europe showed significant increases in ‘temporary work’, yet this category does not constitute all of the forms of work considered precarious (ILO, 2012: 30).

Recent studies on Asia illustrate the challenges in assessing the extent of precarious work. With Asia emerging as the world’s factory, accounting for more than 20 per cent of global manufacturing value added in 2012, precarious work has become a critical challenge (UN Industrial Development Organization, 2013: 27). With the exception of Thailand, all of the other countries shown in Table 23.1 display an increased reliance on precarious forms of employment. The figures presented in the table are drawn from multiple official sources using different definitions of what constitutes precarious work. Earlier data for Vietnam and China data is unavailable, yet the breaking of the previous socialist social contract in areas of employment and welfare suggests that forms of precarious work have expanded substantially (see Arnold, 2013; Zhou, 2013).

In the wealthy economies of Japan, South Korea and Taiwan, considerable attention has been paid to dispatched workers. These are workers employed by third-party companies or agencies who are supplied to other companies under contract. Dispatched workers

Table 23.1 GDP and precarious work, most recent data

Country	GDP/capita (current US\$)	Precarious work (%)	Formal, regular, permanent or standard work (%)	Increase in precarious work, 1995–2010 (%)	Union density, 1990	Union density, 2010
Japan	46,720	33.7	66.3	25	25.2	15.5
S. Korea	22,590	34.2	65.8	14	18.4	10.1
Taiwan	20,328	8.8	91.2	72	43.3	37.3
China	6,188	60.4	39.6	n.a.	90.8	61.5 ^a
Thailand	5,480	62.3	37.7	–25	11.0	3.3
Indonesia	3,557	65.8	34.2	15	14.0 ^b	3.6
Sri Lanka	2,923	62.6	37.4	2.5	20.0 ^c	20.0
Philippines	2,587	77.0	23.0	10	29.7	18.7
Vietnam	1,596	73.7	26.3	n.a.	n.a.	40.0
India	1,489	94.3	5.7	17	26.6	6.3

Notes: ^a 2000; ^b 2005; ^c 1995.

Sources: Data in the table are drawn from Hewison and Kalleberg (2013) and Kalleberg and Hewison (2013b).

are recognized as ‘nonregular’ employees in Japan, ‘irregular’ in South Korea and ‘non-standard’ in Taiwan. Such variable terms are also seen for the other countries in Table 23.1. The economies of Asia vary in their levels of industrialization and in their historical and cultural trajectories. This means that the important features of precarious work will vary, with large numbers of internal migrant workers important in China and Vietnam, while incoming migrant workers are significant for Thailand, and outgoing migrant workers especially significant for the Philippines, Sri Lanka and Indonesia. In addition, like India, many of these economies are experiencing a rapid transition from agricultural-based production to industry and services.

These changes and developments make using the available statistical reporting on changing work patterns challenging. For example, China and Vietnam have not always provided reliable data regarding the situation of rural migrants in cities. For different reasons, in India and Thailand, the reporting of precarious workers is tightly tied to agricultural work and the informal sector. In addition, changes to regulation have impacted how the statistics are reported. In this context, Thailand is a useful example.

In Table 23.1, the notable exception to the trend of increasing precarious work is

Thailand, where the official data show a substantial decline in precarious work. As with all of the other jurisdictions surveyed, ‘precarious work’ is not a term that is commonly used by Thailand’s government, its researchers or labor activists. Instead, several terms, often not mutually exclusive, describe employment that is not ‘regular’, ‘formal’ or ‘standard’. In addition, Thailand’s National Statistical Office (NSO) uses a definition of ‘employed’ that has shifted the age of those considered ‘employed persons’ from 13 to 15 years of age and over and includes anyone who has worked for at least one hour a month for wages/salaries, profits, dividends or any other payment, or who has received a regular salary from an employer but did not work, and unpaid family workers (see Hewison and Tularak, 2013). This definition is so broad that it sheds little light on the extent of precarious work.

However, when the NSO reports on the informal sector, a better sense of precarious work is obtained. Yet even this definition has changed due to regulatory reform. In the official surveying, workers in the informal sector were once considered to be own-account workers, private employees and unpaid family workers in business establishments with fewer than 10 employees. However, the expansion of a state-sponsored

and compulsory social security scheme has been expanded to include workers in 'informal employment'. Essentially referring to agriculture and the urban informal sector, the NSO has come to officially define such workers as being 'employed persons who have not been protected under social security' (NSO, 2011: 2). The result is that this definition of 'informal employment' means that those 'outside the social security system' become a proxy for precarious workers. It is this changing definition and the impact of welfare regulation that accounts for the decline in precarious work for Thailand seen in Table 23.1.

Despite these differences in terminology and definitions, the data collected in Table 23.1 indicates an expansion of precarious work throughout the region. In Japan, this is certainly the case. As global competition has expanded, Japanese firms have used various cost-cutting measures to maintain profitability. These measures have included reducing the wage bill. The result is that companies have hired fewer 'standard' workers and increased the number of 'non-regular' workers. The increase has been dramatic in a society that has long promoted 'lifetime employment'. In 1984, 15.3 percent of the labor force was classified as non-regular, but by 2008 this number had increased to 34.1 percent (Osawa et al., 2013). Gottfried (2014: 465) points out that these changes began in a period prior to the onset of Japan's economic torpor in the 1990s and concludes that the rise of a sharp dualism in the Japanese labor market and the decline of the enterprise-based welfare system are shattering the 'corporate-centred male-breadwinner reproductive bargain'. As indicated in Table 23.1, Taiwan's increase in precarious work has been relatively small in absolute numbers yet large in percentage terms. Part-time, fixed-term temporary (on contracts of three months or less) and dispatched workers numbered 224,554 in 2001, and this had expanded to 924,000 by 2010 (Hsiao, 2013: 378). South Korea has seen dramatic increases in precarious work. In 2011, almost 6 million, or more than a

third of all workers, were officially limited-term, part-time or atypical workers (Shin, 2013: 339, 343).

In Europe, considering the 28 countries in Eurostat databases, the expansion of 'non-standard' work has seen part-time employment expand from about 16 percent in 2003 to 20.2 percent in 2012, limited duration contracts expand from 12.3 percent to 13.8 percent, and own-account workers increase from 9.5 percent to 10.2 percent over the same period. Such data suggest a steady but limited increase in precarious work, although, as Stone (2012) demonstrates, women, young workers and those aged more than 45 years are over-represented in these categories of work. The same patterns are seen in North America. Recent studies have also indicated that 'self-employment' is growing rapidly as unemployment remains high and as precarious work expands. For example, whereas the number of 'employees' has grown only slowly in the US and Britain since 2000, the rates of self-employment have increased by 40 percent and 50 percent, respectively (*The Economist*, April 12, 2014).

It is noteworthy that many of these increases in precarious work have taken place in contexts where firm-level and industry-based employment practices have both become more flexible in ways that have tended to reduce and limit collective organization by workers. Recent research indicates that advanced capitalist economies have seen both an expansion of precarious work and a decline in collective bargaining coverage and union density. Examining ten advanced industrial countries, Stone (2012: 33) observes a generalized increase in various 'nonstandard' employment categories and notes declines in union density in nine of these countries between 1970 and 2005 – the exception is Germany. Stone (2012: 31) points to steep declines in collective bargaining coverage from the mid-1980s in seven of these countries and acknowledges that the causal direction in the relationship between declining union density and 'standard' employment is not yet established. Clearly, the relationships

between flexibilization, precarious work, and union density and collective bargaining are areas requiring further comparative research.

The consideration given to changes in work and workplace arrangements has also directed attention to the impacts of precarious work. Research has indicated that precarious employees work longer, often harder, are more likely to have low-skilled, dirty or dangerous jobs, and almost always get paid less while having fewer opportunities to access workplace or even statutory benefits. In addition, as the Law Commission of Ontario (n.d.) acknowledges, precarious work can also have negative health outcomes. For example, precarious work is likely to involve physically demanding and dangerous or dirty work that has increased health and safety risks. These risks are compounded by the stress that comes from employment insecurity, the tendency for precarious workers to hold multiple jobs, working irregular or long hours, and limited legal protections. Bad jobs can also have adverse impacts for families and communities. Low pay can reduce health options where benefits from employers and government are limited.

MIGRANT WORKERS

An important aspect in the rise of precarious work has been the expansion of migration for work. The scale of internal and international migration for work is enormous, totaling in the hundreds of millions, a massive increase over recent decades, with particular gendered patterns being seen for particular sectors where migrants seek work (Jolly and Reeves, 2005). Whether it is Latinos moving to the United States, Cambodians seeking work in Thailand or internal migrants from rural areas to manufacturing zones in China, the vast majority of these migrants are finding jobs in services and manufacturing that are often relatively poorly paid and precarious.

The Law Commission of Ontario (n.d.) found that recent migrants to Canada have been

disproportionately impacted by precarious work, and are more likely to be self-employed due to a lack of other job opportunities. In China, rural migrants to cities tend to be residentially segregated in disadvantaged neighborhoods and with limited access to state-sponsored welfare. Recent research concludes, 'it is abundantly clear that migrant workers [from rural origins] are still not receiving their full complement of insurance entitlements, as well as being paid less for their productive characteristics compared to urban workers' (Lee, 2012: 469). Similarly, migrant workers arriving in Portugal, mainly from Africa, suffer occupational skills downgrading compared with locals and, hence, even further reduced wages (Carneiro, et al., 2012).

In the US, data on migrants from Mexico showed that 'the labor market status of legal immigrants has deteriorated significantly in recent years as larger shares of the migrant workforce came to lack labor rights, either because they were undocumented or because they held temporary visas that did not allow mobility or bargaining over wages and working conditions' (Gentsch and Massey, 2011: 875). In Singapore and Malaysia there has been a heavy reliance on migrant workers; the low-skilled migrants can find themselves contracted and illegally sub-contracted into jobs that evade the country's labor regulations and result in poor wages, abuse and illegal exactions by employers (Devadason and Chan, 2014; Ong, 2014). Poorly paid migrant workers in Thailand have struggled with low wages, language barriers, dangerous working conditions, abuse, and a lack of legal rights (see Arnold and Hewison, 2005; Eberle and Holliday, 2011).

If migrants enter the country illegally, their position is often amongst the most precarious of workers. They are exploited in terms of gender, race, nationality, regulatory discrimination, wages, and by their limited access to basic state protections. They also are subject to the whims of policy and politics, as has been seen in South Korea, where migrant workers have experienced state crackdowns

and round-ups leading to compulsory deportation (Kim, 2012).

PRECARIOUS WORK AND THE 'PRECARIAT'

While the use of the terms 'precarious work' and 'precarious employment' has expanded, there has been debate regarding the social location of precarious workers. Standing's (2011) term 'the precariat' has attracted considerable attention. On the first page of his book, Standing (2011: i) states that the precariat is 'a new group in the world, a class-in-the-making'. However, Standing rejects the idea that the precariat is the working class, arguing that this class is a part of an old class system that has been shattered in recent decades (Standing, 2011: 6). While Standing (2011: 8) suggests that the 'precariat has class characteristics', he claims 'it has none of the social contract relationships of the proletariat, whereby labor securities were provided in exchange for subordination and contingent loyalty, the unwritten deal underpinning welfare states'. Standing's contention that the precariat is a potentially dangerous class is drawn from his historical reading that, in the old class system, the *lumpenproletariat* was attracted to populism and fascism. Observing parallels with the precariat, he warns that 'unless the precariat is understood, its emergence could lead society towards a politics of inferno' (Standing, 2011: i).

As Standing (2011: 9) acknowledges, he is not particularly innovative in his use of the terms 'precariat' and 'precarity' in English, tracing them back to the 1980s when they were used to describe seasonal workers. As noted earlier, precarity was later associated with social movements such EuroMayDay and 'Beyond the ESF' (European Social Forum), with the latter hosting the first Assembly of the Precariat (see Wainwright and Reyes, 2004). Casas-Cortés (2009: 236) delineates the social movement use of the

term, referring to Chainworkers, an Italian collective, that in 2004 described a struggle and conceptualization that is immediately recognizable:

The precariat is to post-Fordism what proletariat was to Fordism: flexible, temporary, part-time, and self-employed workers are the new social group which is required and reproduced by the neoliberal and postindustrial economic transformation. It is the critical mass that emerges from globalization, while demolished factories and neighborhoods are being substituted by offices and commercial areas. They are service workers in supermarkets and chains, cognitive workers operating in the information industry, [etc.]. Our lives become precarious because of the imperative of flexibility.

This political use of 'precariat' draws on earlier work that identified the rise of digital technologies and work related to this that saw the emergence of 'new media' workers who were identified with new designations such as 'technobohemians' or as 'net slaves' or the 'cybertariat'. Gill's question in the title of her report 'Technobohemians or the new Cybertariat?' captures a view that technology might release workers from the drudgery of standard work. The counter-position was that, for many workers, a new 'digital disciplining' saw them being proletarianized (Gill, n.d.). Clearly, the mixing of the terms 'cyber' and 'proletariat' is a construction that is reproduced in the conceptualization of 'precariat'.

Standing's identification of the precariat as a new class or global class-in-the-making has attracted considerable critical commentary. Breman (2013) argues that Standing is too generalized in his definition and examples, and misses historical nuance and regional variation in the patterns of work and precariousness. He argues that the precariat is not a new or distinctive class and shares much with the proletariat. Seymour (2012) argues that the concept lacks specificity and acts 'as a kind of populist interpellation', while acknowledging its usefulness for anti-capitalist movements. He points out that insecurity has long been at the core of capital-labor relations. Seymour also criticizes Standing's definition of the precariat, which is made in

terms of a comparison with an idealized view of the characteristics of the proletariat during the 'golden age of capitalism'.

The critics agree that while there are empirical and theoretical issues with defining a precariat, Standing has identified an important feature of late twentieth-century and early twenty-first-century work: increasingly workers are being made to labor in situations where the workers themselves must manage the risks of their employment. States and businesses arrange and manage work and workplaces in ways which have led to uncertainty, instability, vulnerability and insecurity expanding and becoming an important feature of global production.

LABOR ORGANIZING AND PRECARIOUS WORK

Individualizing risk by shifting responsibility from employers and the state to workers and their families has important implications for labor organization and collective bargaining. As noted above, changes in global production and rising insecurity are used to discipline workers and to limit collective bargaining, with unionization considered by employers to limit labor market flexibility. In this context, new strategies for organizing have been developing. While these strategies vary considerably by region and social, economic, political and historical context, some general points may be considered.

An approach that has gained some policy support in Western Europe has been flexicurity, most notably through the European Employment Strategy. Flexicurity seeks to enhance labor market flexibility while maintaining employment security and welfare safety nets. While seeming to be a win-win policy, it has been criticized as costly, ambiguous, subject to political capture and biased to employers, as well as for failing to address the issue of deregulation (Burroni and Keune, 2011). Progressive unions in Europe have been interested in both national

and region-wide re-regulation that secures minimum standards, recognizing that unions themselves must change to better incorporate precarious workers and their interests. The emphasis has been on collective bargaining within plants, nationally and regionally, that addresses these interests, and extensive political lobbying (Mehrens, 2011: 78–80). Similar strategies have been adopted by some unions in Asia (Deyo, 2012).

Collective action strategies have also involved both unions and non-governmental organizations. In Thailand, there have been some successes as unionized workers have struck firm-level agreements with transnational employers that include contracted workers from agencies, drawing on support from workers in the companies' plants in the United States (Hewison and Tularak, 2013). In Latin America, unions have achieved similar success, although in buyer-driven supply chains the effective alliances have been with activist and transnational consumer movements in the United States (Anner, 2011). Precarious workers have also been shown to organize alternative labor movements that seek social welfare gains. In India, this has involved using the power of their votes and citizenship rights to address politicians and governments rather than employers (Agarwala, 2013).

CONCLUSION

The expansion of global production and of precarious work suggests attention to a number of issues and questions. While these will necessarily vary by jurisdiction, some broad areas of future research can be identified. The nature and extent of precarious work remains impressionistic, and it is important that more research be conducted that allows for a clearer enumeration of the extent of precarious work. The impacts of insecurity are felt globally and yet workers' perceptions of precarity and vulnerability are not well studied. Likewise, the experiences and struggles of precarious workers need to be better

understood in terms of disaggregated impacts and perceptions by gender, age, work status, industry and national/regional location. More research is also needed to understand the legislation and forms of contracts and non-contracts that face workers and structure employment, and to understand the barriers to regularizing status. Insecurity in employment has also been expanding to include professions and services once considered immune to outsourcing, insourcing and contracting, and more research is necessary in order to better understand these changes. In addition, further studies of business models and employment agencies at different locations in supply and service chains (e.g. buyer vs. supplier chains, bottom vs. top of the chain) will also allow a better reflection on worker responses and collective organization and action. Finally, risk needs to be studied in the context of policy and worker responses, examining employment rights and citizenship rights as workers and their organizations deal with states rather than employers in terms of minimum standards, flexicurity, universalism and political processes. Such research will be most valuable if it involves deep analysis of individual cases that allow for comparative and cross-regional analysis.

A recent World Bank report examining the Asia-Pacific region argues that 'vulnerable' employment tends to be more common in countries where institutions and governance are weakest (Packard and Nguyen, 2014: 35). This view is inclined to obscure the fact that precarious work is a common feature of all economies, irrespective of regulatory robustness. Analysts have demonstrated that precariousness is not a result of limited regulation but of specific decisions made about the nature of regulation (see Gottfried, 2014: 474).

Precarious work has always been a feature of capitalist economies. What motivates attention to precarious work in the contemporary epoch is the recognition that, at least in Western Europe and some of the major Asian economies, the historical efforts to reduce vulnerability are being undone. The progress was a response to the power of labor. In the

West, collective agreements and labor market regulation developed the 'standard employment relationship' to ensure stability in the Cold War era. In Japan, lifetime employment was in part a strategy for defeating left-wing unions. That resulting relationship between capital, labor and the state incorporated the regularity and durability in employment that Rodgers (1989: 1) identified as protecting workers from exploitation, and established a social contract of rights and obligations that underpinned stability and economic expansion. These arrangements were, however, quite limited, restricted to relatively wealthy economies and aimed at unionized men.

As the twentieth century ended, the need for such social contracts was undermined by changes to global politics and production. The end of state socialism meant that global production and markets have dominated, yet the demise of these social contracts has meant the re-regulation of work so that it is flexible. Flexibility has resulted in uncertainty, instability, vulnerability and insecurity. Where states and businesses once carried some of the risks of work, now workers and their families and communities bear the risks associated with precarious work.

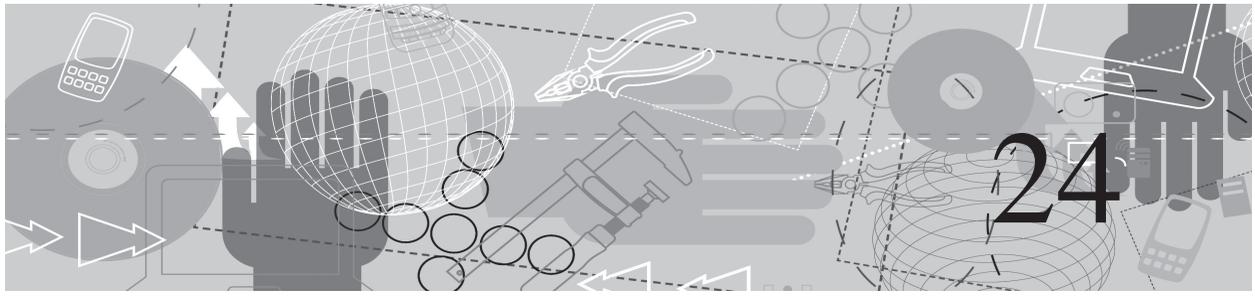
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Unpaid Domestic Labor

Janeen Baxter and Tsui-o Tai

INTRODUCTION

It is well-known that women undertake substantially more housework and care work than men. An abundance of social scientific research has investigated and offered diverse explanations of gender divisions of domestic labor, since at least the 1960s. Early sociological work relied on explanations of men's and women's biological affinities for different kinds of work, arguing that men and women complemented each other in the home by specializing in different kinds of activities in accordance with their biological affinities (Blood and Wolfe 1960). In the 1970s Marxist-feminists rejected housework as women's biological destiny and drew attention to domestic work as real work that could only be interpreted within broader theoretical frameworks that incorporated concepts of production, reproduction, exploitation and use values (Oakley 1974; Seccombe 1974; Barrett 1980). More recently, the bulk of research on domestic labor has focused on explaining why women do more of this work than men, with

theories and empirical investigations about variations in individual and household characteristics, couple dynamics and institutional contexts (Coltrane 2000). The overall challenge driving much of this scholarship is to understand the factors and arrangements that encourage more egalitarian household divisions of labor.

It is surprising that gender divisions of domestic labor have remained so persistent, despite women's gains in access to education, employment and public office, and changing demographic patterns since the 1970s. Changes in levels of female participation in paid work, particularly amongst married women, in addition to changes in the composition of families and households, including declining marriage and fertility levels and increasing cohabitation and divorce rates all signal the emergence of new forms of households, changing gender dynamics and new forms of interpersonal relationships within households (Baxter 2002). Yet, men's share of domestic labor and time spent by men and women on domestic labor has

been relatively stable by comparison. A vast body of research has been devoted to examining these issues in an attempt to identify constraints on the emergence of egalitarian gender divisions of housework and care work, and the circumstances under which gender-equal arrangements are more or less possible (Coltrane 2000; Cooke and Baxter 2010). Theoretical explanations have primarily focused on human capital and economic bargaining, or 'doing gender', sometimes called gender display (Greenstein 2000; Brines 1994; Bittman et al. 2003; Gupta 2007). Research has also examined macro social factors and the interactions between macro-level forces and interpersonal behavior in households (Fuwa 2004; Hook 2006; Cooke and Baxter 2010; Treas and Drobníč 2010).

In the most recent developments, Gupta (2007) has argued that women's absolute earnings, not their relative earnings, are most important for determining women's time spent on housework. And in a reassessment of the quantitative evidence on housework and gender display, Sullivan (2011) has argued that the case for gender display has been over-stated. But while both Gupta and Sullivan present sound arguments and solid evidence, there is nevertheless a wealth of research showing support for either economic bargaining or gender display, suggesting that it may be a bit too soon to discard the insights from these approaches. Perhaps further refinement to take account of specific contexts, such as life-course stage and variations in historical and political institutional settings are warranted. To expect the same analytical model to explain behavior in all contexts is undoubtedly an oversimplification of the mechanisms driving gender divisions in the home. Rather it is more likely that we need to develop a range of theoretical models that are contextualized in time and place.

This chapter outlines these arguments in more detail. We review and summarize the main theoretical approaches that have guided empirical research on domestic labor over the last two decades. These approaches include

micro-level theories about household dynamics and individual level characteristics, as well as macro theories about social context and the role of institutions and cultural norms in shaping interpersonal behaviors. We outline the key findings of influential empirical studies using these approaches and suggest that most domestic labor research has been guided by either economic or gender arguments, with some recent studies developing theories that meld these together. We present an overview of recent theoretical arguments and evidence that has critiqued earlier approaches, particularly economic bargaining and gender display theories, and illustrate the importance of a life course approach with examples from longitudinal research. Finally, we present new evidence of cross-national domestic labor patterns using the most recently available comparative data on housework arrangements.

THEORETICAL APPROACHES

Micro-Level Theories

One very influential approach underlying explanations for the gender division of labor in the home is human capital theory (Becker 1991). Becker argued that men and women pursue rational strategies that maximize household outcomes. Women specialize in care work and household labor while men focus on education and labor market skills. This approach ensures that household and labor market work are divided rationally according to skills and abilities, which in turn ensures maximum household rewards and benefits. The gender division of labor is thus an economically rational means of dividing paid and unpaid work.

Exchange bargaining theories also draw on arguments about men's higher earning power. In this case though, there is recognition of the inequity of gendered labor arrangements for women and the disadvantage associated with economic dependence. Women are

usually economically dependent on men due to their care work responsibilities and their lower earning power in the labor market, and thus are forced to exchange their household labor for economic support, while the partner with higher earnings, usually men, will bargain their way out of housework (Lundberg and Pollak 1996). Since household work is deemed to be unpleasant or menial, the person with the most economic resources, usually men, will bargain their way out of this work, while the person with the least resources, usually women, will have less power and hence will spend more time on domestic work (Brines 1994).

But whether it be part of a rational household strategy or the result of gender inequalities in earnings, many studies find that women perform most household labor regardless of their economic contributions to the household (Coltrane 2000). To account for the persistence of gendered behavior in households, researchers turned to theories that explained the central role of gender in the allocation of domestic labor. The path-breaking arguments introduced by West and Zimmerman in their influential and highly cited paper 'Doing Gender' in *Gender and Society* (1987) led to the development of new theories of housework as a form of doing gender or gender display. West and Zimmerman argued that gender is produced and reproduced in everyday interactions and is an emergent feature of social situations rather than a static social given. Gender is thus something we do, not something we are (West and Zimmerman 1987). Rather than assume that gendered behavior is the result of socialization into gender appropriate roles and identities or structurally determined by virtue of access to resources or social locations, West and Zimmerman emphasized gender as a dynamic socially constructed accomplishment that is continually constructed and reconstructed in different contexts.

Berk extended these arguments to housework arguing that current arrangements for the organization of domestic work support two production processes: household goods

and services, and gender (1985: 201). She argued that the marital household is a 'gender factory' where, in addition to accomplishing tasks, housework produces gender through the everyday enactment of dominance, submission and other behaviors symbolically linked to gender. The process of doing gender does not operate at a conscious level; but rather gender is tacitly produced as men and women perform, or not, routine household tasks. The performance of housework by women and the non-performance of housework by men, is an important component of doing gender and helps to explain why gender far outweighs other factors in explaining who does housework, why housework is not allocated efficiently or rationally according to who has the most time, and why men and women are likely to see the division of labor as fair, even though it is objectively unequally distributed (Ferree 1990: 876–877).

Problematically for empirical studies, actually measuring 'doing gender' is not straightforward, particularly in quantitative research, with the result that many rely on measures of gender role attitudes or gender identity questions as proxies. In the process, some of the important features of the approach as originally outlined by West and Zimmerman have been overlooked, particularly the idea that gender is not a fixed social role with internalized behaviors, practices and identities (Deutsch 2007). Nevertheless, researchers concerned with gender divisions of domestic labor have adopted this approach with enthusiasm, to the point where it is hard to imagine analyses of domestic labor that do not incorporate or examine this approach in some way.

Some of the most influential work has developed extensions that meld together elements of economic bargaining or dependency and gender display. For example, Brines (1994) has argued that both economic dependence and gender display may influence gender divisions in a single household: women's housework time is better explained by an economic dependence model and men's is better explained by gender display. Examining data from the Panel

Study of Income Dynamics in the US, Brines showed that as women's relative share of income increased, men increased their share of housework, but only up to a certain point. Once women's earnings reached parity or increased beyond the point of equality, men's housework hours began to decline. Brines argued that in these 'gender deviant' households, men adopt more traditional behavior in order to negate the gender abnormal behavior of not being the main breadwinner. Women's behavior, on the other hand, consistently followed an economic dependence model. This implies that men's and women's housework involvement are influenced by different processes. In other words, not only is housework gendered, but the mechanisms determining time spent on housework are also gendered.

The possibility that both gender display and economic bargaining drive gender divisions of labor at home has been examined in more recent studies. Greenstein (2000) finds similar results to Brines with an absolute measure of housework hours, but not with a proportional measure. His analyses of the US National Survey of Families and Households found that breadwinner wives do a larger percentage of housework than would be predicted under a model of economic dependence while dependent husbands did less. He coined the term 'gender deviance neutralization' to explain this process. Australian research using time-diary data, arguably more accurate than summary measures of housework time, also reports that 'gender trumps money' once women's earnings exceed men's in the household (Bittman et al. 2003). But for men the results differed. Bittman and colleagues find no relationship between relative earnings and men's housework hours. Once again then, there is evidence that explanations for men's and women's housework contributions must look to gender-specific mechanisms. Bittman et al. conclude that the more entrenched nature of the male breadwinner role in Australia, compared to the US, makes it even more deviant in Australia for women to be the main breadwinner and thus encourages Australian women to conform to

appropriate gender display by doing a disproportionate share of housework.

The most recent theoretical development in this area has shifted attention away from both relative earnings and gender display to economic autonomy. Gupta (2005, 2007) argues that women's housework time is determined by their absolute earnings not their earnings relative to their husband. With data from the US National Survey of Families and Households he shows that women's housework time is related to their own earnings, with higher earning women spending less time on housework than lower earning women (2005, 2007). He also finds the same relationship amongst single women, indicating that the mechanism underlying the relationship between earnings and women's housework time is not linked to economic bargaining or gender display, since single women have no imperative for gender display with domestic labor and no partner to bargain with over the allocation of labor.

There are a number of possibilities why women's earnings may be negatively associated with time on housework, including the possibility that higher earning women are more able to afford paid domestic help and thus spend less time on housework than women with lower earnings. Alternatively, women with higher earnings may have less incentive to do housework because of the potential loss of foregone earnings. Finally, higher earning women may feel less obligation to do it or have less interest in it, and hence spend less time on domestic tasks.

The same relationship is not observed for men. Gupta finds no association between men's earnings and women's housework time, or men's housework time. This may be because there is simply less variation in men's housework time overall compared to women. One of the implications of Gupta's work is that women act as autonomous economic agents in their households and have greater control over expenditure of their own earnings. Research on the organization of family finances reveals a division of labor within households in who takes care of paying bills

and deciding where household funds should be allocated, with women prioritizing different spending areas to men (Treas 1993). It may be that women's sense of responsibility for housework and other family-related matters such as childcare fuels a sense of obligation to use their earnings, rather than their partner's, to outsource domestic work if they are unable or unwilling to do it themselves. Gupta notes a number of studies that support the claim that women are more likely than men to spend their earnings on family-related expenses (see e.g. Lundberg, Pollak and Wales 1997). This may be interpreted as a form of doing gender or the gendering of work, but not in the sense originally outlined by Berk (1985).

Gupta suggests that previous findings of an association between economic dependence and time spent on housework may stem from women's large share of earnings income in low-income households, reflecting their likelihood of being in non-traditional couples where the husband is either not employed or employed part-time. This implies that women are doing less housework due to the circumstances of the household and in particular men's employment status rather than women's economic power (Gupta 2007: 403). Gupta's work thus challenges both economic dependence and gender display theories, and suggests a class-based argument where differences amongst women in levels of earnings is the key to understanding variations in women's housework time.

A recent paper by Sullivan (2011) has cogently argued that the evidence for doing gender as an explanation for the time spent by men and women on household labor has been over-stated. Sullivan argues that reassessments of the evidence for gender deviance neutralization by Gupta (1999) show that most of the evidence comes from men who are at the extreme tail of the income distribution with very little or no earnings (that is, men who are long-term jobless or who have no earnings). In the majority of households the relationship between income and housework hours is negative and linear

in line with economic dependency arguments (Sullivan 2011: 6). Sullivan also cites work by Kan (2008) and others that shows systematic gender biases in reporting of housework hours, with men likely to be much less accurate than women, as measured by the correspondence between survey questions about housework time and time-diary reports. Sullivan thus suggests that men may be simply under-reporting their time spent on housework rather than actively engaging in gender neutralization by performing less housework. She also cites qualitative research which finds that men and women sometimes feel embarrassed about their housework equality and tend to conform by under-reporting men's share. As Sullivan concedes, this is a form of gender display or gender deviance neutralization, but not of the form reported by Brines or Greenstein.

Sullivan's critique of gender display has been assessed positively by England (2011), Risman (2011) and Kluwer (2011) in responses published in the same journal issue. England, for example, suggests that Brines' arguments were misinterpreted, with many of the nuances and details of her arguments lost in summaries and literature reviews, a tendency to focus on the statistical rather than the substantive significance of the findings, in part because of their theoretical interest, and a lack of attention to causality. The end result is 'much ado about almost nothing' (England 2011). Risman and Kluwer are a little more cautious about Sullivan's claims, with both suggesting that her interpretation is only partly right, while Risman calls for a greater focus on gender as structure and Kluwer argues for more psychological insights into gender identity. Recent longitudinal work assessing Gupta's claims in an Australian context also suggests a need for caution in moving beyond economic exchange and dependence arguments, with analyses showing that women's relative earnings are a stronger predictor of women's housework time than their absolute earnings (Baxter and Hewitt 2013). The debate about autonomy versus display is thus not resolved

and may require further investigations across different contexts and life-course stages.

Some of the differences in the findings discussed above may be due to differences in study design. Brines, for example, analyzed data collected by the Panel Study of Income Dynamics in the United States from wave 20 in 1985, while Gupta and Greenstein used data from the US National Families and Households study collected in the late 1980s. Baxter and Hewitt (2013) analyzed data from Australia collected in the 2000s, while Sullivan bases her arguments in part on small-scale studies in the US and UK in the 1980 and 1990s, as well as studies using time use diaries. At least some of the variations in findings, therefore, may be due to differences in design and focus. As England (2011) cautions, we should not over-emphasize conclusions from specific results and we must step back and focus on the 'big picture' of why women continue to do more housework than men.

Changes Over the Life Course

The majority of research on domestic labor has adopted a static approach to explaining household arrangements, using data from single empirical snapshots of individuals and households. Explanations assume consistency over the life course in divisions of labor and the factors shaping those arrangements. This type of approach enables comparisons across social groups to provide some insights into variations over the life course. For example, comparing individuals with and without children, or couples in different types of marital states (for example cohabiting compared to married) provides insights into how domestic arrangements change as individuals move through certain life-course stages. But longitudinal data that follow the same individuals over time is essential for assessing change among individuals and for examining dynamic theories about how individuals respond to changing social context, life-course stage and household structures.

Some research has begun to move in these directions. Gupta's (1999) paper was one of the first showing changes in men's and women's time on domestic work as they moved into and out of couple relationships, using two waves of data from the US National Survey of Families and Households. The maturation of a number of international household panel studies that have included questions on domestic labor arrangements have provided further opportunities for studies capturing greater spans of the life course and an increased number of life-course transitions (Baxter, Hewitt and Haynes 2008; Hewitt, Haynes and Baxter 2013). One of the key findings concerns gender differences in time spent on domestic labor over the life course. Men's housework time tends to remain low (by comparison to women) and relatively stable over the life course, regardless of transitions into relationships and parenthood, although men appear to increase their housework hours when relationships end (Baxter, Hewitt and Haynes 2008). In contrast, women's housework time is much more volatile and receptive to life-course transitions. Women's housework hours increase by about six hours per week after the birth of a first child, according to Australian evidence, and continue to increase further with subsequent births (Baxter, Hewitt and Haynes 2008). Entry into couple relationships also leads to more housework time for women, while relationship break-up is associated with less housework time (Hewitt, Haynes and Baxter 2013).

It is not surprising that time devoted to domestic labor will vary over the life course in response to changing household structures, for example movement from being single to cohabiting with a partner; changing levels of demand for domestic labor time, such as the birth of a child; and changes in the time required for competing demands, such as changes in employment hours. Life-course pathways into and out of relationships are arguably becoming more diverse over time, with increased numbers of couples living together before marriage, increased divorced rates and high rates of re-partnering and

remarriage. In many Western countries, men and women are marrying later, having fewer children, having children outside of marriage, separating more often and spending more time in cohabiting relationships (Bumpass and Lu 2000; Kiernan 2002; De Vaus 2004). Consequently, not only have pathways through the life course become more varied, with individuals spending more time living outside the 'traditional' family unit, but the resources and experiences that individuals bring to relationships have changed.

Longitudinal data that allow us to track changes among individuals across the life course enable better understanding of how gendered patterns of housework time are reinforced or altered as individuals move through increasingly varied marriage and family trajectories. Recent research has shown that a first birth is associated with both men and women placing much greater priority on women's mothering time with children (Katz-Wise, Priess and Hyde 2010; Baxter, Buchler, Perales and Western 2015). This suggests that not only do time and demands for domestic labor change across the life course, but also that men's and women's beliefs about who should be doing this work may also change. The implication is that theories must explain not only variations in domestic divisions of labor across social groups, but within individuals over time.

Cross-National Research: Macro-Level Theories

How couples share domestic work and how much time individuals spend on housework varies substantially across countries, suggesting that both micro-level mechanisms and macro national contexts contribute to the construction of gender relations in the household (Cooke and Baxter 2010; Sayer 2010; Kan, Sullivan and Gershuny 2011). The macro-level perspective argues that contextual factors pattern individuals' behavior in the family. Scholars have pointed to several contextual mechanisms – mainly overall

gender equity, social policies and cultural norms – that may shape couples' sharing of housework.

Scholars have examined whether societal gender equity also affects couples' division of housework. The Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM) (UN 2009), a composite indicator developed to assess four aspects of national gender equity (i.e. politics, market and professional opportunities, and economic power), has been commonly used to evaluate the impact of societal gender context on domestic work arrangements (Batalova and Cohen 2002; Fuwa 2004; Fuwa and Cohen 2007; Knudsen and Wærness 2008; Geist and Cohen 2011). Empirical studies (e.g. Fuwa 2004 and Knudsen and Wærness 2008) show that, all things being equal, housework divisions tend to be more equal in societies with high levels of societal gender equity than in societies with traditional gender norms and practices.

Similarly, research has hypothesized that women's position in the broader economic structure may affect spouses' negotiations about household labor. As expected, the higher prevalence of female employment has been found to be related to a more equal division of housework and greater time spent by men on housework (Hook 2006). On the other hand, high levels of part-time employment, which reflect women's status as the secondary household provider, are correlated with a less equal division. Furthermore, a less egalitarian division is observed in specific skills economies related to varieties of capitalism where there is usually a bigger penalty for women's career interruptions due to childbearing or other family responsibilities (Iversen and Rosenbluth 2006).

With the expansion of welfare states, state support for families with children and policies regulating employment are argued to impact gender relations in paid and unpaid work. On the one hand, social policies change the arrangements of family work through substantive provisions such as the availability of public childcare facilities or parental leave; on the other hand, state

policies are likely to reinforce certain gender norms when the underlying ideologies of social policy are internalized by individuals (Chang 2000; Treas and Widmer 2000; Fuwa and Cohen 2007). A number of studies have evaluated the influences of state policies on the division of housework by either targeting the effects of specific policies (e.g. public childcare, affirmative action) or assessing the association between family work outcomes and welfare regime types.

One of the most influential typologies of welfare regimes is proposed by Esping-Andersen (1990, 1999). In response to Esping-Andersen's modified framework that includes a policy dimension – defamilialization, or state support to lift care work from the family – researchers expect a connection between gender divisions in the household and welfare regimes (Hook 2010). Evidence has shown that domestic work is divided relatively equally in social democratic countries where state policies promote female employment and gender equity (Fuwa 2004; Geist 2005; Hook 2006). By contrast, women tend to do more housework in conservative countries where traditional gender specialization is encouraged through employment structures and family policies (e.g. extended parental leave). In societies where market-based solutions are primarily emphasized, gender divisions are more heterogeneous and generally fall between social democratic and conservative regimes. Some studies, however, present few cross-national variations between different welfare regimes (Baxter 1997).

Institutionalist research on welfare states and gender divisions is not limited to the three capitalist regime types. Eastern European countries are usually grouped as another cluster due to their socialism legacy. Overall in Eastern Europe men spend much time on household tasks, partially because of a long history of female employment (Fuwa 2004; van der Lippe 2010). In contrast, full-time homemaking for married women is common in Southern Europe, where part-time jobs are limited and public childcare facilities are less available (Blossfeld and Hakim 1997).

Although welfare state typologies provide important information about social policies, they combine social policies, employment patterns and cultural norms, which may obscure which policies are the most influential for gender divisions (Hook 2006). In this regard, scholars have considered whether housework division is related to specific social policies directed at balancing work and family responsibilities, improving equal access to employment opportunities or promoting gender equity initiatives. For instance, scholars point out the countervailing effect of public childcare on housework. Although public childcare frees women from childcare and facilitates maternal employment, it also maintains men's low involvement in parenting. Empirical studies show that the availability of public childcare is negatively associated with women's cooking time and positively related to a more equal division, but does not affect men's cooking time (Fuwa and Cohen 2007; Buhmann, Elcheroth, and Tettamanti 2009; Hook 2010). In contrast, extended parental leave, which is usually used by mothers and considered to maintain traditional gender specialization, is related to women's greater time spent on cooking and less time for men spent on housework (Hook 2010). However, in countries where men are eligible for parental leave, women spend less time cooking (Hook 2010).

Also, work regulations that advocate women's employment or gender equity in the labor market are hypothesized to affect gender division in the household because women's elevated economic position might shift gender role expectations in both paid and unpaid work. Following this reasoning, Fuwa and Cohen (2007) show that the division of household labor is more egalitarian in countries without discriminatory regulations limiting women's work opportunities.

Finally, national cultures are likely to orient the allocation of housework through, for example, cultural norms serving as reference in comparison with individuals' domestic arrangements (Greenstein 2009). Given that the Protestant tradition is considered more

liberal with respect to gender norms than Catholic or other Christian affiliations, not surprisingly, countries with Catholic and Orthodox traditions show more traditional divisions of household labor than Protestant nations (Voicu, Voicu and Strapcova 2009). Furthermore, public support for more egalitarian gender roles enhances more equal divisions in the household (Fuwa 2004).

Recent literature not only documents macro-contextual impacts on couples' absolute and relative contributions to household labor, it also reveals the role of macro-level factors as a moderator for micro-level effects. That is, although individual and family characteristics could enhance or hinder equal gender divisions, these micro-level effects may differ in response to varying national contexts. Previous studies have shown that some macro-level factors (e.g. GEM, social policies and economic development) interact with micro-level characteristics to influence individuals' domestic work (Aboim 2010; Fuwa 2004; Geist 2005; Hook 2006; Fuwa and Cohen 2007). For instance, Fuwa (2004) found that the equalizing effects of women's full-time employment and liberal gender attitudes on domestic work are stronger for women in more gender-egalitarian countries. In other words, it seems to be more effective for women to use their individual assets to negotiate housework with their spouses in gender-egalitarian countries.

In accordance with the findings of Fuwa (2004), Geist (2005) found a weaker positive link between liberal gender attitudes and equal divisions in conservative countries than in social democratic or liberal countries. However, this study also shows a stronger positive connection between women's working hours and egalitarian divisions in conservative countries than in other welfare regimes. According to Geist's argument, in conservative countries, women's negotiations about housework allocation with their partners may depend on more evident behaviors, such as their long working hours leading to them being less available for housework. Gender attitudes or bargaining power through

share of income, on the other hand, may not be sufficient to rearrange housework allocation in conservative countries (Geist 2005).

Social policies also moderate how individual-level and family characteristics affect domestic work. The study of Fuwa and Cohen (2007) reveals that women's higher levels of income relative to their partners have stronger effects on the gender division of housework in countries without discriminatory policies. However, longer parental leave undermines the influence of women's full-time employment on domestic divisions (Bird and Gottschall 2004).

Societal gender ideology also affects individuals' gender attitudes and gender division practices. Identifying three differential gender contexts – egalitarian, traditional and transitional (i.e. between traditional and egalitarian) – among 24 countries, Diefenbach (2002) found that women's higher relative income equalizes the division of housework more effectively in transitional countries than in egalitarian or traditional countries, suggesting that personal resources may lend women more bargaining power in the household when gender norms are less fixed. Similarly, Aboim (2010) shows that the effect of individuals' gender attitudes on the division of domestic work varies in different national contexts. For instance, in Sweden where gender equity is highly supported through social institutions and social policies, such as father entitlements for leave, attitudes toward gender roles are not salient in the division of household labor.

In summary, the division of household labor is not isolated within the household. How couples share domestic work is not only contingent on individual and household characteristics but also responsive to broader contexts. As previous studies have shown, housework is divided more equally in societies with higher levels of overall societal gender equity, more state support for female employment and childcare, and more egalitarian gender norms. By contrast, women undertake a larger share of housework and spend more time on housework in countries

where part-time employment is prevalent, parental leave is extended, and gender norms endorse traditional gender specialization. Furthermore, societal contexts not only affect the benefits of traditional gender specialization, but also influence the effectiveness of individuals' resources and characteristics in the process of negotiations about housework.

WHO IS DOING THE HOUSEWORK? NEW EVIDENCE FROM ISSP

Women perform more housework than men in all societies and periods documented in previous studies (Lachance-Grzela and Bouchard 2010; Kan, Sullivan and Gershuny 2011; Treas and Lui 2013). Although scholars suggest a slow and incomplete gender convergence of paid and unpaid work trends (Sayer 2010; Kan, Sullivan and Gershuny 2011), gender inequalities in housework vary considerably across societies. According to a recent study based on the Multinational Time Use Study (MTUS) data for 16 countries (Kan, Sullivan and Gershuny 2011), women's total domestic work time ranged from 272 minutes per day in the US to 341 minutes in Italy in the early years of the twenty-first century. Men's daily housework time ranged from 97 minutes in Spain to 173 minutes in Australia and Norway. Generally speaking, there is a steady downward trend in women's total domestic time or time spent on routine chores in the four decades since the 1960s. Meanwhile, men's overall domestic work has increased from 90–105 minutes per day to 148–173 minutes in the same period of time, but shows signs of slight decline or levelling off in some countries in the 1990s or the early 2000s. For example, Norwegian men's time totalled 125 minutes per day in the 1970s and reached 173 minutes in the 2000s, while their female counterparts lowered housework levels from 367 minutes to 276 minutes. Similarly, Bianchi and her associates (2012) show that American women's total housework time dropped from 30 hours

per week in 1965 to 16.2 hours in 2009–2010. American men's total housework time increased from 4.9 hours to 10 hours per week in the same period.

A closer look at various types of domestic work (i.e. routine housework, non-routine housework, and family care), revealed sharper declines in women's time on routine housework (e.g. cooking, cleaning, laundry) than on non-routine tasks (e.g. household repairs) in the past four decades (Sayer 2010). For instance, French and Dutch women's daily time in routine chores dropped by 60–80 minutes and their time in non-routine activities fell by 10–20 minutes. By comparison, men's time in routine tasks rose by 17–36 minutes. As scholars point out, the decreasing gender inequality in routine housework time is accomplished mainly through a substantial drop in women's routine housework time, as well as a less marked increase in men's time (Kan, Sullivan and Gershuny 2011).

In contrast to trends in routine housework, the pattern of family care time displays a different pattern of change. For women, their time allocated to family care fluctuated, with highly divergent patterns among the 16 countries from the MTUS data. In general, men's time on family care activities is relatively limited, despite showing a slightly rising trend since the 1960s (Sayer 2010; Kan, Sullivan and Gershuny 2011). Most countries provide limited provisions to care for older adults compared to children (Bettio and Plantenga 2004). Although men's time on childcare has increased over the past four decades, mothers continue to allocate two to three times as much time to children as fathers do and provide about 70 percent of elder care compared to men (Abel 1991; Craig 2006). Among aged couples, wives usually provide care for their husbands, partially because women's average life expectancy is longer and because wives tend to be younger than husbands. Adult daughters are also more likely to take care of older parents than sons when a spouse is not available for elder care (Abel 1991; Smith 2004).

Given the body of literature showing the contingency of domestic work arrangements

on national contexts (e.g. Fuwa 2004; Fuwa and Cohen 2007), it is plausible to expect that patterns of domestic work change in response to evolving macro factors. Kan and her associates (2011) reveal that women's share of total domestic work time declined more sharply in social democratic and liberal countries (from 75–85 percent to 63–57 percent) than in conservative countries (80 percent to 65 percent) from the 1960s to the early 2000s. Despite the lack of data available for earlier years, Southern European countries show a downward trend from around 85 percent in the 1980s to 75–80 percent in 2000–2004. In addition, women's share of core domestic work dropped substantially, although not as steeply as women's share of total time. While the MTUS data show similar drops in women's share of core domestic work time in most social democratic, liberal and conservative countries, the findings by Geist and Cohen (2011) present different trends. Based on the International Social Survey Program (ISSP) data and different measures of housework, the male share of four routine tasks (laundry, grocery shopping, cleaning and meal preparation) rose more rapidly in conservative countries than in liberal and social democratic countries from 1994 to 2002.

The reduced amount of women's total housework time exceeds the increase in men's time on household labor, which leads to a gradual decline in total time spent in housework by couples. Scholars suggest that the decline in housework time may reflect the rise of dual-earner families, decreased involvement in housework to maintain time with children (Bianchi 2000), the outsourcing of family chores (Treas and De Ruijter 2008), and the advancement of domestic technologies (Heisig 2011; also see the review by Treas and Lui 2013).

Trends in Time spent on Domestic Labor

Data from the ISSP enable us to update housework trends to 2012. Unlike the MTUS data, the ISSP data only provide the respondent's overall estimation of housework time based on

two questions: 'On average, how many hours a week do you personally spend on household work, not including childcare and leisure time activities?' and 'And what about your spouse/partner? On average, how many hours a week does she/he personally spend on household work, not including childcare and leisure time activities?' Therefore, we are not able to evaluate time spent on routine and non-routine chores separately.

In addition, there are questions regarding the division of six household tasks between couples (i.e. laundry, caring for sick family members, grocery shopping, cleaning, meal preparation and small repairs). The respondent's response falls between 'always the respondent does the task' (= 1) to 'always the spouse does the task' (= 5). Following Geist and Cohen (2011), we focus on laundry, grocery shopping, cleaning and meal preparation, given that small repairs and taking care of sick family members do not occur routinely in some households. We averaged respondents' responses to the four items to measure the overall gender division of female-typed tasks. Using both time-based and task-based measures of domestic work, the following analyses examine changes in the respondents' absolute and relative contributions to household labor across 27 countries from the ISSP data between 2002 and 2012 (GESIS 2012). The analytic sample consists of 10,603 coupled men and 14,210 women (married or cohabiting), aged between 25 and 55.

Figures 24.1–24.6 illustrate the distribution of housework time across 27 countries. On average, women's weekly housework hours declined from 21 to 20 ($p < .05$) hours, while men's time on domestic work increased from 9 to 10 ($p < .05$) hours. More specifically, men's involvement in housework was elevated in nine countries in the last decade ($p < .05$). Meanwhile, women shed time on household labor in six countries ($p < .05$). Housework patterns were relatively persistent in some countries. For instance, men in Mexico, the Philippines and several post-socialist countries (i.e. Poland, Russia, Slovakia, Latvia) continued to spend the most amount of time

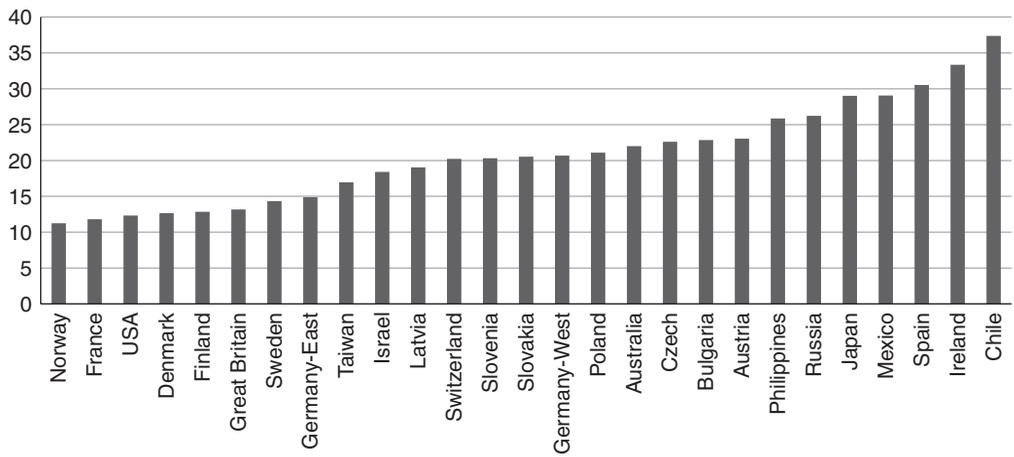


Figure 24.1 Women's weekly housework hours, 2002

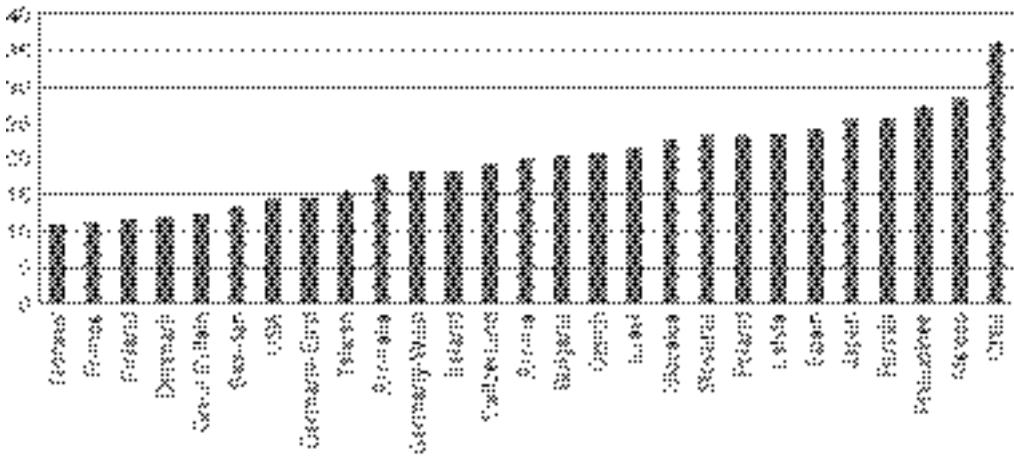


Figure 24.2 Women's weekly housework hours, 2012

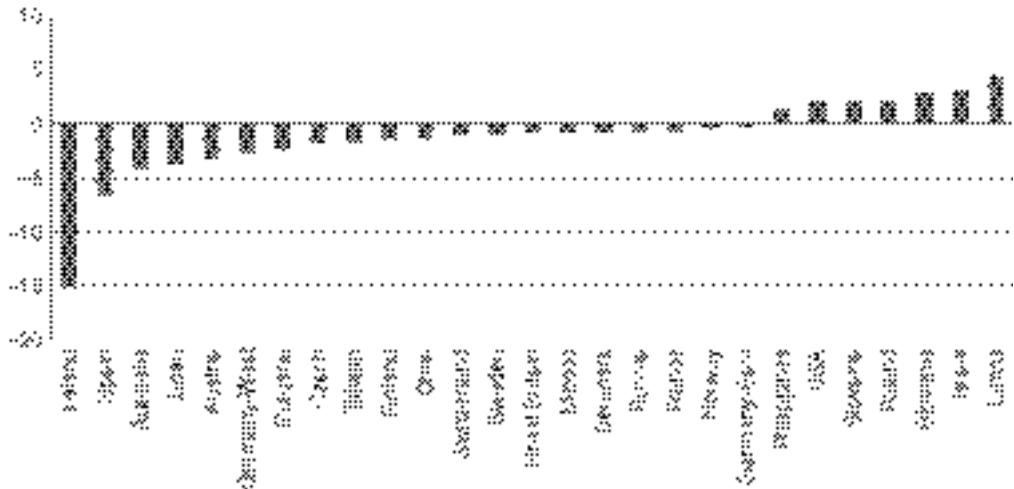


Figure 24.3 Change in women's housework hours, 2002–2012

on household tasks, while their counterparts in East Asia (i.e. Japan, Taiwan), conservative countries (i.e. France, West Germany) and social democratic countries devoted the least amount of time to housework. Women in Chile, Mexico, Japan, Russia and the Philippines reported long housework hours at both time points, whereas women in France, social democratic countries, the USA and Great Britain allocated much less time to domestic work. Changes in housework time vary remarkably cross-nationally. For female respondents, the sharpest declines were found in Ireland (15 hours), Spain (6.5 hours), Australia (4 hours) and Japan (3.7 hours), where women already spent long hours doing housework in 2002. The most notable increases in women's domestic work time were observed in Latvia (4 hours), Israel (3 hours) and Slovenia (2.8 hours). Among men, the sharpest drops were witnessed in Bulgaria (2.7 hours) and Australia (1.8 hours), while most gains were found in Poland (4.4 hours), Austria (3 hours) and Norway (2.8 hours).

In sum, trends shown in Figures 24.1–24.6 indicate that the distribution of housework time seems to be path-dependent at the aggregate level. Individuals in countries with reports of long housework hours in 2002 continued to spend much time doing housework in 2012. Interestingly, when women's housework levels declined in most societies, some post-socialist countries (e.g. Poland, Latvia, Slovenia) showed an increase in both men's and women's housework time. By contrast, Australian men and women reduced their housework time. By comparison, in some traditional gender countries (e.g. Austria, Spain), men increased their housework time and women reduced their time on household labor, suggesting a catch-up of gender equalization in these countries.

Trends in Gender Shares of Domestic Labor

Women's lower investment and men's greater involvement in housework time leads to a

downward trend in women's relative contribution in the last decade, although women continue to do the lion's share of domestic work. Overall, women's share of housework time slightly declined, from 74 percent to 71 percent. Women in Japan, Chile and Taiwan continued to shoulder the largest part of housework time during the last decade. In contrast, the gender gap in housework time is smallest in some social democratic (i.e. Denmark, Sweden), liberal (i.e. Australia, Great Britain, USA) and post-socialist countries (i.e. Latvia, Poland) at the two time points. According to Figures 24.7–24.9, women's time share fell significantly in 11 countries ($p < .05$). Women's time share dropped most in Spain and Japan, as well as in liberal (i.e. Great Britain, Australia, Ireland), social democratic (i.e. Norway, Denmark) and some conservative countries (i.e. Austria, France). However, Mexican women indicated a significant increase ($p < .05$) in time share, apparently resulting from men's reduced time spent in housework.

Turning to the division of female-typed household tasks (i.e. laundry, grocery shopping, cleaning and meal preparation), these tasks were usually done by women in 2002 and 2012 (mean = 1.95, referring to 'usually the respondent does the task'). Considering cross-national differences, according to women's reports, their spouses' share increased in seven countries, but decreased in Russia and the Philippines ($p < .05$).

Compared to analytical results regarding housework time, time-based and task-based findings concur in some countries but diverge in others, with an intermediate level of overall correlation ($r = 0.5$, $n = 27$, $p < .01$). First, women's housework levels are the highest in some gender-traditional countries such as Japan, Chile and Mexico, according to either time-based or task-based measures. Second, couples share housework time and female-typed tasks more equally in social democratic and some liberal countries (i.e. the USA, Great Britain). In some countries, however, changes in time share are not similar to changes in routine task share.

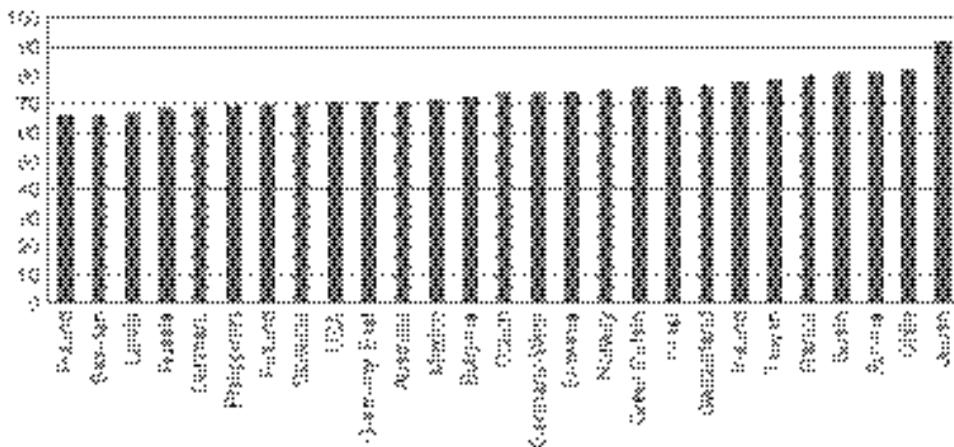


Figure 24.7 Women's percent of total housework time, 2002

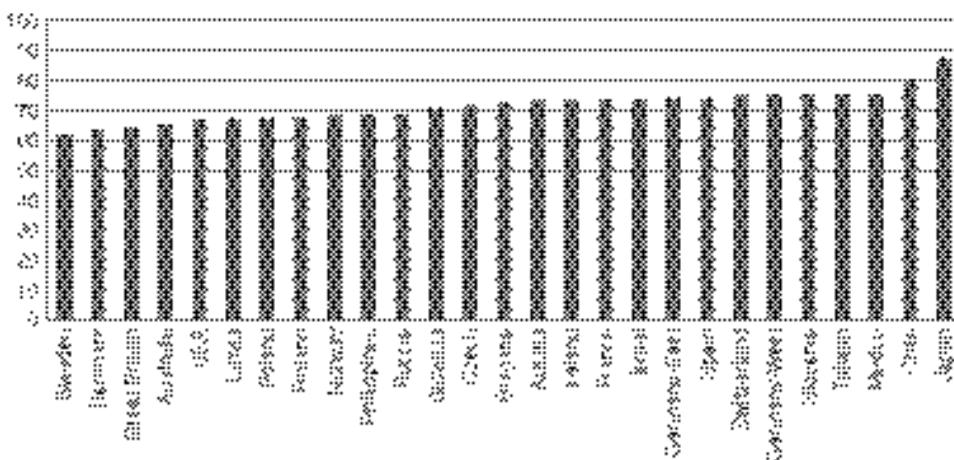


Figure 24.8 Women's percent of total housework time, 2012

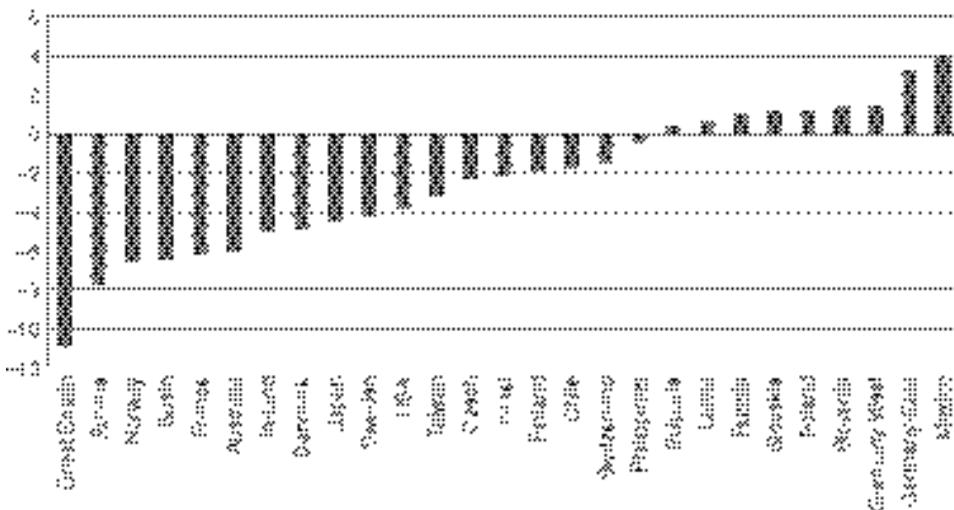


Figure 24.9 Change in women's percent of housework time, 2002–2012

level in the last decade ($r = -0.4$, $n = 25$, $p < .05$). In other words, in countries where gender income inequalities declined, women's housework time dropped as well. More specifically, in Ireland and Spain, women's income relative to men increased, while their housework time fell. By contrast, in Latvia and Slovakia, women's relative income levels declined, while their time allocated to housework increased. Further, countries that allocated more public expenditures to childcare facilities, such as social democratic countries, Australia, Austria, Ireland and Japan, display downward trends in women's share of housework time and tasks. The overall correlation, however, is not statistically significant.

There are some limitations in our updates of recent housework trends. First, as discussed previously, ISSP does not provide information about time spent on routine and non-routine chores. Thus, we cannot assess how individuals allocate time to specific household tasks. On the other hand, ISSP provides data on the sharing of household tasks between couples. We are therefore able to assess couples' relative contribution to some routine tasks, although the measure seems to be more subjective than time-based measures. Furthermore, although the literature relates housework to social policies such as public childcare facilities, our aggregate findings do not show strong links. Stronger links may have been evident if we had included childcare and elder care in our measure of unpaid domestic labor. As scholars suggest, contextual factors are likely to interplay with micro-level characteristics and other macro factors to shape gender relations in the household. Thus, more comprehensive studies that incorporate both macro- and micro-level factors, and a range of measures of unpaid domestic work, are important to improve our understanding of these associations.

FINAL COMMENTS

Gender gaps in unpaid domestic labor persist, although, as discussed in this chapter,

important variations are evident across time and nation, and among individuals over the life course. These variations include temporal and institutional changes in the historical evolution of housework as women's work; differences in gender divisions of labor in relation to the social and economic characteristics of individuals and households; differences in relation to specific activities and tasks; and variations across countries in the institutional forces that shape gender relations within households. Although early studies of domestic labor assumed that men's and women's activities at home were different but equal, most recent studies recognize the considerable inequalities and consequences associated with women's unpaid work and care responsibilities and have focused attention on identifying the factors that support more egalitarian domestic labor arrangements.

In this chapter we have charted some of the theoretical and empirical developments in social research on domestic labor. Broadly speaking, research on who does domestic labor has either focused on economic factors or gender. In the case of the former, theories of human capital, household specialization, economic exchange, dependency and autonomy all adopt a broadly rational approach to explaining domestic labor. In most cases, these approaches are gender-neutral with the implicit assumption that economic mechanisms work similarly for men and women. On the other hand, gender approaches have explained domestic labor primarily in terms of theories of doing gender or gender display where domestic work is a form of gender accomplishment and a means of creating and affirming gender identity.

These approaches have been contextualized in time and place through research on changes over the life course and across nations. Longitudinal studies draw attention to changes within individuals as they transition through key life-course events showing that domestic labor arrangements are not static and suggesting that both economic and gender theories need to be contextualized by life-course stage. At the institutional level,

scholars have shown how societal level gender equity shapes household arrangements, not only by influencing women's access to, and control over, resources, and definitions of gendered work, but also as a moderator of interpersonal interactions. Broadly speaking, nations with more egalitarian state policies exhibit more egalitarian domestic labor arrangements, arguably by increasing women's access to economic resources, but also through policies that negate the gendering of domestic work.

Research on unpaid domestic labor is vast and we have not covered the full breadth of the field. We have focused exclusively on those housework activities that are the routine, everyday chores required in most households, and have not considered other forms of unpaid domestic work, such as childcare or elder care. While some of the theoretical approaches developed to explain domestic labor may apply equally well to these forms of care work, we would argue that childcare and elder care are qualitatively different forms of work and require different approaches and explanations.

At the most basic level, it is clear that adding these forms of unpaid care work to the routine housework activities considered here would add substantially to the amount of time spent on unpaid domestic labor. Most research shows that women perform the bulk of this care work, although there is evidence that men participate more in some forms of childcare (e.g. taking children to sports, playing with children) than other forms of domestic work (Bianchi et al. 2006). Childcare and elder care highlight the need to consider changes over the life course in the amount of unpaid care work to be undertaken, and the life-course factors that encourage or undermine gender divisions in care work, such as women's withdrawal from paid labor after the birth of children. It may also be the case, as suggested above, that state policies relating to childcare support, elder care, health care systems, and social security and pension systems may play a stronger role in shaping gender divisions of care work than we observe in relation to routine housework activities.

Our focus here has also been on quantitative studies of unpaid domestic labor. We have not reviewed the many excellent qualitative pieces that help to further unpack the patterns discussed above. There are many insights resulting from this literature, including the importance of understanding mechanisms that enable some households to deviate from the trend and follow egalitarian arrangements (Deutsch 1999). Quantitative work tends to focus on the 'average', thereby ignoring the small number of, nevertheless important, cases that fall outside the average. Qualitative work can also identify nuances in definitions of sharing and in-depth understandings of household gatekeeper roles whereby some individuals may seek to control how much and by whom domestic labor is performed. There is also evidence from qualitative work that even if women are not doing domestic tasks they still feel responsible for organizing this work, thereby both doing and undoing gender at the same time (Lyonette and Crompton 2015). And important work has identified the disjuncture between 'spoken' and 'lived' egalitarianism (Lyonette and Crompton, 2015; Gerson 2002). While most young people espouse principles of gender equality, men and women tend to pursue different strategies when egalitarian relations are not possible to attain in practice. There may thus be a disjuncture between espoused principles and actual practices which must be accommodated and managed (Gerson 2002). In other words, the assumption that attitudes are causally prior to behavioral outcomes undoubtedly overlooks some of the complexities in these associations, including the likely reciprocal and dynamic relationship between beliefs and behavior.

We have also focused specifically on research aimed at understanding gender divisions of domestic labor in terms of time and share of work. In doing so, we have ignored many other important related areas such as studies of perceptions of housework fairness (Thompson 1991), housework conflict (Ruppanner 2012), domestic outsourcing (Craig and Baxter 2014) and the links between

domestic labor and a range of outcomes such as divorce, depression and marital quality, as well as women's employment and their health and well-being (Treas and Drobníč 2010). Domestic outsourcing has been identified as one means that women in certain social classes and countries may substitute their unpaid domestic labor. But the number of households employing paid domestic labor varies markedly across contexts. And recent research suggests that domestic outsourcing has little impact on gender divisions of labor at home (Baxter, Hewitt and Western, 2009; Craig and Baxter 2014). Furthermore, much research has pointed to the inequalities, exclusion and oppression often associated with domestic outsourcing and the transfer of valuable care labor from third world to first world families when women migrate to undertake domestic work in another country (Parreñas 2001).

Ultimately an important goal of all of this work must be to not only explain, but to enable the development of approaches that inform policies to promote gender equality in families and societies more broadly. What works in one country and at one historical period to promote domestic sharing may not be relevant in other places and at other times. Our policies will therefore need to be flexible. And we must continue to research at both the macro and the micro level by not only stepping back to take the broader view of institutional and cultural contexts that shape domestic labor arrangements, but also narrowing down to the interpersonal relationships within households at specific time points and life-course stages.

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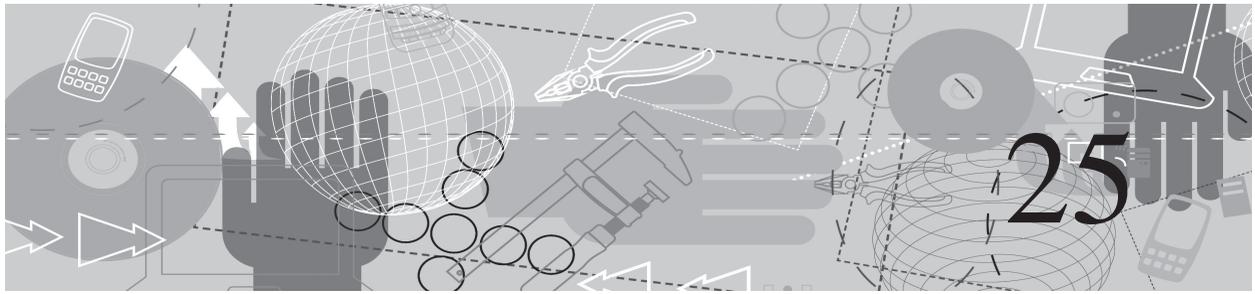
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Unemployment

Ken Roberts

INTRODUCTION

Social research into unemployment has a long history. It was among the nexus of issues – others were poverty, slum housing and ill-health – that were addressed by the pioneers of empirical social research in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. These pioneers were motivated by a belief that their scientific methods would identify causes and solutions which could be implemented by reform-minded governments, leading to social progress.

Marienthal: The Sociography of an Unemployed Community, first published in Germany in 1933, is the one pre-1939 study of unemployment whose reputation and place on student reading lists survives to the present day. The research broke new ground in combining quantitative and qualitative methods. *Marienthal* was (and still is) a small town in Germany where the economy ground almost to a standstill in the 1920s. The original edition of the book omitted the authors' names. They feared that their Jewish identities would

harm the book's reception. They were correct: most copies that remained in Germany were burnt. All the authors subsequently moved to the USA. One of them, Marie Jahoda, moved again to England in the 1950s where she translated an edition of *Marienthal* that was published in 1972 (Jahoda et al., 1972). This proved timely. Social research into unemployment had lapsed during the full employment decades that followed the Second World War. In the early 1970s unemployment was rising again and social research into unemployment was being resuscitated. The main message of *Marienthal* (more on this will follow) was that the damage inflicted by unemployment was not wholly economic: there were also devastating social and psychological outcomes.

Up to and including the 1970s, sociologists and psychologists concentrated on effects and left the identification of causes and the measurement of unemployment to economists. This division of labour has subsequently broken down. Therefore this review proceeds with meanings, definitions and measurements

before moving on to effects, and concludes with causes and solutions. In the 1950s and 60s economists believed that they had banished mass unemployment for ever. One of their number, John Maynard Keynes (1883–1946), had explained how governments could smooth out the ups and downs of business cycles and prevent unemployment ever again reaching the levels experienced in the 1920s and 30s. How wrong can you be? The banking crisis of 2008–09 triggered a global recession which was exacerbated by the Eurozone crisis. Unemployment rates in Southern Europe rose above 20 per cent and exceeded 50 per cent among 16–24 year olds in Greece and Spain. The effects of unemployment for the individuals, families and communities that are affected directly remain much the same as in the 1930s. However, we shall see that unemployment can have different meanings and be a different kind of problem in different historical eras, in different countries in the same era, and for different sections of all the countries' populations.

MEANINGS, DEFINITIONS AND MEASUREMENTS

If you are unemployed, your own experience tells you what unemployment 'is'. It will mean having no workplace to go to; submitting claims for benefit; sending-off job applications online, by mail and in person, very likely experiencing successive rejections; and otherwise filling every day while surviving on a minimal income. People who are unemployed share many of these experiences. They encounter one another when 'signing-on' and when attending job interviews.

For the employed population, unemployment is probably a statistic that is reported regularly in the press: 2 million or 2.3 million or 10 million, depending on the country, who amount to 6 or 9 per cent of the workforce, maybe more, maybe less. People in work may use these statistics to assess their own chances of finding alternatives should they

lose their jobs. Their knowledge about 'the unemployed' will most likely be from the media. People who have been unemployed sometime in the past (which is most people nowadays) often feel different from *the unemployed*: they themselves regained work. They may never have considered themselves part of *the unemployed*. Rather, they thought of themselves as 'between jobs' or 'looking for work'. *The unemployed* are likely to be seen differently: losers, very likely including shirkers, a burden and a problem.

Claimant Counts

All modern societies have some kind of welfare state which, among other things, supplies an income to (some of) the unemployed. Therefore all these societies have a claimant count: a rolling record of the number of people receiving benefit on account of their unemployment. For politicians and very likely many members of the public, claimants represent the scale of the unemployment problem – the burden on working taxpayers.

Some economists argue that the payment of unemployment benefits poses a 'moral hazard' because it acts as a disincentive to seek work (Minford, 1983; Parker, 1982). They insist that 'work must pay' and endorse the nineteenth-century principle of 'less eligibility' – that the life of a person on welfare should be distinctly inferior to that of the lowest-paid worker. It has never been possible to enforce this principle rigidly: this would mean starving the unemployed to death. The alleged moral hazard may be averted by the state topping up the earnings of low-paid employees. This was known as the Speenhamland System when tried in England in the late-eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, whereupon further 'moral hazards' were encountered. The system was abandoned because of the incentive to employers to pay sub-subsistence wages, and the disincentive for workers to try to increase their earnings. Comparisons between different countries' welfare regimes show that

relatively generous unemployment benefits prevent the jobless being socially marginalised, and certainly do not reduce the likelihood that they will seek and gain employment (Ganßmann, 2000; Hammer, 2003; Harsløf, 2005). Social researchers used to think that politicians and the public would accept and act on this kind of evidence. We have now learnt otherwise.

The problem with claimant counts arises when trying to measure trends over time and differences between countries, as the criteria for claiming benefits can change over time and vary from country to country. Whether a person is eligible may or may not depend on previous contributions to a social insurance fund, or whether a claimant has alternative means of support from savings, a pension or other household members. This led economists (mainly), coordinated by the Geneva-based International Labour Office (ILO) to seek a standard method for defining then measuring the level of unemployment, and in 1982 they reached agreement.

The ILO Definition

A person is considered unemployed if he or she:

- Has not performed any work during the previous week. Even just an hour at work results in the person being classed as employed or self-employed. Whether the work was paid is deemed irrelevant.
- Has searched for work during the last week. Signing on for benefit and reading job adverts do not count as searching. At least one enquiry or application for employment needs to have been submitted.
- Is willing to start immediately if offered a suitable job.

The last two criteria separate the unemployed from the 'economically inactive' – housewives/husbands, students and the retired.

Levels of unemployment are monitored in Labour Force Surveys. These are conducted continuously in all modern countries, and totals are calculated every three months.

There are always some claimants who are not classed as unemployed in these surveys. This may be because they have not searched for work sufficiently, or they may have worked during the previous week. Some unemployed claimants supplement their benefits through 'fiddly jobs' (see MacDonald, 1994). However, the jobs that households in poor neighbourhoods perform for one another are usually more akin to mutual aid than proper employment. It is higher-income employees who are the most likely to have undeclared (for tax purposes) incomes (see Williams and Windebank, 2002, 2005).

Claimants who are not counted as unemployed on ILO criteria are usually vastly outnumbered by non-claimants who are recorded as unemployed in Labour Force Surveys. They either do not bother to claim benefit because they regard the sums for which they will be eligible as not worth the effort or, in more cases, because they are ineligible for benefit because of one or more of the circumstances listed above (income from savings or pensions, insufficient insurance contributions, or the incomes of other household members). In the UK in 2013 the monthly claimant count totalled around 1.5 million whereas the level of unemployment estimated from Labour Force Surveys was around 2.5 million.

Other Estimates

It can be argued that claimant counts and ILO approved measurements both understate the true scale of the job deficit today. For example, in 2013 UK Labour Force Surveys estimated unemployment at around 2.5 million but the same surveys found a similar number of people who were not working and said that they wanted to work but did not qualify as unemployed on the ILO definition, usually because they were deemed not to be searching for work. Most of this group can be described as 'discouraged workers'. Some are students who have returned to or remained in education because they do not expect to be

offered jobs if they exit. Some are older people, able to draw pensions, who have opted for *de facto* early retirement but would prefer to be employed. Other older individuals qualify for incapacity benefit and have ceased seeking jobs because they consider it highly unlikely that they will be offered suitable work. In 2013 the UK Labour Force Surveys also found that around a million part-time (under 30 hours a week) workers wanted more hours. Add these groups to the 2.5 million estimated to be unemployed on the ILO definition, and the estimated level of unemployment plus under-employment becomes around 6 million (Aldridge et al., 2012). In addition to these, in 2013 the UK had just over 3 million 'working poor' whose incomes were being topped-up by tax credits, and around 5 million who were being paid less than a 'living wage' (MacInnes et al., 2013). If these are added the total becomes between 9 and 11 million persons, well over a quarter of the workforce, who were unable to obtain any or enough paid work, or who were in jobs that paid less than a living wage.

The Real Level of Unemployment

Which figure is correct? There is no real level of unemployment that can be summarised with a single digit. There are many different indicators of the scale and character of today's job deficits. There are various states between the fully and securely employed on the one side, and the wholly unemployed on the other. Seeking a single figure that summarises all these conditions is the mistake. Sociological perspectives and research have shown that in countries with persistent job deficits, the effects of unemployment spread beyond claimants and the unemployed as identified in Labour Force Surveys. When there are persistent surpluses of labour it becomes possible to fill various kinds of precarious jobs – part-time, casual, zero-hours contracts, temporary, minimum-wage jobs. All these forms of employment are now widespread. They are common in media and

information technology occupations, as well as in higher education (see Beck, 2000; Bowring, 1999; Kretsos, 2010; Standing, 2011). The effects of job shortages ripple into fully employed workforces who are likely to feel under greater pressure not just to satisfy but to impress their bosses, and experience insecurity not so much because they feel that they are likely to be dismissed or declared redundant so much as the awful consequences should this happen (Felstead et al., 2013). Since 2008–09 various kinds of fear at work have become more widespread in Britain: anxiety about unfair treatment and loss of job status as well as fear of redundancy and the consequences. Also, contrary to the pre-2008 situation, all kinds of fear have subsequently become as common or more common in the public sector than in the private sector (Gallie et al., 2013).

Arguably, the ILO definition of unemployment was most fit-for-purpose during the era that was ending when the definition was adopted in 1982. It was a reasonable measure of the level of unemployment in the decades following the Second World War when, in most places, full-time work was available for everyone who wanted to work full-time. At that time, communism was an alternative way of organising an industrial society, and this system was able to place everyone in a workplace irrespective of whether the organisation had work for them to do. These decades have proved a brief historical episode. Unemployment has been a persistent issue, surging then subsiding, throughout industrial history. Definitions, meanings and measurements are now contested because full employment, as achieved in most places between 1945 and the 1970s, now seems unattainable. The ILO definition has never worked well in less developed countries where most non-agricultural employment has remained informal. These countries include much of Asia, the whole of Latin America and the whole of Africa (see, for example, Hammoud, 2010; Population Council, 2011). The informal, unofficial work itself may not be illegal, but some laws (like non-payment

of taxes) are usually breached, and basically legal types of informal work shade into petty and organised crime such as drug production and wholesale distribution or retail distribution, depending on the country.

EFFECTS

The republished study of Marienthal (Jahoda et al., 1972) was hugely influential when social research into the effects of unemployment was revived in the 1970s. Marie Jahoda's own review of recent research (Jahoda, 1982) concluded, and other researchers concurred, that the social and psychological effects of unemployment remained basically the same as in the pre-war era despite the stronger welfare states that had been created in the meantime. However, the unemployment whose consequences were judged similar was long-term unemployment with no end in sight: that is, the kind of unemployment featured in the Marienthal research. Subsequent research into labour market careers has shown that most post-war experiences of unemployment have not been of this type.

Claimant counts and labour force surveys take 'snapshots' of the numbers of those who are unemployed at specific points in time. The unemployed persons who are captured in these snapshots are not stable groups. The unemployed are better likened to a stream. Individuals flow in and out. The highest rate of outflow occurs during the first months of unemployment. People with skills, qualifications and experience that are sought by employers find jobs rapidly. Others take longer. The greater the length of time that individuals have been unemployed, the less likely they become to exit within a further month. Beneath the flowing stream there is always a group that remains unemployed. They tend to have been the least attractive to employers to begin with, and their accumulating histories of joblessness make them even less attractive. They are likely to remain unemployed indefinitely unless there is a dramatic

improvement in labour market conditions or they are assisted by government-sponsored activation measures (see below).

Transitional Unemployment

Most spells of unemployment can be described as transitional. Such experiences are common between leaving school or college and receiving a first job offer. Transitional unemployment also occurs during job-changing when people are dismissed or declared redundant involuntarily, or when they move voluntarily (maybe after being pushed and tempted with an attractive severance package). In all these circumstances the individuals may be unable to start or restart employment immediately, even if they have received job offers and their prospects are assured.

People step into a limbo with destinations unknown when they become unemployed without first jobs or next jobs lined-up. This situation is never comfortable. This applies even when people feel confident about their prospects. The uncertainty is most likely to be stressful and anxiety provoking, particularly if time goes by and any savings and redundancy payments are exhausted. Individuals who regard their own unemployment as temporary are likely to resist describing themselves as, and inviting association with, *the unemployed*. Attempts to disguise their predicaments have been known to induce people who have lost former jobs to conceal their unemployment from neighbours and even immediate family members. They may continue to leave home and return at the end of the day as if they were still in employment. For as long as possible they will insist to themselves and others that they are between jobs. What were previously sidelines may be developed into, or otherwise presented as, main occupations. Redundant professionals often describe themselves as consultants.

Most people who become unemployed exit within months and hope never to repeat the experience, which will not necessarily have made them more sympathetic towards

the unemployed: losers who obviously lack the qualities that enable others to obtain or regain employment. Transitional unemployment is not always long-term cost-free. Job-seekers who are in employment usually move to better jobs. Formerly employed but currently unemployed job-seekers usually have to downgrade in order to regain employment. Very often they have to cope with substantial permanent losses of workforce status and income (Longhi and Taylor, 2011).

Repeated Unemployment; Chequered Working Lives

Episodes of unemployment after leaving school and following a job exit do not always prove one-off. Sometimes they are the first steps into chequered careers in which periods of unemployment recur between temporary jobs, training schemes and efforts to become self-employed.

It is necessary to distinguish between the chequered career histories built by some individuals during the post-war decades of full employment and what has happened subsequently. In times of full employment it was possible to take breaks between jobs, confident that another job would be offered when sought. There were chronic job-changers who moved between a series of short-lived jobs in the initial years of their working lives (Baxter, 1975). Unemployment was an option rather than enforced. People could work for a bit in order to do nothing for a while. This was sometimes the preference of young people who regarded both the jobs that they had experienced and unemployment as intolerable for long unbroken periods (Parker, 1974; Roberts et al., 1982). There was a voluntary element in this kind of repeated unemployment, but individuals' number one preference was most likely to be for jobs that would be worth keeping.

Since the 1970s it has become rare for school-leavers in all the older industrial countries to make 'traditional transitions' straight from secondary education into continuous

employment. They now face a series of screens or hurdles: vocational courses, training schemes, internships, temporary jobs and part-time jobs. If they are lucky, any of these first steps can lead to continuous employment, but many young people make a series of false starts. They find that intended 'stepping stones' act as 'black magic roundabouts' which lead back to 'square one' – unemployment (Craine and Coles, 1995). Leaving a job voluntarily has become risky in these new times. Employers with a choice of recruits have no need to take a chance on quitters.

Contrary to claims that low-skilled work is disappearing, young people in high unemployment neighbourhoods report that poor work is plentiful – official and 'fiddly' jobs, unlikely to be long-term, typically for variable hours and always at the legally minimum or sub-minimum wage (MacDonald and Marsh, 2005). High levels of unemployment make it possible for employers to fill low-paid, precarious jobs. In 2013 Britain's Trade Union Congress estimated that four-fifths of all the new jobs created in Britain since 2010 had been in low-wage industries (Trade Union Congress, 2013). Expert knowledge circulates within high unemployment neighbourhoods on how and where to find unofficial and other kinds of precarious work, and whether a particular job justifies signing off the unemployment register, ceasing to claim benefit, then needing to re-establish entitlements in the (likely) event of a further spell of unemployment. At some point young people may escape into jobs worth keeping. For others the 'black magic roundabout' continues to operate. Girls may exit into lone parenthood: more secure than dependence on a male with a chequered work record. Boys may graduate through petty crime into professional crime, which may or may not involve drugs (see Craine and Coles, 1995). Some young adults build long-term careers in a mixture of poor jobs interspersed with spells of unemployment.

Women returners and older workers whose main careers have been terminated often face not just downgrading but the kind of screens

that confront school-leavers – temporary jobs, (re)training schemes, part-time employment. They are likely to resent the undignified, tattered ends to their working lives (see Young and Schuller, 1991). Those who have accepted relatively menial jobs are likely to try to maintain former occupational identities among families, friends and neighbours. ‘The job that I am doing is not really what I am’ (MacKenzie et al., 2006). Those who can qualify may opt for long-term incapacity benefit. They find the sick role preferable to being an unemployed job-seeker or an employee in a menial job. Those who are able to claim pensions may opt for early retirement, in which case they become retired steel workers, accountants or whatever – all preferable to facing continuous pressure to seek and accept menial jobs or the stigma of being an unemployed benefit claimant (Alcock et al., 2003).

Long-term Unemployment

In the early 1930s the entire town of Marienthal was afflicted by long-term unemployment (Jahoda et al., 1972). This kind of unemployment returned to countries where economic restructuring and deindustrialisation accelerated in the 1970s and subsequently. Despite stronger welfare states, the social and psychological consequences proved eerily similar to those reported in Marienthal (Jahoda, 1982; Marsden, 1982; Sinfield, 1981; Westergaard et al., 1989).

- 1 Long-term unemployment still means a serious long-term loss of income. Once savings and redundancy payments are exhausted, households are forced to spend less. Household goods and clothing cannot be renewed. People are able to ‘go out’ less frequently. Holidays away are no longer possible. Thus the long-term unemployed become adrift from the standards and patterns of life that are normal in their society.
- 2 Psychologists have identified a set of basic ‘categories of experience’ which are normally supplied by employment of which the unemployed are likely to be deprived. These are basic elementary

experiences like having something to do, a task to perform, a goal to aim for, and interaction with other people. Withdrawal of these types of experience is likely to lead to deteriorating physical and mental well-being (Warr, 1983).

- 3 Time structures imposed by paid work are allowed to collapse. In the early months of unemployment those concerned may make an occupation out of job-seeking, but this becomes difficult to sustain in the face of repeated rejections and unanswered applications. The unemployed then start to get up later and do not bother to dress as if they were going to work. Days and weeks become shapeless. Without a workweek there can be no weekend experience. Without workdays there can be no holidays.
- 4 The unemployed lose the social status of the worker. Occupations differ in status but they are all superior to being workless, doing nothing, dependent on hand-outs.
- 5 The long-term unemployed are stripped of occupational identities. Their experience demonstrates that we not only ‘do’ but also ‘are’ teachers, managers, engineers and so on. Loss of a respected status and social identity makes all social interaction difficult. In everyday encounters, the first question invariably asked is, ‘Have you found work yet?’ Admitting repeated failure is painful.

These effects of long-term unemployment unfold gradually. In the initial weeks and months, most individuals are able to maintain at least outward optimism and express confidence that they will soon obtain or regain work. Friends and former colleagues are likely to offer advice and encouragement, and also assurance that the person’s skills and abilities are certain to lead to employment before long. If employment is not obtained, confidence is likely to give way to frustration. The unemployed begin to question their own job search tactics and the advice that they have been given. They become angry when job applications are not even acknowledged. They just do not understand why job interviews which appeared to go well did not lead to job offers. They may then begin to question their own worth and entertain the possibility that maybe they will never obtain employment. The sequel in Marienthal, and in later studies, was

resignation and apathy. The unemployed become unemployable, though if offered fresh starts they usually display rapid and impressive powers of recovery (Marsden, 1982).

There are exceptions. Some people cope well and a minority thrive during unemployment. Some experience improvements in their physical and mental health. Some have been proactive and have made plans ahead, just in case, typically to enrol in education and improve their qualifications (Fryer and Payne, 1984). Postgraduate university students may welcome the life space to complete a PhD (Walter, 1985). Olympic competitors have been known to use unemployment benefit in lieu of sports scholarships. The first months of unemployment may be used to redecorate the house and sort out the garden, but these tasks are completed at some point. Further qualifications, even PhDs, do not always lead to commensurate employment.

In principle it is possible for anyone who is unemployed to devote more of their time and energies to a leisure activity, and this usually helps to sustain well-being by providing valuable 'categories of experience', but leisure pursuits cannot perform other functions of employment. They cannot usually be developed into sources of income. Since leisure activities are voluntary, they cannot impose a time structure on people's lives in the same way as a paid job. Competitors who make Olympic squads may enjoy a status and identity superior to what most jobs can offer, but the status that a manicured lawn earns within a gardening club is less easily carried into other areas of life (see Glyptis, 1989; Havitz et al., 2004).

There are constant fears that the long-term unemployed will become a 'socially excluded' class or an 'underclass' that endangers the wider society (Murray, 1990, 1994; Wilson, 1987). Guy Standing (2011) nominates 'the precariat' as the new dangerous class. Social research repeatedly supplies contrary evidence. Even the long-term unemployed are not a class apart: other family members and neighbours are in employment (Burchardt, 2000; Morris and Irwin, 1992).

There is hardly a glimmer of rebellion: apathy is far more common. Rumours abound of families in which no one has worked for two or even three generations. Searches for such families fail to find any (Shildrick et al., 2012), but the rumours persist. They can be used to justify punitive treatment of unemployed claimants, and assure the employed workforce, including those with personal experience of unemployment, that they are different.

That said, Britain experienced waves of riots in 1981 and again in 2011 (see *The Guardian*/London School of Economics, 2012). All the riots began in deprived parts of the relevant cities. In 2011 most of the rioters were aged under 25 and over a half of those who were not students were unemployed. Adults in high unemployment, poor neighbourhoods may learn to accept their predicaments as normal (see McKenzie, 2012), but the frustrations of young people are always there, liable to be set alight by any incident, probably involving contact with the police.

There is still long-term unemployment, but this is less common and far less typical than was the case during the economic depressions in the 1920s and 30s. This is because, first, there are fewer giant workplaces with giant workforces where closure leaves entire towns with hardly any jobs to search for. Most of these workplaces have either downsized or closed. Second, the population has become more mobile. Motor cars have widened workers' and employers' 'local' labour markets. More people earn salaries that justify long commuter journeys to work. Third, governments today have batteries of 'activation measures' (see below) that prevent young people leaving school then spending years unemployed, and likewise members of workforces that are made redundant. However, long-term uninterrupted unemployment appears to have been replaced not by secure, well-paid jobs but by recurrent unemployment and careers built out of low-paid, precarious jobs, some official, others unofficial.

So why are there still substantial numbers of long-term unemployed? Many have

special difficulties: criminal records, chronic physical or mental health conditions, psychological issues, alcohol or drug abuse, for example. Employers are less willing than in the past to ‘carry passengers’ or even to ‘take a chance’ because they have no need to do so. Governments must make difficult choices. The hardest to place can be removed from unemployment registers and placed in another claimant category (usually long-term incapacitated). Or they can be offered enhanced activation: extra support and wage subsidies. However, even the most superlative activation and generous wage subsidies often fail to lead to sustained employment, and both options are likely to cost more than leaving the long-term cases on unemployment benefit. That said, we should bear in mind that all types of unemployment – transitional, repeated and long-term – rise when there is an excess supply of labour relative to demand. When there is excess demand, virtually everyone becomes employable.

CAUSES AND SOLUTIONS

We need to distinguish between what causes some individuals and groups to be more at risk of unemployment than others, from what causes the overall rate of unemployment to be at a given level. Some predictors of individual and group risks are common across most countries (for example, see Berthoud, 2003).

- Young people usually face above-average risks. Their inexperience is a disadvantage in the eyes of many employers who may also find it difficult to assess young applicants, especially when the recruiters are unfamiliar with recently introduced qualifications. Also, new entrants are ‘outsiders’ who always find it is harder to break into employment than for ‘insiders’ to retain their jobs.
- Older workers whose main careers have been terminated can also find it difficult to regain employment. Rightly or wrongly, employers often fear that they will be slow learners, committed

to old ways of working, and that they will be prone to health-related absences. In any case, there is a feeling that older workers will expect higher status jobs and salaries than younger job applicants.

- The higher a person’s educational qualifications, and the more skills he or she can offer, the lower the risks of unemployment. Whether the less qualified are technically deficient in the abilities required to do a job can be irrelevant: they can remain disadvantaged by a common routine assumption that the least qualified should be placed at the back of a metaphorical queue for employment.
- Immigrants and other ethnic minorities usually face above-average risks of unemployment.
- Whether men or women run higher risks of unemployment varies from country to country. Some local cultures insist that men, as family breadwinners, should take precedence, and these cultures can remain influential even when equal opportunity laws have been passed. On the other hand, the decline of employment in ‘masculine’ manufacturing and extractive industries such as coal-mining, and the expansion of employment in ‘feminine’ non-manual jobs, favours women’s chances.

It is sometimes assumed that if everyone possessed the characteristics of the low-risk (of unemployment) groups, then the overall rate of unemployment would fall. This is presumed when prescribing education and training as the answers to unemployment. The assumption is likely to prove incorrect. If there are insufficient jobs for everyone the outcome is more likely to be upgrading the qualifications and skills of the unemployed. Indeed, the hitherto reliable relationships which said that more education will reduce your risks of unemployment could be changing as more and more countries expand their education (in search of the knowledge economy) while employment growth switches towards the bottom. Young people with full secondary schooling or better, face higher risks of unemployment than the lesser-educated in North Africa (Hammoud, 2010; Population Council, 2011), and this situation appears to be spreading into Southern Europe, then possibly northwards.

Economists have retained the lead role in explaining macro-levels of unemployment. Their discipline has risen in prestige and influence. Economists' models impress politicians. They purport to show how changes in tax or interest rates, for example, feed through and affect other parts of an economic system. These models are not built initially from detailed observations of how actual economies work. They are mathematical models in which the actors are utility maximisers. Until the models are fine-tuned, their predictions are imperfect. Real people are the problem that prevents the models working perfectly. Sociologists would prefer to say that human cultures and social institutions are always intervening variables. Remarkably, governments have been persuaded to try to make their real economies and societies work like the economists' models. Macro-economic management has been repositioned as a technical specialty best left to experts. Hence the global trend towards transferring monetary policy out of the hands of politicians and into the hands of central banks.

We need to recall and realise that the decades of relatively full employment were the result of governments prioritising full employment in their economic policies. They were persuaded to do so because they had the Keynesian tools (see below), and also because, partly as a reaction to experiences between the wars, these policies won votes. Political parties of the centre-right joined a social democratic consensus which held in most Western countries from the 1940s up to the 1970s.

Frictional Unemployment

Economists argue that some unemployment is necessary otherwise the labour market would freeze. Frictional unemployment occurs during job changing and when school and college leavers spend a period searching and applying before commencing employment. It is argued that unless there is a flow of people between jobs, thriving businesses

will be unable to recruit new staff and then grow. Furthermore, it is claimed that the minimum level of frictional unemployment that is compatible with a dynamic economy is higher today than in the past due to the acceleration of technological change and firms' need to be able to respond rapidly to global competitive pressures. In the UK in 1942 William Beveridge proposed 3 per cent unemployment as the fullest level of employment that was possible, and in the 1950s the UK's claimant count was no higher than this, a total of less than half a million unemployed at any time. Economists and governments now treat five times that number as full employment.

These arguments are not as apolitical as neo-liberal economists can make them sound. It may suit businesses if there is a constant flow of unemployed persons from which they can recruit immediately, as and when required. It would suit workers better if there were always vacant jobs so that periods of unemployment when changing jobs became unnecessary. Who should wait, jobs or people? Adrian Sinfield (1981) makes the case for giving priority to people. This is not impossible. Communism abolished unemployment for most of the time in most places for as long as the system lasted. Neo-liberal economists may argue that what is best for businesses is best for the economy which, in the long run, will be best for a society and all its citizens, but is this true? Governments have been easily persuaded, perhaps too easily, that the complete abolition of unemployment is impossible in a dynamic market economy, and that the consequences of pursuing such a goal would be damaging.

Cyclical Unemployment

Free markets will not settle into a steady state of their own accord. There will be surges then declines in business activity, booms and recessions, creating troughs and peaks in levels of unemployment. The economist John Maynard Keynes (1936) explained how governments could replace these business cycles

with steady economic growth. When an economy began to sink into recession, governments were urged to act contrarily, pumping demand into the economy by, for example, cutting taxes or spending more even if the government's own accounts went into debit. Governments were to adopt reverse measures during booms. Thus a government's own accounts would balance over a business cycle. These Keynesian policies were responsible for the (near to) full employment and almost uninterrupted economic growth that Western countries recorded during the '30 glorious years' that followed the Second World War. By then, according to some, the policies were imposing unacceptable costs onto the economies. Labour was empowered. Real wages rose and profits were squeezed. Increases in state spending on welfare and services such as health and education were not cut back during booms. This stoked monetary inflation, led to higher taxes, and increases in the proportion of all spending by governments. These long-term trends were said to be making businesses uncompetitive.

By the 1980s neo-liberalism had become the new economic orthodoxy. This urged governments to prioritise preserving the value of their national currencies; which could be achieved by relinquishing control of monetary policy, which was redefined as a technical apolitical matter, and handed to central banks that were advised by economists. Governments were to keep their own accounts in balance (Friedman, 1981). Taxes were to be kept low thereby strengthening incentives for all economic actors. Thereafter, markets were to operate freely, which, the economists' models forecast, would achieve optimum outcomes. According to this thinking, markets should be allowed to set levels of employment and unemployment. Recessions are said to confer long-term benefits. Weaker firms are culled. Resources (including labour) are freed for later use by thrusting enterprises. This is why, some claim, unemployment is a price worth paying. This was the thinking that sent unemployment rates in

weaker (southern) Eurozone states soaring to above 20 per cent in the recession that followed the 2008 banking crisis (Patomaki, 2012).

The main losers from these policies are the socio-demographic groups that run the greatest risks of unemployment – the young, older workers, and (up to now in most countries) the least qualified and skilled. Older workers who are shaken out of former jobs are likely to be condemned to tattered conclusions to their working lives. Young people who are unable to be trained in employment are likely to become a scarred-for-life generation as a result. Of course, all this depends on other things remaining equal, one of economics' more useful expressions. The children of the Great Depression in the 1930s were saved by a combination of Keynesian policies (the New Deal in the USA) and the Second World War, which gave everyone a fresh start (Elder, 1974). During the post-2008 recession there was no prospect of another major war, and in 2011 the Eurozone governments signed an 'austerity pact' which ruled out Keynesian measures. In 2012 the European Commission urged all member governments to introduce 'youth guarantees' – a job or a place in education or training for every young person after four months of unemployment. However, such offers cannot guarantee that the jobs will last, or that the education or training will lead to sustained employment.

Keynesian economists demanded that governments end the post-2008 recession by boosting demand (Krugman, 2012; Stiglitz, 2010), but neo-liberal orthodoxy demanded that the recession be allowed to run its 'natural' course. At some point in a recession, all factors of production – land, labour and capital – should become so abundant and cheap that businesses decide to risk new investment, and when a critical number act together the recession bottoms and an upturn begins. The problem is that economists cannot say how deep any particular recession must become, or how long it must last, before a recovery starts 'naturally'. When most of the world's governments are opting for austerity at home, it is impossible for any country

to export its way out of recession, and neither sufficient numbers of consumers, lenders nor businesses may be willing to take a risk. Ultimately, which economists' advice is followed is a political choice. Currently the respect paid to neo-liberal economists enables governments to shelter behind their own nominated experts.

Mismatches

Even when labour demand and supply are perfectly balanced in a quantitative sense, there can be mismatches which result in levels of unemployment that are not purely frictional. The jobs and workers may be in different places, and/or the workers may lack the skills and qualifications that the jobs require. Economists argue (and this is not controversial) that such mismatches are to be expected in any dynamic, growing economy.

The solutions are well-known and they can work. Governments can provide assistance and incentives for jobs, workers or both to relocate. The unemployed can be offered education and training so that their skills and qualifications match the requirements of jobs that are vacant. The European Union advocates 'flexicurity' policies. The idea is that workers cannot be offered the security of jobs for life but that they can be persuaded to trade this, to accept flexibility, in exchange for the assurance that they will be retrained for and then able to enter jobs that are at least as attractive as those that they have left (Muffels and Luijkx, 2008). The problem is that training has become the preferred government response to unemployment whatever the type or causes. The idea that spending on unemployment should be transferred from 'passive' measures, that is, simply paying unemployment benefits, to 'activation' is sound, but activation measures work best when they are bolted securely to jobs, and ideally when any training is provided by the businesses that will provide the subsequent employment (Barbier and Ludwig-Mayerhofer; 2004; O'Connell, 2002).

Throughout the post-Keynesian era, that is, since the 1970s, it has never been possible to offer sufficient activation with these characteristics. The result has been training and education that simply 'churn' the unemployed on metaphorical 'black magic roundabouts', which eventually blemishes the reputation of all government-supported training (see Finn, 1987; Lee et al., 1990).

Structural Unemployment: A New Type of Joblessness?

Since the 1970s there have been repeated warnings that the West faces a new type of unemployment. Subsequently the argument has been that this new kind of unemployment has arrived: a job deficit that cannot be explained in frictional, cyclical or mismatch terms (see Aronowitz and DiFazio, 1994; Bridges, 1995; Gill, 1985; Gorz, 1982, 1989, 1999; Jenkins and Sherman, 1981). If it has indeed arrived, this kind of unemployment may be new to the West but it has been endemic for decades in many developing countries.

The original predictions were responses to the character of the latest new (digital) technologies. These were said to be different from earlier new technologies which had destroyed some old occupations while creating new ones, like motor mechanics replacing blacksmiths. Digital technologies are said to be different in that their applications are neither occupation- nor industry-specific, and their introduction usually leads to reduced employment. Subsequently it has been added that free trade policies, which intensify international competition, force firms to adopt the leanest possible employment regimes, and also allow them to transfer jobs from the relatively expensive West to lower wage-cost countries. Jobs are exported and unemployment is imported. Meanwhile, labour supply in Western countries has been inflated not just through natural population increase but also by increased labour market participation by women and immigration,

and the latter has received a further boost in Western Europe as a result of the European Union's post-2004 eastward enlargement.

Neo-liberal economists insist that structural unemployment will not persist if labour markets are allowed to operate freely. In other (harsher) words, workers need to price themselves into jobs by working more productively or more cheaply: the so-called race to the bottom. This was implicit when, in 1993, the European Commission argued that, 'We will never, in the foreseeable future, bring unemployment down to acceptable levels unless we adopt a more employment-intensive system of production' (European Commission, 1993: 3). The problem was, and remains, that employment-intensive production leads to higher priced, difficult to sell products, or low-paid workforces.

Over thirty years ago labour economists were noting a tendency towards labour forces dividing into primary and secondary segments. The former contained permanent employees, represented by trade unions, who tended to be native-born males, doing skilled, higher-paid jobs. The secondary segments contained mainly women, immigrants and other ethnic minorities, doing lower-skilled and lower-paid jobs which were often part-time and/or temporary (Gordon et al., 1982; Piore, 1979). Subsequently this division has widened and hardened, indicated by wider income inequalities and the massive numbers who are now unemployed, or are under-employment and in jobs that pay sub-subsistence wages. The severity of the primary-secondary labour market divide varies between countries. Where much employment is tightly regulated and workforces have statutory protection, low-paid and precarious jobs, and risks of unemployment, tend to be concentrated among disadvantaged 'outsiders'. This division is amplified under 'conservative' welfare regimes where social security benefits are earned by contributions paid while in employment. Weakly regulated labour markets such as Britain and the USA, especially those with relatively 'liberal' (safety-net) welfare regimes, spread the pain

and risks more evenly (though never equally) (see Bernadi and Garrido, 2008; Buchholz et al., 2009; Chauvel and Schroder, 2014).

Alternatives to the 'race to the bottom' that have been proposed involve reductions in labour supply by lengthening education, earlier retirement and, most radically, paying everyone a citizen's wage then motivating workers with enriched jobs rather than mainly monetary rewards (Gorz, 1982, 1999; Standing 2011). Needless to say, these proposals are not (yet) on any government's agenda.

CONCLUSIONS

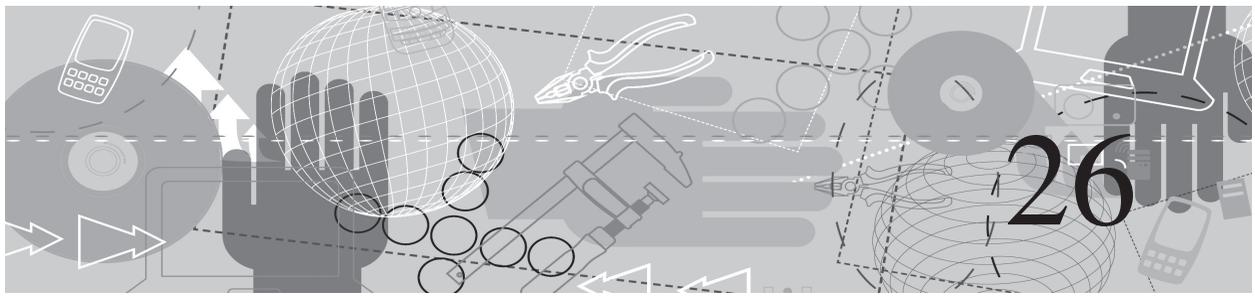
Hans Dietrich (2012) claims that despite decades of research and thousands of books and learned articles, we are still failing to identify a cause of unemployment and a related solution that can be applied everywhere. 'No single cause' is certainly true, but governments are able to eliminate unemployment if this is their priority. Ultimately in democracies it is voters who decide, and since the 1980s there have manifestly been more votes in telling the employed that they are different, and doing the right thing, that the jobless are less deserving and that the unemployed rather than unemployment are the problem. Employees in higher-paid occupations with (they hope) secure careers are evidently most attracted by policies that promise them even higher earnings. Investors want policies that deliver capital gains and maximum profits. Governments who prioritise these choices have an army of neo-liberal economists who will say that the governments are doing the right thing. Social research continues to strengthen knowledge about the extent and wider effects of job deficits, and the causes also, but Dietrich is correct in so far as achievements leading to reform and improvement remain relatively modest. The nineteenth- and early twentieth-century pioneers of social research under-estimated the difficulties in persuading governments to adopt genuine evidence-based reform policies.

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Volunteering and Unpaid Work

Rebecca Taylor

INTRODUCTION

Voluntary work or volunteering has a particular place in the public imagination. The terms conjure up images of harried school PTA members organising cake sales, well-to-do women hosting charity events, and concerned citizens gathering to clear up the debris left by natural disasters or social unrest. Yet these images provide the briefest of snapshots and do little to illuminate the sheer magnitude of unpaid labour that goes on outside the family in the service of associational, community and civic life. They do, however, hint at the enormous diversity of activities that might count as voluntary work. At one end of the spectrum are highly institutionalised formal roles: trustee of a large museum, chair of a sports association, advice worker for a national charity. Further along the spectrum a swathe of voluntary work takes place in more informal settings: the local 'neighbourhood watch' group or the village fête committee. More informally still, voluntary work might take place in the

context of local neighbourly relationships and community networks: odd jobs for neighbours and friends; routine shopping for the lone older person next door; informal and reciprocal childcare arrangements between families.

This array of unpaid work activities has not escaped the notice of politicians and policymakers. Volunteering has a long history of appropriation by political parties of all persuasions keen to hitch policies to popular notions of community spiritedness, civic participation and the perceived worthiness of voluntary action. This interest has mirrored a growing political concern with the institutional location of much voluntary work, variously defined as the third sector, civil society, the non-profit sector or the social economy, although these entities are not entirely coterminous (see for example, Alcock and Kendall 2011; Salamon and Anheier 1997; Smith and Teasdale 2012 for discussion of their boundaries and legal forms). Recently, programmes of welfare state restructuring in a number of countries have entailed an increasing role for

third sector organisations in new contractual relationships with the state. Volunteers in these organisations have been viewed as a key element of the sector's 'added value' (Kendall 2003), with arguments resting, often implicitly, on what Salamon calls 'the myth of pure virtue' (1993) and notions of the superior quality of the gift relationship (Titmuss 1973). At the same time policy-makers' long-running interest in the role of social capital in promoting social inclusion has informed policies promoting volunteering and civic participation as a way to generate community cohesion. The resulting plethora of government-funded volunteering programmes and schemes promoting volunteer activities, and an aligned growth in volunteer infrastructure organisations, brokerage and management, has been termed 'the volunteering industry' by commentators (Rochester et al. 2010).

Alongside and partially driven by intense political interest, the past 20 years have seen the study of volunteering emerge as a sprawling academic field encompassing a range of disciplines and spanning Europe, the US and beyond. Much of this field is policy focused, concerned primarily with understanding and promoting voluntary action and enhancing the recruitment, support and retention of volunteers. Those taking a more sociological approach have sought to explore the social profile of volunteers (Musick and Wilson 2008), different cultural perceptions of volunteering (Cnaan et al. 1996; Handy et al. 2000; Meijjs et al. 2003), its value to the economy (Handy and Srinivasan 2004) and processes of modernisation and individualisation of volunteering (Hustinx 2010; Hustinx and Lammertyn 2003). Other disciplines have also contributed. Psychology has focused on personality traits, propensity and pro-social behaviour (Omoto and Snyder 2002). Political science has drawn on Tocqueville's paeon to civic America (1969 [1835]) in studies exploring the links between participation and democratic engagement, voice and social capital (Eliasoph 2011; Putnam 2000; Verba et al. 1993).

There is much that is useful and illuminating in this body of literature but there are also some important and in many ways quite perplexing blind spots. Whilst structural inequalities of social class, education and ethnicity appear to be primary determinants of volunteering, shaping what activities people engage in as well as whether they engage, there is little analysis of how these inequalities operate. Even the sociological debates lack an explicit engagement with the role of power and resources in shaping who does what, why and crucially how: the economic foundations of voluntary work. In fact the concept of work itself is mostly absent. There is little discussion of divisions of labour, relationships between paid and voluntary work, the position of voluntary work in occupational career structures, its embeddedness in working lives or indeed different stages of the life course or broader shifts in patterns of work in a neoliberal economy, particularly in relation to issues of insecurity and informality. Difficult questions about the role played by volunteering in the reproduction of social class and gender identities are largely unaddressed. The need for a critical sociological approach to voluntary work, one that embeds it in the wider context of work and employment, is overwhelming.

Yet not only is the notion of work missing from the study of volunteering but the volunteer is missing from studies of work. Until relatively recently voluntary work has been something of a footnote in the sociology of work and employment. Its marginal status is unsurprising considering the dichotomous model of work that formed the framework for empirical study in the period following second-wave feminism – work was either paid and took place in the public sphere or unpaid and located in the private sphere. Unpaid work in the public sphere did not fit the model and did not feature in the debates (Taylor 2004). Those surveying the terrain of work and employment that acknowledged voluntary work tended to conflate it with women's work in the home (Beechey 1987; Pahl 1988). Whilst second-wave feminism

positioned unpaid domestic labour as integral to the study of work, there has been no clamour for a critical overhaul of thinking about voluntary work. Yet if domestic labour raised an effective challenge to embedded assumptions within sociology that work is simply that which is paid, so too can voluntary work.

VOLUNTEERING: DEFINITIONS, DEBATES AND CONTOURS

The vast literature on volunteering rests on a series of ‘endless arguments’ (Smith 1981), about the definition of voluntary work, its central features, and which activities should be included or excluded (Dekker and Halman 2003; Hustinx et al. 2010; Musick and Wilson 2008). Generally definitions include a combination of four axes: a non-obligatory or ‘free will’ dimension; an absence of a financial reward dimension; an institutional context dimension; and a ‘who benefits?’ dimension (Cnaan et al. 1996). The disagreement occurs about the point on each axis at which an activity qualifies as volunteering.

The free-will dimension implies that for an action to qualify as volunteering a person must choose to do it (as if from a menu of possible activities) and not be obliged or coerced, for example through a court order or as part of a workfare scheme. Of course ‘free will’ is hardly unproblematic and raises question about whether individual agency, choice and autonomy can ever be free from culturally rooted notions of what is acceptable and symbolically valuable. Empirical evidence suggests that some volunteers may feel a strong sense of obligation and duty to volunteer and to continue volunteering even when they would like to stop (Musick and Wilson 2008). The absence of financial reward dimension highlights how, whilst some volunteers do not receive any financial or material reward for their time, others might have expenses reimbursed, and others still might receive some kind of nominal fee

or stipend. Activities done for no financial reward or even at a financial cost to the volunteer are seen as a ‘pure form’ and commentators question the point at which expenses, fees and stipends nudge the activity into the category of (low paid) work (Musick and Wilson 2008). Since many contributors to these debates operate in a policy environment that wishes to promote volunteering, much of the discussion argues more pragmatically that reimbursing out of pocket expenses is a legitimate reward for volunteers (Rochester et al. 2010). The institutional context dimension is important to some scholars, particularly in the US, who argue that voluntary work must have an organisational setting and that informal reciprocal help in neighbourhoods or communities does not count (Musick and Wilson 2008). In contrast in the UK, informal volunteering (‘giving unpaid help as an individual to people who are not relatives’) is routinely measured in most surveys (Rochester et al. 2010).

The final dimension, the extent to which the volunteer benefits others by their actions or is also a beneficiary of any action they undertake, is also contentious. A series of studies into public perceptions of volunteering found that the less the volunteer benefits by their actions, compared with the time and resources they put in, the more what they are doing is perceived as volunteering (Handy et al. 2000). Taking a ‘net cost’ approach, a teenager volunteering in a soup kitchen for the homeless, for example, scored more highly than a trainer who runs a free workshop for a breast cancer charity as a marketing device (Meijs et al. 2003). In other words, whilst volunteers are acknowledged to be motivated by a range of factors (Smith 1981), it is the altruistic ones that define its pure form. These assumptions about the specific characteristics of volunteers often implicitly underpin the narratives of policymakers and commentators. Wuthnow, for example, argues that volunteering is the institutionalisation of kindness, courage and compassion (1995). Even economic models of volunteering seek to rationalise volunteering behaviour

through notions of the 'warm glow' that volunteers are thought to receive from behaving altruistically, although notions of 'impurity' creep in here too (Andreoni 1990). Stringent deployment of the 'who benefits?' question amongst those debating voluntary work's boundaries means activities which have collective or reciprocal goals (political activism, trade union work, informal help to a neighbour), rather than being focused on service to other individuals, are less likely to be regarded as volunteering. Even serving officials in sports clubs or cultural or arts associations are not always viewed as legitimate volunteers (Musick and Wilson 2008).

The practical problem with these definitional dimensions is that when applied too generously they struggle to impose coherence on a set of very different activities; when applied too stringently they potentially exclude the volunteering of more marginalised or working-class groups. This does not help policymakers seeking to promote volunteering and enhance its inclusivity. As a result, these long-running definitional debates have tended to encapsulate an unresolvable contest between purism and pragmatism. However, a more intrinsic problem for sociologists of work wishing to draw on these definitions is that they begin by embedding culturally defined assumptions about volunteer motivation (notions of free will and altruism for example) in the definition itself. Assuming volunteering to be inherently 'good' and virtuous lends a normative undercurrent to debates and limits the degree to which a critical perspective is possible.

The definitional problems also draw attention to a related set of difficulties in attempting to measure volunteering rates and trends and compare its contours within and across countries. If scholars struggle to agree on conceptual boundaries, those on the receiving end of surveys also have a variety of understandings and interpretations of what is being asked. Even within countries, cultural and linguistic differences between social groups mean that different things are being measured by the same questions, and across countries those

differences are more pronounced (Dekker and Halman 2003). One study suggested that different paradigms operate which contribute to the collection of fundamentally different data on volunteering. The non-profit sector paradigm, mainly found in the US, focuses on charitable activities and voluntary social service in formal non-profit organisations. The civil society paradigm, more common in Europe, focuses on participation in voluntary associations, clubs, societies, self-help organisations and cooperatives seen to be meeting shared needs (Lyons et al. 1998).

Despite the definitional difficulties surveys tend to find that in very broad terms roughly half of all adults in the UK and the US volunteer. Cross-national studies such as the World Values Survey reveal some variation with much lower rates in former Soviet and Latin American countries (Salamon and Sokolowski 2001). Understanding of volunteering trends is limited since volunteering data has only been consistently collected in many countries since the 1970s and 80s, and adaptations to survey questions during that time make it difficult to track change. In the US a range of survey evidence has shown that over a 30 year period rates slightly increased, at least until the mid-1990s. However, generally the data in many countries shows relative stability in the volunteering rates over time. In Sweden it has remained constant for 40 years (Musick and Wilson 2008), and in the UK rates have also remained largely steady since the early 1980s, although surveys have changed and there have been fluctuations. A slight fall between 2007 and 2010 has been countered by a rise in the 2012/13 figures (NCVO 2014).

Providing a coherent picture of the demographic contours of a typical volunteer is difficult but there are some common themes. Pan-national volunteer profiles based on the World Values Survey tend to find that men are more likely to volunteer than women, although in the UK and US this profile is reversed (Musick and Wilson 2008). Surveys also tend to find that class, education and

income are significant factors in shaping volunteering, with much higher rates amongst those who are educated and with higher socio-economic status. In the UK the 2005 citizenship survey found 59 per cent of those in higher managerial and professional occupations volunteered formally compared to 28 per cent of those in routine occupations (Kitchen et al. 2006). Studies in the UK and Canada have identified a ‘civic core’ of people engaging in volunteering and civic participation drawn predominantly from the most prosperous middle-aged and the highly educated sections of population living in the least deprived parts of the country (Mohan and Bulloch 2012; McCullough et al. 2012; Reed and Selbee 2001). Socio-demographic factors not only influence whether people volunteer but also what they do and how they do it. In the UK women were found to be concentrated in education or health and disability organisations engaged in formal and informal care, whilst men were more likely to be involved in sport and leisure organisations and engaged in educating, advising and transporting (Kitchen et al. 2006).

BEYOND VOLUNTEERING: CONFIGURATIONS OF PAID AND UNPAID LABOUR

The broad empirical literature on volunteering points to its internal diversity and multiplicity, yet theorists have sought to construct volunteering as a coherent and uniform category (Hustinx et al. 2010). In doing so, they have tended to isolate it from other social practices and wider contexts and debates. Here we take a contrasting approach by positioning voluntary work in its diverse forms within a broader context, specifically work and employment. We widen our lens to look *beyond volunteering* to the broad category of unpaid work in the public domain of which voluntary work is just one form. Taking *unpaid work* as our focus sidesteps to a

certain extent the normative baggage that comes with volunteering and extends the parameters of the discussion, enabling an exploration of the relationship between different forms of work.

Our starting point is to look back to the conceptual frames proposed by sociologists of work over recent decades that suggest ways to think about the links, intersections and arrangements of paid and unpaid work. Work theorists, economic sociologists and others have increasingly drawn attention to the diverse forms and social relations of work, distinguishing between paid and unpaid work, public and private work, formal and informal work and market and non-market work. These scholars have defined volunteering as unpaid productive activity outside the household in the public domain, anchoring it in the study of work and differentiating it from employment or domestic labour (see for example, Glucksmann 1995; Pahl 1988; Tilly and Tilly 1994; Wilson and Musick 1997). The notion of the total social organisation of labour (TSOL), for example, provides a sophisticated framework for viewing the contribution and interdependencies of different forms of labour, including volunteering, across different socio-economic modes or domains: the state, the market, not-for-profit, household and community ‘where the same tasks may be undertaken on a very different basis (paid, unpaid, formal or informal)’ (Glucksmann 2013: 7). Voluntary work as a form of unpaid work sits within this framework, always positioned in relation to other forms of work. The utility of this model comes from its contention that those relations and configurations of modes are dynamic. Work activities may shift from unpaid to paid or market to non-market in response to socio-economic or cultural change or a particular policy environment (Glucksmann 1995; see also Glazer 1993).

The TSOL has provided a useful conceptual tool for studies of the relationship between various forms of paid and unpaid work across different sectors and domains, not only voluntary work but also community

work and informal work which have lacked a conceptual space within the sociology of work (Halford et al. 2015; Pettinger et al. 2005; Taylor 2004; Williams 2011). In exploring configurations of paid and unpaid work at the micro level, studies have uncovered the ways voluntary work is juggled with other forms of work in people's daily lives. They highlight how individuals construct working lives and careers from combinations of paid and unpaid work (Hardill and Baines 2011; Parry 2003), doing paid work to support their unpaid work (Taylor 2005), some with a lifelong commitment, others engaging at particular life stages (Bowly et al. 2010) to get on the career ladder or improve job prospects (Amin 2009; Leonard et al. 2015), or as an alternative form of work activity for those without paid work (Halford et al. 2015) or following retirement (Hogg 2013). A wealth of evidence exists about the gendered divisions of employment and household labour, 'the second shift' (Hochschild and Machung 1990). Bringing voluntary work and other forms of unpaid work into this picture has revealed what some have called 'the third shift' (Dickson 1997; Gerstel 2000).

Understanding configurations of paid and unpaid labour in individuals' working lives illuminates the economic basis of unpaid work in the public domain; the way it is intrinsically shaped by social class. Studies that explore *how* individuals undertake unpaid voluntary work reveal the different ways in which it is financially supported at the household level. Upper-class volunteers for example, are able to undertake unpaid work because they have income from inherited wealth and property, which means they do not have to engage in employment (Daniels 1988; Odendahl 1990). The middle classes undertaking unpaid volunteer roles are usually employed or supported by a partner's employment. For those who undertake unpaid work with few financial resources – refugees, the unemployed or retirees supported by a state pension – unpaid work is often indirectly supported by the state. For example, studies of volunteering projects in low-income neighbourhoods, or

where volunteering is linked to employment programmes have shown the inclusion of disadvantaged groups often requires financial support through sessional payments or unemployment benefits (Amin 2009; Halford et al. 2015; South et al. 2014).

The interconnectedness of paid and unpaid labour is also visible at the macro level across and between particular occupations, institutions and sectors. Studies highlighting the impact of de-industrialisation, for example, have noted how the configurations of paid and unpaid work in those communities shifted in response to changes in local economic conditions. Voluntary and community organisations became an important gendered site of (unpaid) work and identity in towns that had lost their industrial base and infrastructure (Hardill and Baines 2011; Parry 2003, 2005). In one ex-coalfield site some workers, particularly women but also ex-miners, strategically undertook voluntary work to reskill, retrain and build confidence, or as a way to achieve job satisfaction outside a labour market that was no longer able to provide meaningful work (Parry 2003). Case studies of particular occupations and industries suggest the way socio-economic contexts create specific arrangements of forms. Looking at the case of elder care in four European countries revealed differences in configurations of paid and unpaid work across the public, market, household and voluntary sectors. The commodification of family-based informal care through direct payments has been accompanied by a shift to formal paid work in the market in the UK contrasted with Sweden where the same marketisation has been accompanied by a shift to informal care relations (Glucksmann and Lyon 2006; Lyon and Glucksmann 2008). This analysis chimes with ecological approaches to sectoral divisions of labour which examine 'for profit, non-profit and public forms, competing or cooperating within industries' (DiMaggio and Anheier 1990: 144).

At an organisational level too, examining shifting configurations of paid and unpaid work can illuminate the way in which

organisations structure their workforce. In the third sector, for example, that relationship is mediated by both resources and policy agendas. For example, one study highlights the conflicting interests of staff, volunteers and young people in youth empowerment projects in the US. During their short weekly volunteering slot, the mostly white middle-class adults mentoring marginalised ethnic minority young people, provided inconsistent advice, ignored the harder to help and distracted others from their homework, creating frustration and extra work for paid workers who had to both engineer a fulfilling experience for the volunteers whilst providing effective support for the young people. These contradictions were effectively embedded in the funding requirements of the projects (Eliasoph 2010). Studies of organisations working with socially disadvantaged individuals, particularly those referred from employment programmes where unpaid work is viewed as a stepping stone to the mainstream economy, note the blurred boundaries between staff, clients or users and volunteers (Amin 2009).

OLD AND NEW FORMS: HISTORICAL LEGACIES AND CONTINUITIES

We have touched on the various ways unpaid work is organised in the context of individuals' working lives and careers and also how it is differently configured at broad institutional and organisational levels. Here we return to the diversity of forms unpaid work takes and start to unpack these forms and their diverse origins. Looking back to classed and gendered divisions of paid and unpaid labour in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries helps to shed light on the historical legacies that have shaped modern forms of unpaid work.

The history of *paid* work is well rehearsed in a narrative where industrialisation processes formalised both a distinction between home and work and a system of waged labour

in which the individual rather than the household became the unit of production. Formal employment relations replaced embedded subsistence work and work relations characterised by cash, patronage and payment in kind. The history of *unpaid* work in the public domain is intertwined, if largely invisible, in this narrative. Across the industrialising world the rise of an educated, professional class and wealthy manufacturers brought with it a surge in the establishment of philanthropic institutions and voluntary associations, and with them an evolving non-profit or voluntary sector that created a new world of civic and professional power for emerging urban elites (DiMaggio and Anheier 1990; Kramer 1981; Ostrander 1984; Owen 1964; Veblen 2007). Physicians and surgeons, for example, founded and ran an expanding voluntary hospital system which provided them with an institutional home and access to operating theatres, laboratories, and the diseased and injured poor on which to hone their skills (Morris 1983; Owen 1964; Perrow 1963; Starr 1982). These unpaid work practices were also gendered. Whilst middle- and upper-class men held multiple positions as chairmen and presidents of societies and associations alongside professional careers (Hayes 2013; Veblen 2007), their wives and daughters were mostly found in the lower ranks, working as visitors, guardians and secretaries of the voluntary associations. These unpaid roles were effectively the only legitimate positions open to middle-class women in the public domain given that religious doctrine had defined wage labour as an affront to their nature and womanhood (Davidoff 1995; Douglas 1977; Hall 1992; Kessler-Harris 1981).

The middle and upper classes were not the only ones engaged in unpaid labour in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The new industrial working class created a web of self-help organisations, cooperatives, and friendly and burial societies (Finlayson 1994; Harrison 1971; Zeldin 1979). Working-class membership of labour organisations and political associations flourished (Clegg

et al. 1961; Kessler Harris 1981; Lewenhak 1977; Liddington and Norris 1978; Milkman 1985). Like the philanthropic associations, these organisations were run by committees whose members worked unpaid as secretaries, shop stewards, administrators, treasurers and collectors. However, they were driven less by the rewards of civic power and professional closure as by the importance of mutual aid, solidarity and reciprocity as antidotes to urban poverty. This work too was gendered, and working-class women, whilst active in some trade unions and societies, were more likely to be found operating informal support networks and care arrangements within their neighbourhoods (Anderson 1971; Tebbutt 1995).

A third form of unpaid work can also be seen in the rise of new social movements in the latter half of the twentieth century. The emergence of radical campaigning organisations such as Greenpeace, and broader social movements protesting against nuclear weapons or campaigning for civil rights, took place in the 1960s and 70s. The unpaid work of members and activists managing, organising and fundraising, mobilised resources and enabled these groups to sustain themselves (Jenkins and Eckert 1986; McAdam 1989; McCarthy and Zald 1977). Whilst some workers were grassroots activists from marginalised communities, social movements provided the middle classes with alternative forms of work and institutional power. Scholars have noted the over-representation in these organisations of a post-war educated middle class, 'in changing coalitions with marginalized social groups' (Brand 1990: 26).

These various historical forms of unpaid work shaped by particular class and gendered divisions of labour provide the foundations for the diversity of contemporary forms. Two examples – civic leadership roles and trade union work – highlight some continuities. High-status civic leadership roles in social service, culture, sport and arts organisations echo the unpaid work of the nineteenth-century urban elite. They are dominated by

middle- and upper-class men and women from the business, political and cultural elites: families that have inherited or acquired wealth and property (Viannello and Moore 2004). The gendered origins of these roles are still visible. Men's considerable autonomy in their paid professional careers in law, finance or ownership of business institutions, gives them the opportunity to serve as directors, trustees, chairs, presidents and CEOs of organisations and associations (Ostrower 2002). However, for elite women paid work may still be regarded as an impropriety and civic leadership roles provide a high-status occupation that can be organised alongside household management and raising children in what Daniels has called an 'invisible career' (Daniels 1988; Ostrander 1984). These positions are not open to everyone but are gained and sustained via social connections; family members, friends, professional contacts and the 'old boys' network'. Board membership often requires the possession of personal resources, primarily financial but also business skills, political connections or even art collections that could be useful in sustaining organisations (Ostrower 2002). At the same time, notions of decency and morality articulated by wealthy elites to explain their charitable work (Odendahl 1990) lend moral distinction, legitimacy and symbolic value to their activities.

At the other end of the social class spectrum we find the unpaid work of those in the nineteenth-century labour movement echoed in contemporary trade unions and labour organisations. In local branches union secretaries, worker representatives or shop stewards are elected from the rank and file members and are involved in administering local union business, advising members and communicating issues to employer representatives and union leaders. Where this activity takes place in work time the individual is indirectly being paid; however, much union work takes place outside working hours and is effectively unpaid work. Studies have documented the substantial levels of time and commitment that are a feature of this work

(Clegg et al. 1961). The ‘heroic macho culture’ of long hours (Franzway 2000), and the demand for unwavering commitment and ‘24/7’ working (Cockburn 1991), result in 50–60 hour working weeks for union workers (Heery and Kelly 1989; Watson 1988). The symbolic notions of moral decency that underpinned civic leadership roles are visible here but framed by notions of worker solidarity, voice and support, and an ethos of labour politics (Kirton 2006). Whilst it has traditionally been the domain of working-class men, there are significant numbers of women in service and statutory sector organisations engaged in union work. The work-life balance issues of ‘the triple load’ or ‘third career’ constituted by unpaid union work are well documented (Kirton 2006) and echo the earlier discussion of the ‘third shift’ for women juggling traditional forms of voluntary work with domestic and waged labour. The examples of union work and civic leadership highlight the diverse forms unpaid work takes, its embeddedness in other work and non-work relations, the various meanings it carries, the capital and resources that support it and the continuity of classed and gendered divisions of labour that structure it.

THE CHANGING WORLD OF (UNPAID) WORK

The world of unpaid work is characterised not only by continuity but also by change and the emergence of new forms in new configurations with paid work. Here we touch on two particular dimensions of change: first the forms and locations of unpaid work within emerging occupations and industries, specifically the creative industries; and second the broader implications of trends related to neoliberal restructuring of labour markets, i.e. outsourcing and deregulation, and austerity budgets imposed on public services.

The cultural or creative industries, encompassing art, media, film and increasingly software, have seen relentless growth over

recent decades. Narratives of fulfilment and self-actualisation are countered by evidence of multiple jobholding, long hours, high levels of insecurity and casualisation, and very low pay, often no pay (Hesmondhalgh and Baker 2010; Menger 2006; Ross 2000; Terranova 2000). Unpaid internships, ‘runner’ positions or ‘working for free’ are an embedded part of careers in these industries (Percival and Hesmondhalgh 2014). For recent graduates, freelancers, employees or those between jobs, these unpaid roles provide work experience or build professional profiles and reputation that they hope will generate paid work in the future (Gandini 2014; Grugulis and Stoyanova 2011). The legitimacy of unpaid work is often supported by an ethos of personal self-sacrifice for the sake of artistic endeavour that permeates these industries (Ross 2000). Creative workers are predominantly middle class – what Ross has termed ‘bohemian industrialists’ (Ross 2004). Family wealth and resources mean they can afford to participate in unpaid and low-paid labour so long as it provides the symbolic capital of ‘disinterested’ artistic endeavour (Bourdieu 1984, 1990). In the case of internships, the domain of the unemployed graduate looking for a foot on the professional career ladder (Frenette 2013 Perlin 2012), recruitment mechanisms often resemble those that operate to fill civic leadership roles and positions in creative industries more generally: social networks, family connections and patronage (Grugulis and Stoyanova 2012). They are also routinely sold for high sums in charity auctions. Unpaid creative labour is so deeply institutionalised in the sector that when the UK’s media industry union attempted to campaign against unpaid internships they were met with a barrage of protest from cultural sector workers fighting for the right to work unpaid (Percival and Hesmondhalgh 2014).

In the software industry unpaid work occupies similar positions, visible in the examples of the ‘modern sweatshop’ endured by digital media workers putting in long unpaid hours (Terranova 2000) or ‘working

for free' to build a freelance profile. But unpaid work is also a high status activity at the technically advanced end of the industry, albeit one which operates outside traditional institutional and corporate structures. Free/libre open source software (FLOSS) products like Linux are designed, built and tested by developers or 'hackers' working unpaid (Kelty 2008; Raymond 2001). Hackers tend to be employed or freelance developers. They undertake unpaid open source development in their spare time or even in their paid work time, working in distributed, 'virtual', self-organised groups, almost entirely online, with industry conferences used as meeting points (Crowston et al. 2007). In general they tend to be male, middle-class graduates, although some are self-taught. Studies of their unpaid development work focus on the search for prestige, recognition and reputation amongst their peers, describing it as a gift relationship where members compete for status by giving away their labour (Kelty 2008; Raymond 2001; Terranova 2000). Reputation gained in open source development and other unpaid work in the industry is also a strategy for career development and movement between paid jobs (Lerner and Tirole 2002). The speed of knowledge and technical development in the industry creates pressure on workers to find ways to continually update skills and stay ahead. In an industry with little social closure and few formal restrictions on entry (Adams and Demaiter 2008) reputation is one of the only available measures of competitive success (Raymond 2001).

Exploring the diverse positioning of unpaid work in different creative industries suggests that its forms are shaped by particular occupational practices and narratives. However, this raises a question about the extent to which new forms and locations of unpaid work in the labour market are related to wider programmes of neoliberal restructuring that are implicated in the rise in non-standard, flexibilised employment and a decline in job quality (Kalleberg 2011). Increasingly, studies are highlighting the changing role of

unpaid work in the wake of reforms to particular industries, sectors and organisations. For the UK's television industry, deregulation in the 1980s led to an aggressive degradation of terms and conditions. The result, as we have already noted, was a predominantly freelance workforce supplemented by an oversupply of media students willing to work for nothing to gain entry, and thus an increasingly blurred boundary between unpaid work and low-paid work (Menger 2006; Percival and Hesmondhalgh 2014; Ursell 2000). In the example of contracted healthcare markets in Canada, new roles emerged for volunteers within services outsourced to the non-profit sector. However, unpaid work was also undertaken by statutory and non-profit sector paid staff in an attempt to secure their jobs or as a way to continue to provide an adequate service to clients following the implementation of efficiency measures (Baines 2004). The restructuring of New York City's parks provision saw the emergence of distinct layers of unpaid workers filling gaps left by the withdrawal of municipal funding. These volunteers included workfare recipients and those with community service orders providing enforced unskilled labour, but also corporate volunteers, young people on youth volunteering schemes and regular volunteers working for non-profit parks foundations involved in fundraising and gardening (Krinsky and Simonet 2012).

These individual cases of restructuring provide valuable insights into shifting configurations of paid and unpaid work, particularly where the delivery of public services is marketised, outsourced and stripped back following periods of welfare reform and the imposition of austerity budgets. In the UK, the substitution of paid staff by unpaid workers in local state provision was enshrined, at least briefly, in political rhetoric. The Conservative Party's 'Big Society' agenda that accompanied their 2010 election campaign posited communities as the ideal providers of local services: an ideological counterpoint to big government. In practice of course, 'the community' in this narrative

means unpaid workers. Where recent austerity budgets imposed on public provision have created pressure on non-essential services such as sports and library facilities, local councils have toyed with strategies to deploy volunteers as a way to reduce costs, in some cases transferring entire institutions to community ownership (MLA 2011). Even more critical services such as policing and street cleaning have increasingly seen initiatives to deploy unpaid workers. Notably in the UK in 2011, police officers forcibly retired in cost-cutting measures were asked if they wished to re-join the force as unpaid special constables (Travis 2011). These examples suggest that an increase in unpaid work might be both a goal and a side-effect of a neoliberal political agenda. Yet that same agenda has been linked to broad-brush declines in volunteering rates associated with depressed and declining communities and civic association (Clark and Heath 2014). Both increases and decreases may be occurring in different areas of activity, but volunteering surveys provide a blunt instrument with which to measure these trends and shed little light on wider patterns in unpaid work.

A final question we can pursue here is how emergent forms and new configurations of paid and unpaid work might be understood within conceptual accounts of post-industrial or late modern society. On the one hand these diverse contemporary examples speak to the risk laden, hyper-individualised and reflexive working lives invoked by Beck, who suggested that, increasingly, flexible forms of paid work will be combined with unpaid work, and that unpaid work will itself become increasingly individualised (Beck 1992, 2000). These twin trajectories are, to a certain extent, both visible in the examples outlined above. Open source development is a flexible form of unpaid work that operates in tandem with paid work. The apparent growth or at least visibility of internships and the embeddedness of 'working for free' in freelance 'portfolio' careers indicates the more precarious and transitory types of unpaid work and individualised career profile building.

Scholars of volunteering have identified new styles of short-term reflexive and strategic voluntary work aimed at accessing particular careers that might signal this transformation (Hustinx 2010; Hustinx and Lammertyn 2003). Yet, other accounts of contemporary volunteering suggest that whilst reflexive forms may exist amongst certain (young, middle-class) groups in certain locations, there has not been a reconfiguring of voluntary work per se (Parry 2005). Class continues to shape choices about unpaid work, in part because of the resources that this work commands (Leonard et al. 2015). A more empirically driven account may be required to address the complexity of paid and unpaid work configurations in late modern society.

CONCLUSIONS

In the introduction to this chapter we argued for a critical approach to voluntary work, and we have sought to provide that by positioning volunteering firmly within sociological understandings and debates about work. This has meant looking beyond volunteering as a coherent and unified object of study to both its internal diversity and its position within the broader category of unpaid work in the public domain. Voluntary work, we have argued, is one form of unpaid labour and it can be contrasted with other forms such as internships or open source software development. From this starting point we have highlighted how different forms of unpaid labour sit in relation to paid work at different societal levels and at different points in time – the configurations of paid and unpaid work within the total social organisation of labour (Glucksmann 2009). Two particular dimensions have emerged from these discussions and examples. First, at the micro level, we outlined individuals' experiences of undertaking various forms of unpaid work: how they manage it, the resources they need, and the value they extract from it. Second, at the wider structural level, we raised questions

about where unpaid work sits within occupational structures and in relation to broad labour market restructuring.

The first of these dimensions, the process of exploring how and why individuals undertake different types of unpaid work, revealed points of connection across different forms. Whether as voluntary work, internship or some other type of unwaged labour, these activities can take a range of positions in individuals' working lives. For some, unpaid work is itself a career, an alternative to paid employment; for others it is embedded in a paid career; and for others still it is a strategy undertaken at a particular point as a way to re-skill, to continue working or to supplement or complement paid work.

The role resources play in how positions are obtained and sustained is also critical in understanding individual participation in unpaid work. This may seem obvious but it requires emphasis. The possession of economic resources at the individual, family or household level facilitates unpaid forms of labour: the graduate intern able to live in the family's city apartment without the burden of rent payments; the CEO able to take on multiple civic leadership roles whilst his company profits accumulate; the union rep putting in long hours beyond their full-time job. Resources also come in the form of non-economic symbolic rewards, underpinned by notions of 'disinterest' (Bourdieu 1990), that accompany unpaid work. In the cultural industries, creativity and self-sacrifice secure professional and artistic reputation. In civic leadership roles moral distinction denotes authority and power. Trade union work brings symbolic rewards around membership, solidarity and autonomy in the workplace.

The second structural dimension has highlighted diverse configurations of paid and unpaid work and the shifting position of unpaid work in a changing labour market. At the occupational level empirical examples suggest the embeddedness of particular forms of unpaid work in professional career structures, not only at entry level in the creative industries, for example, but woven through

the software industry, or bolstering the reputation of business elites. Yet, whilst unpaid work is an institutionalised route into particular careers, we cannot extrapolate from there that any unpaid work is likely to increase the employability of any worker. If anything, the specificity of these occupational pathways into and through unpaid work provides a critique of the employability agenda, specifically the use of volunteering placements within labour market activation programmes. Unpaid work without occupationally defined symbolic rewards looks more like exploitation. Positioning these issues within a broader contemporary context we drew on studies that explore the impact of neoliberal reforms on unpaid work in particular sectors and industries. Whilst these examples suggested increases in unpaid work linked to outsourcing to the third sector or filling gaps left by the withdrawal of state funding, they do not necessarily constitute broad trends. As we showed early in the chapter, volunteering rates (such as are available from the survey data), have remained relatively stable for the past 20 years. The implication is that the impacts of large-scale labour market change on the configuration of paid and unpaid work are uneven and mediated by particular (localised) institutional and occupational contexts and socio-economic conditions.

Ultimately this chapter has taken a broad perspective on unpaid work and has raised a whole array of further questions. For example, we have focused on just one industry, but unpaid work is institutionalised within other occupations. What forms does it take, how is it accessed and symbolically rewarded in fields such as social work, counselling and law? Further questions might be identified in relation to the role of unpaid work in the triple shift: how is unpaid work managed and juggled with paid work and how does this differ for different socio-economic or ethnic groups? How is this work gendered? This also overlaps with issues of work intensification, unpaid overtime (does this count as unpaid work?), and the blurred boundaries between different forms of work in people's daily lives.

A third set of questions might explore the dividing line between exploitation and class reproduction in relation to unpaid work – a discussion that would need to ask who participates, what do they do, and what are the resources and rewards in that case?

If there is one message to take from the discussion in this chapter it is that unpaid work is not a marginal or niche activity but is embedded in people's working lives and in occupational and institutional structures. This chapter has sought to make unpaid work not only visible but central to contemporary debates and, in so doing, to drive forward research agendas in the sociology of work and employment.

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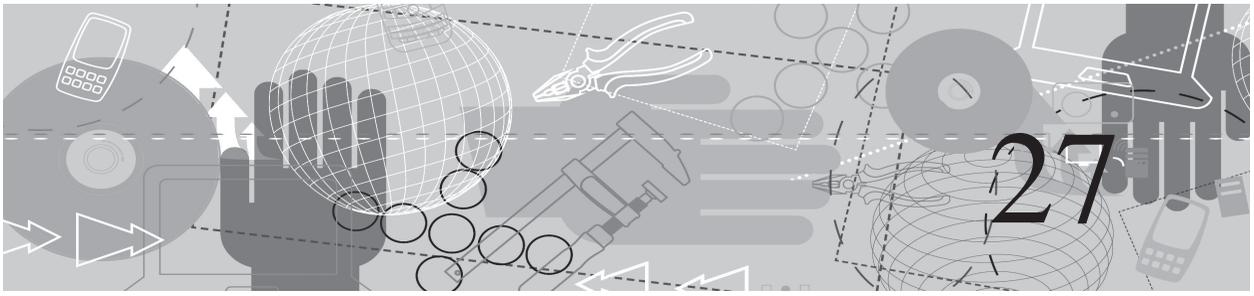
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Work-Life Balance

Abigail Gregory

The problem of balancing the demands of work and life outside work has come to the fore in recent decades and been the focus of significant public, academic and policy-maker interest. It is readily acknowledged nowadays that achieving balance between work and private life is important. Employees whose work fits in well with non-work demands have lower sickness absence, higher work motivation and tend to be more loyal to their employer, while wider business benefits include better retention, lower turnover, improved work organisation and skills preservation (EuroFound, 2013: 45; ILO, 2011: 11) while work-life conflict not only bears negatively on the worker but also on their families, children and adults alike, in both developed and developing countries (ILO, 2011: 2).

The growth in interest in work-life balance has originated in neo-liberal economies (Henniger and Papouschek, 2008) and is considered to have been stimulated by at least four main changes since the 1990s: (i) women's increased labour market participation,

the demise of the male breadwinner state and its challenges for work-family reconciliation, along with related concerns about fertility and the size of the working population (Hennig et al., 2012; MacInnes, 2008); (ii) the simultaneous de-standardisation and individualisation of the life course as traditional work and family structures dissolve; (iii) rising work intensity; and (iv) increasingly blurred boundaries between work and family (EuroFound, 2007a: 1; 2013: 45). Alongside these changes is evidence that in the West we feel increasing time pressure, with women, especially mothers of young children, feeling most pressed for time, along with dual income households (Southerton and Tomlinson, 2005), and that work is becoming more rewarding for some than home life as these realities evolve (Hochschild, 1997).

In this changing context, Western policy-makers have focused, within a wider framework of welfare state restructuring on whether, what and how intervention should take place, with significant implications for families, children and gender equality in paid

and unpaid work. Also, while macro-level frameworks, particularly at nation-state level, have been shown to be important in determining work-life balance provision, Western academic research has demonstrated that the latter is highly contingent on a range of other variables at meso (organisational) and micro (individual, couple and household) level, and that the relationships between the three are complex and interrelated (Anxo et al., 2013; Gambles et al., 2007; Hobson and Fahlén, 2009).

In developing economies, specific demographic, social and environmental factors come into play in relation to work-life balance (ILO, 2011: 3). These include pandemics and rapidly ageing populations which have contributed to over dependency on individual workers who often care for both adults and children. Elsewhere, traditional and informal support mechanisms have been reduced through changes in family structures (fewer extended family networks, high levels of single-parent family households) and processes of urbanisation and migration. In some low-income economies women are particularly impacted by pressures to support their families as a result of crises in the provision of resources to satisfy basic needs. In these countries work-family policies can significantly aid the promotion of women's access to better education and jobs, promote greater gender equality and help reduce family and child poverty.

Work-life balance is of direct relevance to men's, women's and households' life satisfaction, and men and women in paid work are in principle faced with the same problem of achieving a satisfactory balance. However, the effective division of paid and unpaid work which underlies work-life balance has long been recognised by sociologists, and feminists in particular, as underpinning fundamental gender inequality between men and women and has led to a strong academic argument for policy to support a more equal division of labour at work and in the home (Crompton, 1999; Gornick and Mayers, 2009). Work-life balance issues and debates

intersect with key theoretical questions relating to agency versus structure (Hakim, 2000), the place of care and its commodification (Esping-Andersen, 1999), and the processes of evolution of gender relations more widely (Gershuny et al., 1994; Walby, 2009), including what constitutes 'progress' in the context of enhancing individual well-being (Sen, 2004).

The aim of this chapter will then be to review the key areas outlined in brief above in order to: (1) explore work-life balance policy (macro-level) and related theory; (2) outline the organisational (meso) and micro (individual, couple and household) variables considered to interface with these macro frameworks in work-life balance choices; (3) establish the principal characteristics of work-life balance in practice; (4) briefly discuss current and future challenges for its development. To begin with, however, we will set out the conceptual issues surrounding the terms 'work-family reconciliation' and 'work-life balance', an area which continues to be the focus of debate.

CONCEPTUAL ISSUES WITH WORK-FAMILY RECONCILIATION AND WORK-LIFE BALANCE

The study of work-life balance takes its roots from various disciplines, from organisational psychology, sociologies of work and family practices and, most recently, management studies, each area bringing specific strengths and limitations (Gatrell et al., 2013). While the term work-life balance has been reported in the public discourse since the 1990s (MacInnes, 2008), research since the 1960s revealed the links between work and family roles, with a focus initially on women and work-family stresses. Subsequently, numerous new concepts appeared such as work-family conflict or interference, work-family practices, work-family interface, work-family accommodation, work-family integration, work-family compensation and work-family

balance whose descriptions reflect nuances in interpretation relating to their disciplinary location (see full review and definitions in Gatrell et al., 2013). Work-family balance preceded work-life balance and implies ‘the extent to which individuals are equally involved in – and equally satisfied with – their work role and family role’ (Greenhaus and Singh, 2003: 2, in Gregory and Milner, 2008b: 1), implying that by prioritising both equally, work-life conflict can easily be avoided. Subsequently the term was enlarged to refer to work-life balance as the narrower definition was thought to engender a backlash from non-parents.

However, the definition of work-life balance itself is considered problematic on a number of levels (Gregory and Milner, 2009; Lewis et al., 2007; Rigby and O’Brien-Smith, 2010) for conflating work and employment and the slippage between unpaid work, specifically family responsibilities, leisure in general and all that is not employment (MacInnes, 2008); for demonising ‘work’ and simultaneously portraying all of life as (child)care (Warhurst et al., 2008); and for its normative assumptions (see Gregory et al., 2013: 528–529) that it is possible to satisfactorily ‘balance’ paid employment and family responsibilities, and about the gendered nature of care (fathers depicted as the main breadwinners and mothers as the principal caregivers).

A further conceptual issue is that work and life are treated as distinct spheres and not integrated/overlapping. In many occupations work relations and practices extend into life outside the workplace and vice versa (Warhurst et al., 2008: 2). This has led to the conceptual framework of boundary work (Nippert-Eng, 1996a, 1996b) and work/family border theory (Campbell Clark, 2000). Boundary work is the ‘active mental management and organisation of practices and artefacts so as to create the segmentation (clear separation with impenetrable boundaries) or integration (merging) of home and work’ (adapted from Warhurst et al., 2008: 10). The focus on ‘balance’ is also considered (MacInnes, 2008; Pocock et al., 2008) to overstate the

place of the individual in the work-life picture when structural and occupational factors are deemed to be key, leading to an alternative approach advocated by Warhurst et al. (2008: 12) and conceptualised as ‘work-life patterns’ determined by work practices, structural constraints, lifestyles and context-specific logics. It has led to alternative conceptual models such as the idea of a ‘total responsibility burden’ (Ransome, 2008: 62), exploring how the burden of responsibilities for households (and individuals within them) across market and non-market work and ‘recreational labour’ is established and balanced.

Finally, the scope of the term work-life balance is considered to lack clear operational definition and to be open to interpretation (EuroFound, 2013: 45; Gregory and Milner, 2011). On the one hand it can refer to a narrow set of policy initiatives around leave for parents or employer childcare support, while, on the other, to a wider group of initiatives responding to growing workplace demands for employee flexibility and availability (Perrons et al., 2007).

In this chapter, as in earlier work (see Gregory and Milner, 2009: 3), for practical reasons the term ‘work-life balance’ is used in its traditional definition, comprising employees’ ‘time management, inter-role conflict (role overload and interference) and care arrangements for dependents’.

WORK-LIFE BALANCE: POLICY AND THEORY

Supra-National Level

Supra-national organisations such as the ILO, EU and OECD have actively promoted policy development in this area and are contributing to national policy learning processes. For example, the ILO Workers with Family Responsibilities Convention (No. 156), and its accompanying Recommendation No. 165, introduced in 1981 and ratified by 15 member states stipulates ‘that the full exercise of the

right to work implies that family responsibilities cannot constitute cause for discrimination or restrict access to jobs' (ILO, 2011, in O'Brien, 2012: 3). The instruments advocate state policies to ensure a more equal division of care responsibilities. Subsequent ILO communications have called for measures 'to facilitate reconciliation of work and family responsibilities for women and men, effective access to comprehensive social care services for dependants and maternity protection' (ILO, 2011: 1). Similarly, the UN, as part of the Millennium Development Goal Acceleration Framework, in 2010, identified leave policies and infrastructure for childcare and dependent care as key pillars to speed progress in relation to poverty reduction, gender equality, child mortality, maternal health and HIV/AIDS and other diseases by 2015 (ILO, 2011: 1). However, despite this regulatory framework, as we discuss below, the development of work-life balance policies in the developing world is subject to the realities of informal, unregulated work in the context of wider globalising trends.

With respect to the European Union, while the term reconciliation appeared first in the 1974 Community Social Action Programme, work-family reconciliation policies were not explicitly referenced until the early 1990s. For example, a European Council recommendation was issued in 1992 on childcare, recommending that member states 'develop and/or encourage initiatives to enable women and men to reconcile their occupational, family and child-raising responsibilities' (Lewis, 2009: 12). In 1993 the Working Time Directive was introduced as a way of promoting family life and worker well-being. It set a maximum weekly limit of 48 hours, including overtime, along with the conditions under which this limit could be exceeded. In the late 1990s a new concept of reconciliation appeared, derived from the changing economic and social climate (seen across Europe in the politics of the 'Third Way'), and a greater expectation that men should be involved in care in the family in the face of new social challenges. In 1996 the Parental

Leave directive was adopted providing minimum rights to three months' non-transferable parental leave for men and women in order to promote gender equality; and in 2000 the Council Resolution on the Balanced Participation of Women and Men in Family and Working Life provided a regulatory space for encouraging a more egalitarian division of domestic labour, and became embedded in Article 33 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights. These fundamental rights formed the basis of EU work-life policy today and notably the Commission's proposals in the 2008 Work-Life Balance package (Caracciolo di Torella, 2011; Lewis, 2009).

However, while reconciliation and work-life balance were initially embedded within a gender equality framework and taken forward under this pillar of the Treaty of Rome, this focus has been diluted as it has increasingly been linked to priorities of economic growth, increasing flexibility at work and generating employment, a feature accelerated by the mainstreaming of equal opportunities across all policy fields (Milner, 2011). A similar approach seems to have issued from the OECD from the late 1990s through its key publications *A Caring World* (OECD, 1999) and *Babies and Bosses* (OECD, 2007) (Mahon, 2006).

National Level

While supra-national frameworks have stimulated developments in work-life balance policy, national institutional frameworks are acknowledged to be key determinants in work-life balance through their shaping of organisational, individual and household choices and practice. A large body of Western theoretical work has sought to analyse national policy frameworks underpinning work-life balance, focusing on how to achieve social justice and equality in gender relations and building on the initial gender-neutral approach used by Esping-Andersen in his welfare regime typology (Esping-Andersen, 1990, 1999; Walby, 2009).

This interest is generated by prevailing inequalities in the division of labour.

Although in virtually all countries hours of employment are longer for men than women, women still continue to undertake the majority of unpaid work whether engaged in paid work or not, leading to a longer total working week than that of men (Fagan et al., 2012). Within Europe, the majority of women (80 per cent) say that they do household work every day (care or education of children, care of elderly or disabled relatives, cooking or housework) while men's contribution is much more varied, ranging from 19 per cent of Slovakian men to 68 per cent of Swedish and Finnish men (Pascall, 2012: 137).

Within a gendered welfare regime model, authors have sought to classify institutional frameworks, for example in relation to care provision (Lewis, 1992; Sainsbury, 1996) and family policy (Hantrais, 2004), as well as in relation to the gendered division of labour, via reference to the gender regime (Pfau-Effinger, 2004) and the 'breadwinner' regime (Crompton, 1999). Crompton's (1999) continuum of models of the division of labour runs from role specialisation in the male breadwinner/female caregiver model prevalent from the late nineteenth century to mid-twentieth century in industrialised nations, through the dual earner/female part-time caregiver and dual-earner/substitute carer models (state/market based childcare provision), to the dual-earner/dual-caregiver model at the most egalitarian end of the spectrum. All but the most specialised of these models are conceived as potential solutions to the problem of achieving 'work-family balance' (Gornick and Meyers, 2009: 14–15).

Analyses of various countries along this continuum demonstrate very different and path-dependent approaches and rationales by policy-makers towards work-family models (Crompton 2009; Lewis, 2009; Lewis et al., 2008). Policies can indeed enhance work-family balance and contribute to a more equal division of labour in the home, but can also have unexpected consequences. Mandel (2011) has highlighted the negative

consequences of work-family policy for women's occupational attainment and gender wage gaps in certain welfare state configurations.

Overall, despite a trend towards promotion of an 'adult worker' household model (dual-earner, dual-caregiver), in practice clusters of members of EU states corresponding broadly to traditional welfare regime typologies persist and the convergence seems to be rather around a 'modified breadwinner model' (dual-earner/female part-time caregiver) (Mätzke and Ostner, 2010).

Gornick and Meyers, along with other feminists, have argued in favour of the dual-earner/dual-care-giver or 'universal caregiver' approach, based on the Scandinavian model, by which employers, welfare policies and civil society organisations would see everyone as a potential caregiver, thereby feminising men's lives. Other authors (e.g. Esping-Andersen, 2009; Gregory and Windebank, 2000) have argued for men to be more reflexive about their roles and to move more into the domestic sphere in the same way as women have adapted with respect to paid work.

Finally, while much of the modelling around work-life balance has analysed national policy frameworks, research reaching across father involvement and the division of labour in the home (Gregory and Milner, 2008a), the regulation of working time and working time regimes (e.g. Anxo and O'Reilly, 2000) and the links between work time and relative gender equity in labour market roles (Mutari and Figart, 2001) highlight the intersections between all of these areas in delivering work-life balance outcomes.

MESO AND MICRO VARIABLES AND WORK-LIFE BALANCE

Organisations

Research over the last decade has identified the important role of organisations in mediating the relationship between national policy frameworks for work-life balance and

individual behaviours and attitudes within the family. They are seen to provide an additional framework within which employees, and notably mothers and fathers, negotiate their own work-life and work-family choices.

Factors influencing the take-up of work-life balance measures at organisational level relate to organisational cultures and include the degree of feminisation of the workforce; the extent of manager and co-worker support and the perceived career consequences of taking a work-life balance measure; organisational time expectations and practices (including the impact of presenteeism and long-hours cultures); and gendered perceptions of policy use (Gregory and Milner 2009: 4–5, 2011). These factors play out in significantly gendered ways.

Specific research relating to father-friendly organisations highlights the way in which gendered perceptions of care within organisations reduce men's sense of entitlement to workplace work-life balance measures (Lewis and Smithson, 2001), and ingrained organisational career cultures prevent men from overtly choosing to privilege an improved work-life balance over career. Tracy and Rivera (2010) show that men's role as a father is ignored in organisations by comparison with their role as breadwinners, even where management is demonstrably committed to the sharing of family and parental responsibilities.

Industry-specific factors also impinge on work-life balance opportunities and take-up, as Kvande (2009) has shown in relation to knowledge work in Norway and Watts (2009) has demonstrated in UK engineering. Gregory and Milner (2011) found that sectoral features might include specific workload pressures, modes of working (such as team working) as well as department and function. Local factors including local labour market conditions may also affect flexibility in working time as organisations may enhance the latter to attract target workforces in times of labour shortage.

The complexity of factors operating at organisational level is highlighted in the findings of the *Establishment Survey on Working*

Time (2004–5) which surveyed 21,000 establishments of 10 employees or more in 21 EU countries. It identified six types of companies in Europe regarding working time and work-life balance options: organisations that are worker orientated with high flexibility, company orientated with high flexibility, life-course orientated with intermediate flexibility and low flexibility types, those offering day-to-day intermediate flexibility and overtime reliant intermediate flexibility, and finally low flexibility types. The company-orientated high-flexibility and low-flexibility types were the most common and covered 43 per cent of establishments surveyed (EuroFound, 2007a: 39). The Survey showed that, while every country had some of each company type, the numbers of each type varied significantly between countries, with some resemblance between these country clusters and the well-known welfare state typologies as well as the gender division of labour. The Survey also showed that an organisation's flexibility profile was related to company size (number of employees) and sector. Henninger and Papouschek (2008) also found that the impact of a company flexibilisation strategy on work-life balance depends on structural features of the respective occupational fields including labour market conditions, work assignments and qualification structures.

Finally, the relationship between national institutional frameworks and organisations has been shown to be complex. There is some evidence (Cologne Institute for Economic Research, 2010; Holter, 2007), as hypothesised by some authors (e.g. Haas et al., 2000), that where there is a strong institutional framework for work-life balance, development of such support at organisational level is weaker, although national factors have also been found to impact on organisational developments (see Gregory and Milner, 2011).

Trade Unions

Working time is a key element of the wage-effort bargain core to the employment relationship (Grimshaw and Rubery, 2010: 362).

An important focus of bargaining in developed countries has been the duration of working time, with a long-standing trade union objective being to reduce members' working time. Motives for this have included health and safety of workers, the need to share work more fairly in times of economic recession and to enhance workers' work-life balance. Legislative change at EU level via the setting of a maximum 48-hour working week and at national level in some countries, such as France with its policy to reduce the working week to 35 hours in the early 2000s, increased bargaining activity over the duration of working time. There has been a corresponding long-term decrease in working time in many countries, as we note below.

Related to the pressure for reduced working time has been employer interest in negotiating for enhanced labour flexibility and productivity in the wider context of the de-standardisation of working time. This has corresponded with a trend towards greater decentralisation of bargaining (Milner, 2015). However, the national configuration of trade unions' roles, organisation and representation differs significantly, with legislation playing a much larger role in some countries than in others and a complex interaction between regulation, collective agreement and organisational initiative in triggering work-life balance initiatives (Cologne Institute for Economic Research, 2010; EuroFound, 2006: 47).

As Rigby and O'Brien-Smith (2010) note, on the basis of research in developed countries, much of the work in relation to union involvement in work-life issues has focused on national policies and agreements. They suggest that the 'empty shell' theory advanced by Hoque and Noon (2004) in relation to equal opportunities policies (i.e. that many written policies are not implemented) applies also to the work-life area, and that the gender composition of full-time officials and lay representatives is significant for the promotion of gender equality and work-life balance issues. In-depth research at sectoral level (see Gregory and Milner, 2009; Hyman

and Summers, 2007; Rigby and O'Brien-Smith, 2010) has delivered mixed findings relating to the role of trade unions in this area, highlighting the importance of structural contexts (nature of the industry, levels of union engagement and impact). Much of this supports earlier research (see Wysong and Wright, 2003) which explored the relationship between class, power, organisational factors and variations in family-friendly benefits across the US, Canada, Italy, Germany, Sweden and Austria. The American data shows that the provision of family-friendly benefits is positively related to: (i) organisational structure (monopoly or competitive sectors of the economy), with such benefits more likely to be found in monopoly firms; (ii) the level of employee unionisation – with the number of benefits correlated positively with the level of unionisation; (iii) non-profit status and key aspects of internal labour markets (five of the seven core worker and internal labour market variables selected increased the availability of benefits); and (iv) location in the state sector with increased family benefits available in the state compared with the private sector. Significantly Wysong and Wright (2003), drawing on cross-national data, also found a strong correlation between the nations where higher proportions of workers were covered by collective bargaining agreements and state-mandated family-friendly benefit levels, leading the authors to conclude that 'worker power and benefit outcomes are linked both in the employer and state policy arenas' (p. 359).

Other work (Gregory and Milner, 2009) exploring the intersection between national and sectoral variables in relation to work-life balance in Britain and France found that work-life balance programmes and bargaining agendas were also linked closely to the wider working-time regime (role of legislation, trade unions and negotiated frameworks), as well as the mode of action and gender equality concerns. Most recently, Milner and Gregory (2014) have demonstrated a strong link between gender equality bargaining and the negotiation of work-life balance measures

in these two countries, although they note that implementation is significantly impacted by the local bargaining context.

Outside of developed countries there is evidence that flexitime and other working-time arrangements for family reasons can figure within collective bargaining agreements where they exist (see ILO, 2011: 13) and that in Latin America notably this has proven a key tool for progressing work-life balance.

Individual and Household Factors

While the importance of organisational factors in mediating policy frameworks is clear, European research suggests that changes in the home feed into changes in the workplace rather than the other way around (Holter, 2007; Singley and Hynes, 2005). Fatherhood involvement in childcare, for example, has been related to the female partner's working hours and relational resources, including their level of education (see Benjamin and Sullivan, 1999; Coltrane, 2004). The complex relationship between individual, couple and organisational factors is highlighted in the work by Brandth and Kvande (2002) exploring fatherhood practices in Norway after the birth of a child. They contend that fathers' actions are strongly influenced by their individual work and family contexts and not typically affected by pre-existing norms and traditions. In a similar vein, Tracy and Rivera (2010), on the basis of their research with 13 male executive married gate-keepers with children, found that the development of progressive work-life policies and supportive workplace cultures was closely tied to the personal values and practices of the gate-keepers in relation to the division of work and home, which in turn could be modified through developing a wider knowledge of work-life issues. Comparative research (Crompton and Harris, 1999) carried out in the Czech Republic, Norway and the UK suggests that the male breadwinner role is shaped in particular by gender role attitudes, themselves not explicitly linked to women's

employment. Hence in the Czech Republic as a former Eastern bloc country, high levels of full-time working by mothers (supported by a policy framework to support women's equality in paid work) were combined with very traditional gender role attitudes and division of labour in the home. A similar, but less extreme example of this is found in France. These analyses intersect with wider social theories which provide explanations for shifts in gender roles.

In summary the research to date demonstrates the interaction of structural, organisational, household and individual factors in explaining work-life balance in practice and their location within wider national gender cultures, expectations and labour market regulations.

WORK-LIFE BALANCE IN PRACTICE

At the heart of the work-life balance debate in developed countries is the assumption that many employees are dissatisfied with their work-life balance and particularly that working hours are too long and do not enable employees to see their children (Warhurst et al., 2008: 3). In this section we look at how work-life balance works in practice for men and women in paid work under the three headings: inter-role conflict and satisfaction with working time; non-standard working hours and work-time flexibility; and care arrangements. Much of this data is drawn from the EU where detailed individual participant and enterprise-level surveys are carried out, although it is complemented where available with international data from the OECD and ILO.

Inter-Role Conflict and Satisfaction with Working Time

The fifth European Working Conditions Survey (EWCS), carried out in 2010, found a high proportion (83 per cent of men and 87 per cent

of women) of respondents were satisfied with the relationship between working hours and commitments outside work (Anxo et al., 2013: 46), with the self-employed less satisfied than average (73 per cent men; 80 per cent women), which is possibly a reflection of the longer working hours within this segment of the working population. Among developed countries, the USA contrasts with European countries with respect to levels of work-life conflict, as longer working hours and very weak legislative support for working parents lead to higher reported levels of work-family conflict (OECD, 2013; Ray et al., 2010; Williams and Boushey, 2010).

The fifth EWCS found that work-life balance is correlated with stage in the life course, country cluster and skill level, with parenthood being a key trigger for work-life conflict. However, according to this Survey the impact of parenthood is also gendered, affecting men only when they have young, pre-school children but extending to the whole of the parenting period for women. It is important to note, however, that while much research looking specifically at the fit between work and family – work-life conflict – focuses on employees with children, given the real difficulties encountered and the social policy issues this raises, the wider relationship between work-life conflict and well-being has been found to apply across both male and female employees who are non-parents as well (Fagan et al., 2011: 16).

The EWCS showed that the extent of work-life balance satisfaction is higher in a northern cluster of countries where institutional design provides more support for parenthood and the reconciliation of work and family life. Nevertheless, women tend to be happier with their work-life balance than men in all country clusters except northern countries. The gender gap is particularly high in liberal market-orientated countries. A tentative explanation for the generally higher satisfaction among women is that many women choose occupations and sectors that enable them to better combine work and family

commitments, resulting in gendered patterns of working hours (volume of hours and their arrangement) (EuroFound, 2006, 2013).

The European Quality of Life survey, carried out in 2011, found 78 per cent of those surveyed were satisfied with their ability to combine work and commitments outside work, with dissatisfaction related to longer working hours particularly amongst men in the middle of their working careers (Anderson et al., 2012) and more widespread in the private than the public sector. For both men and women, self-reported perception of being 'too tired to fulfil family responsibilities' rose markedly over 40 hours of paid employment a week. Surveys consistently show that the incidence of long-hours working varies across occupational class and that this distinction is country-dependent and more significant in countries with less work-time regulation such as the UK and US.

International reviews suggest that work-life conflict is often higher among professionals than non-professionals, reflecting the longer working hours and greater job-related stress in these social classes (Fagan et al., 2011). Evidence from the US finds that 'long, unpredictable, and inflexible hours in elite occupations, especially in finance and corporate management, do not mesh well with the rhythms of everyday life and the calendar of children's school and after-school activities' (Gottfried, 2013: 109), thereby removing these (mainly male) workers from care responsibilities. Qualitative research among male lawyers in the UK found similar pressures and difficulties in being available for family commitments (Collier, 2010). However, high-skilled men and women workers are also more likely to have the resources to help resolve such conflict revealing class divisions in this area and their relation to the international and racial features of the 'ethic of care' (Tronto, 1993). Nevertheless, specific national (e.g. Portugal in Lyonette et al., 2007) and job-related factors (see below in relation to non-standard working hours) can significantly impact work-life balance outcomes.

These national disparities in working time sit within a wider context of long-term decline in working time in industrialised countries (Bosch, 1999).

Outside these countries, however, hours can be significantly longer: for example, Peru, where 50.9 per cent of workers are working more than 48 hours per week, according to the ILO's global report on work time (Lee et al., 2007), or South Korea, where this pertains to 49.5 per cent of workers. National data also only includes the formal sector and does not highlight regional and local variation. Even longer working hours are likely in unregulated and informal labour markets such as India, Mexico, Argentina, Brazil and South Africa (O'Brien, 2012: 6). In many countries, notably in Asia, the working hour norm is dictated by economic necessity.

The OECD (OECD, 2011) also highlights significant country differences in parental working hours, although paternal hours are consistently longer than maternal hours in most countries (O'Brien, 2012: 6). For example, while nearly a third of fathers in couple families work more than 45 hours per week, with particularly long paternal working hours in the UK and Turkey, only around 9 per cent of women do, with the exception of Greece (19 per cent) and Turkey (38 per cent). Three countries – South Korea, the USA and Japan – are characterised by the vast majority of male and female employees usually working 40 hours or more per week (O'Brien, 2012: 6).

Finally, while there are clear cultural understandings of the place of work and its relationship to home (O'Brien, 2012: 8), satisfaction with work-life balance relates in part to the degree of individual discretion or autonomy over the organisation of working hours as well as to the degree to which working hours are a fit with individual preferences (see Fagan et al., 2011: 13-14). Fangel and Aaløkke (2008) found that spouse support could enhance the experience of balancing work and family life but also crucial was the individual's conceptualisation of work and the extent to which they considered it to be individualised work or not. Those who

saw their work as individual were often dissatisfied and frustrated with their work-life balance because they would discount collective activities (discussions and meetings) as real work and engage in individual work by encroaching on their personal time to carry it out.

In addition, a range of 'situational factors' have been shown to influence men and women's (self-perceived) ability to secure work-life balance in developed economies. These include work intensification, perceived job security or insecurity, the degree of sociability in working hours, the demand for availability via new technologies, and the existence of long-hours cultures/presenteeism at organisational/societal level (Roberts, 2007).

Non-Standard Working Hours and Work-Time Flexibility

The manner in which working hours are scheduled is important for the fit with domestic and wider social life schedules (Fagan, 2001). Work schedules comprise: (a) the times when hours are worked, including whether those hours are standard (full-time within daytime and weekdays) or non-standard (working less than full-time and evenings, nights, weekends, rotating shifts); and (b) whether they are flexible according to the needs of the employer (employer-led/centred/orientated), such as changing shifts, hours, breaks or overtime, or offer some working-time flexibility for the employee (employee-led/centred/orientated). This might include flexitime; individual time accounts; sabbaticals; long-leave arrangements; opportunities to alter start and finish times; a right to request flexible working, to engage in job-sharing or to work from home (see Fagan et al., 2011, Figure 1.2 and p. 6).

Non-Standard Working Hours

The definition of non-standard hours (otherwise known as unsocial or anti-social hours) varies across cultures. Here we are talking about mainly employer-led forms of working

time. De-standardisation of working time has been a feature of post-Fordist work organisation in the context of the wider de-standardisation of paid work. It is widely accepted that non-standard hours can have a negative effect on work-life balance, in particular shift work. European analyses have found that, for both men and women, there was almost twice as much reported work-family incompatibility if men and women (a) worked evening/nights compared with days, and (b) worked shifts compared with those not working shifts (Lyonette, 2011: 42).

Distinct country features exist in the practice of non-standard hours (EuroFound, 2007b). The UK stands out for having a particularly high share of establishments reporting at least 20 per cent of staff working unusual working hours, a feature it shares with the US (Enchautegui, 2013: 6), while Portugal, Spain and Greece have particularly low shares of this type of working. The UK has been unusual in the extensive use of 'zero-hours contracts' whereby employees have an employment contract but no fixed hours of work and hours which can be changed at little notice. The potentially exploitative nature of these contracts led to a government undertaking in summer 2013 to consult on how to regulate them. The research also showed a correlation of the incidence of non-standard working with larger enterprises and certain sectors of the economy, with particularly high incidences in the hotels and restaurants and the health and social work sectors.

A high proportion of those working non-standard working hours are from lower occupational classes and lower income groups (Fagan et al., 2011; Enchautegui, 2013). In the US, for example, one in four workers with wages at or below the median worked on a non-standard schedule in 2010–11, compared with 15 per cent of those with wages above the median. Consequently, specific social groups can suffer cumulative disadvantage in this way, notably certain ethnic groups (Asian and Black workers), and single mothers who are more likely to be employed in lower skilled occupations than other groups

of mothers (Enchautegui, 2013; Ruggeri and Bird, 2014).

Outside Europe, many female workers are located in the informal economy where working hours are long and irregular with little or no social protection (Fagan et al., 2011: 15). These jobs may be chosen because they offer more flexibility for childcare (e.g. being closer to home, they enable the child to accompany the mother to work). In Latin America 14 per cent of women's employment is estimated to be as domestic workers, an occupation which can present particular challenges for work-life balance. In some cases – such as where workers are 'live-in' or jobs are located a long way from home – there may be long absences from the family. The challenges are particularly great where women migrate internationally and have to leave families at home for long periods, as seen among domestic workers employed by highly paid professionals in the USA (Gottfried, 2013).

Work-Time Flexibility and Part-Time Work

Burnett et al. (2013: 633) note that: 'Arrays of deliberately flexible working practices have ... been lauded as "key elements within family and employment policy" ... in relation to desires to facilitate improved work-life balance'. Indeed employee-led flexible working arrangements are found to be popular, with the right to work part-time or to reduce working hours being the most prevalent and dominated by women with children for whom these arrangements are considered to aid work-life balance (OECD, 2011). Although there is some evidence that – in the UK at least – when men become fathers there is greater use of flexible working arrangements, in some countries cultural mores and a 'macho' work ethic prevent uptake of measures of this sort (O'Brien, 2012: 19).

Levels of working-time flexibility vary by country, sector (with greater availability in the services) and across larger companies (EuroFound, 2007a; O'Brien, 2012: 19), with evidence of growth in some countries (see

Grimshaw and Rubery, 2010). Within the EU the countries with the highest share of companies offering employee-orientated flexible working-time arrangements are Sweden, Finland, Austria, Germany and Denmark, while those with the lowest availability are Greece and Portugal. However, flexible working arrangements tend to be limited to specific groups of employees only, more commonly those in more senior positions and parents (OECD, 2010: 27).

Part-time work is now a common working arrangement in many parts of the world, although country differences exist in its incidence and duration, reflecting the impact of different economic and labour market conditions as well as institutional frameworks (Fagan et al., 2014: 5). While part-time work may be conceived by employers as an arrangement facilitating work-life balance with benefits for staff satisfaction and retention, it may also be used to respond to organisational needs for flexibility and/or a cheaper and more precarious workforce, each logic corresponding with a greater or lesser degree of organisational working-time flexibility (Chung et al., 2007; EuroFound, 2007c).

The quality of part-time work also varies in terms of its duration (number of hours), pay rate, level of social protection and opportunities for employment progression, resulting in some part-time work being marginalised secondary employment and other part-time work more akin to full-time work (Fagan et al., 2014). A number of studies show that in some countries (e.g. in Chile, Honduras and Mexico) it is frequently involuntary, in a context of low GDP per capita, and associated with high levels of informal employment and related poor working conditions such as low pay and job insecurity (see Fagan et al., 2014: 14–16). In developed nations the degree to which part-time work is considered voluntary varies both across and within nations.

Overall, women with caring responsibilities dominate in part-time work, although a growing proportion of men are now working part-time in some countries (e.g. the UK, Mexico, Canada and Japan), either among the

under 25s (during education or when youth unemployment rates are high) or the over 65s (as retirement is delayed or made more flexible). Very few men work part-time in order to reconcile work and family life during the family formation stage. While part-time work may improve work-life balance for some, and notably for mothers, its use raises well-documented wider issues of gender inequality in relation to job security, earnings and retirement income, occupational mobility and career progression, and the persistence of traditional gender roles.

Childcare, Leave and Care Arrangements

A wide range of measures pertaining to the care of children and dependents can be employed in order to facilitate work-family reconciliation (see ILO, 2011: Table 1). They include social security benefits including maternity, paternity, parental, child or other benefits; care services for dependents, including pre-school, home help and before and after school programmes; and leave policies (maternity, paternity, parental leave, etc.).

Good quality and affordable infrastructure for child and eldercare are seen to be vital for widening women's employment opportunities and preventing them taking up poorly paid part-time work or informal employment for want of quality alternatives (Fagan et al., 2011: 41). However, national frameworks for childcare and associated public spending are very variable across the OECD – highest in the Nordic countries and France and lowest in Canada, Greece and South Korea (OECD, 2011). In developing countries, as we have already seen, access to early education and care is typically much reduced, with strong national variation dependent on a wide range of policy priorities such as labour supply, child well-being, fertility and gender equity (see O'Brien, 2012: 30).

Significant national variation and disparity among and between developing and developed countries is also visible in relation

to parental, paternity and maternity leave (Moss, 2014). In the OECD, 30 countries offer maternity leave with an average 18 weeks of leave, of which 13 are paid at 100 per cent of last earnings (full-time equivalent), although the duration and payment period varies considerably: in the US and Australia, for example the leave is entirely unpaid (OECD, 2011: 22). Parental leave (employment-protected leave for parents outside of maternity and paternity leave) is also available in many countries, with varying degrees of financial support for this period.

A common trend is for growing support from government, regional bodies and employers for working fathers to be more engaged in family care activities through the life course (O'Brien, 2012; United Nations, 2011), with intended benefits for couple work-life balance and gender roles within the couple. Paternity leave is now available in half of the OECD countries (OECD, 2010), although for significantly shorter periods than maternity leave and typically for two weeks or less, and parental leave is designed with a 'father quota' in some systems such as in Iceland, Norway and Sweden to provide a period of leave exclusively for fathers on a 'use it or lose it' basis. However, the lack of systematic financial compensation at replacement levels for leave directed at fathers in many countries is seen as a major impediment to their take-up.

Although there is evidence of significant progress in leave provision in some developed and developing countries (ILO, 2011), many workers in the informal sector do not benefit from any protection and a number of countries have eased regulations to reduce labour costs (O'Brien, 2012).

CONCLUSION

This review of the literature relating to work-life balance has highlighted the growth of interest in work-life balance and the growing policy interventions in this area across

developed and developing nations, within a wider supra-national regulatory framework, although with very significant differences in the range of measures and their outcomes. It has also identified the sometimes contradictory impacts of these interventions for gender equality more widely, notably where work-life balance policies target mothers. However, as O'Brien (2012: 38) points out, access to provisions to support families in coping with dependents and engage in the labour market is mainly in formal and regulated labour markets 'with many workers still experiencing profoundly "family-unfriendly", harsh and dangerous work environments'.

Drawing mainly on research from developed countries, this review has also set out the complex relationship between macro, meso and micro factors in understanding work-life balance. This research highlights the strong importance of country and sector, with a wide range of other factors, including the importance of attitudes towards gender roles and couple dynamics coming into play in determining work-life balance outcomes. EU and OECD data demonstrate the existence of widely divergent family and labour market models, related to conventional welfare regime types and associated with work-life balance and gender equality outcomes. The review also highlights patterns of disadvantage and social division with respect to work-life balance, not only globally in relation to some developing countries but also for those engaged in non-standard working hours or part-time work. Future research might focus on currently under-researched groups (fathers, single parents, those with low income/social capital) in Western nations as well as the growing impact of globalisation on work-life balance in developing economies. There also remains very little comparative research exploring the relationship between macro, meso and micro variables in work-life balance outcomes.

Many of the changes underpinning the rise in interest in work-life balance in recent decades can be expected to continue. This includes the growth in women's participation

in the labour market with the possibility that – through lagged adaptation (Gershuny et al., 1994) – the gender division of labour will shift, leading to a more significant role for men in the home and revised expectations of paid work for men and women. Likewise, the continued blurring of work and non-work boundaries through the ubiquity of new technologies (Gregg, 2011) may ease this type of transition. On the other hand, it may enable greedy organisations to commandeer more unpaid time for commercial purposes. Alongside this, changing organisational practices (high performance management, new organisational structures, flexible work organisation, new service requirements, work intensification) are likely to continue and spread into developing nations, bringing with them challenges to work-life balance practices (Perrons et al., 2007).

In this context, some are seeking radical solutions to work-life balance problems and a revaluing of non-work. This ranges from those seeking a fundamental rebalancing of work and family life, for example through the transition to a 21-hour working week for all (National Economic Foundation, 2011) or the extension of Scandinavian gender symmetrical family/work models. These models, however, accept the core value of paid work in our societies. Perhaps it is time, following Kathi Weeks (2011), to call into question the very role of waged labour and seek to create a society which enables people to make a creative and productive contribution outside the employment relationship?

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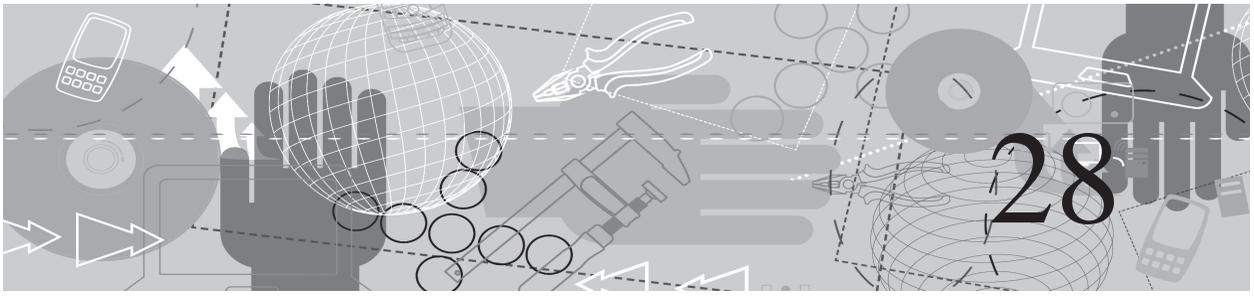
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Working Time

Michael Bittman

HOW DID WORKING TIME BECOME IMPORTANT?

Working time became important only after the distinctive change in the character of labour following the industrial revolution. Before this change the majority of people in Europe worked the land, and a smaller number of people, based in towns and cities, were occupied in crafts, controlled by guilds. Work patterns were organized around the seasons, including religious festivals, or according to task. Farming communities sowed seeds, guarded lambing sheep, harvested by the season, and milked cows daily; tides determined the working rhythm of fishing communities; handicrafts were made by people who owned their own tools; iron-ore furnaces were fed with fuel at the required time. Almost one third of the year was days dedicated to some saint or other (Hill, 1968: 148).

However, following the enclosures of the common lands, the proportion of the population able to make a living by working the land was drastically reduced. What ultimately

emerged was a large class of people with no other means of livelihood than the sale of their ability to labour. Their capacity to labour belonged to the labourers themselves, along with the responsibility for maintaining this capacity. These 'free' labourers sold this capacity in units of time.

The profound set of changes in the nature of work brought about by the industrial revolution is usually discussed in terms of three stages: the putting-out system of cottage industry; manufacturing; and, finally, modern industry.

COTTAGE INDUSTRY – THE PUTTING-OUT SYSTEM

In this stage, workers lived in their cottages and the families still owned their own tools of trade, just as they had in the earlier system of independent handicraft workers. In the production of textiles, for example, they were in a position to control the way they wove their own cloth, and the merchants who

employed them had to secure their cooperation, which was not always forthcoming.

When the framework knitters or makers of silk stocking had a great price for their work, they have been observed seldom to work on Mondays and Tuesday but to spend most of their time at the ale-house or ninepins ... The weavers, 'tis common with them to be drunk on Monday, have their head-ache on Tuesday and their tools out of order on Wednesday. As for the shoemakers, they'll rather be hanged than not remember St. Crispin on Monday ... and it commonly holds as long as they have a penny of money or pennyworth or credit. (John Houghton, 1681, quoted in Thompson, 1967: 72)

MANUFACTURING

There is a popular belief that moving workers from their cottages to centralized workshops (factories) occurred because there was a need to concentrate workers around a source of power that could drive the machinery. However, there were a great many cases when the organizational change to groups working under one roof preceded the technical change to powered machinery. There was already a marked degree of concentration in workshops and factories by the time Arkwright and Hargreaves (the most famous originators of the new machinery) came to Nottingham (Clawson, 1980).

There is evidence that a large proportion of the factory workforce were forced and unfree (as much as one-third of the labour force in the early factories), and most industries, particularly textiles, in large buildings, were associated with prisons, workhouses and orphanages. The most widespread use of unfree labour in the new large-scale industry was the massive employment of pauper apprentices (Pollard, 1965: 192, 194, 203). This suggests that it was not technological innovation that led to the factory system, or at least not initially. Rather, it was the buying and selling of the capacity to labour in units of time that resulted in the need to supervise and direct how employees spent their time on the job by concentrating them all in one place.

Moreover, centralized workshops provided a good opportunity for organizational innovation. A key element in this was the extension of the division of labour. In pre-industrial handicraft production, one person manufactured a complete commodity, using skills developed over many years (Clawson, 1980: 57). A central workshop offers the organizational opportunity for workers to cooperate, each performing only a small part of the whole process. No single person performs the whole operation; everyone does a limited number of processes over and over, each worker repetitively performing one (or a few) of the steps necessary to produce the commodity.

This leads to real improvements in productivity. Having all the workers under one roof means less time is needed to transport the unfinished object from worker to worker, no time is lost changing operations, and each person becomes more expert at their newer, more narrowly defined tasks. Most importantly, because each job embodies little or no skill and attracts a low rate of pay, employers can reduce their wages bill by buying the barest minimum of skills. But this impoverishes the labour of the individual worker, which has become devoid of skill, monotonous and repetitive; most importantly, the worker has lost control over the work process, the mental stimulation of planning how to make an object, and the ability to control the pace and exertion involved in the execution of this work. The control of the temporal rhythm of work has passed from the handicraft worker to management.

'MODERN INDUSTRY' AND AUTOMATION

Once a job is broken down into its constituent parts, it can be done more easily by a machine that reproduces a simple operation. Ultimately, this lays the groundwork for increasing the automation of work. Making the most of workers' labour time was a key

determinant in the mechanization of industry.

This process was not easily accepted. There was an active form of resistance between 1811 and 1817 by the artisans whose skilled labour was being displaced by the machinery. A group known as Luddites, for example, destroyed many newly introduced textile and farming machines – stocking frames, spinning frames, power looms and threshing machines. The movement was supposedly named after Ned Ludd, a youth who allegedly smashed two stocking frames in 1779. The term is still widely used today, usually as a derogatory term to indicate a person opposed to the inevitable progress of new technology. The original movement was such a serious threat to industry, and the general population was so sympathetic (regarding Luddites as folk heroes, much like Robin Hood), that 12,000 British troops were deployed against them. The government subsequently made ‘machine breaking’ a capital crime with the Frame Breaking Act and the Malicious Damage Act in 1812 (Hobsbawm, 1952).

THE REGULATION OF THE WORKING DAY

Competition among the early factories was intense, and the easiest way to increase production was to increase the length of the working day. But this strategy was limited by two factors: firstly, a day only has 24 hours, and fatigue means that the limits to a maximally productive day are well short of that; and, secondly, expanding the working day can easily set off a ‘race to the bottom’ as factories compete with each other in making the working day longer and longer.

The limits to a maximally productive day were discovered when the British government tried to maximize the productivity of munitions factories during World War I. To find out how to do that, they commissioned a survey of munitions workers, this found that the output of a 70-hour workweek differed

little from the output of a 56-hour workweek (Pencavel, 2014). Working that extra 14 hours was a waste.

In the early period of industrialization, working conditions were pretty close to unendurable. A typical working day was 12–14 hours, or longer when demand was high. The British Parliament attempted to regulate working hours through the Factory Acts, at first limiting daily hours to 12 hours for apprentices in 1802, and for young children in the Cotton Mills and Factories Act 1819 (although this was largely unenforced until 1833 when a new Act established a professional Factories Inspectorate). By 1833 children’s labour was capped at 48 hours per week, some participation in schooling was required, and the employment of children under 10 years forbidden. The emphasis was on the distress of children, a reflection of changing social attitudes where children were no longer regarded as small adults able to work in shafts and chimneys too narrow for grown men and women, but seen as innocents enjoying a separate and precious stage of life (Cohen, 2006: 20).

In 1844 this regulation of (paid) working time was extended to women. After 1853 there was, in theory, a 10-hour day for all workers, although this was ineffectively monitored. Despite widespread predictions that the 10-hour day would ruin industry, it did not provoke any crisis. Against this backdrop, the Factory and Workshop Act 1878 consolidated all the previous Acts and applied them to both men and women in all trades. Women’s hours of work were limited to 60 hours per week. Education was compulsory for children up to the age of 10, and their employment was forbidden. Young people 10–14 years of age could only be employed for half days. Other laws imposed standards of safety and ventilation and regulated mealtimes. By the start of World War I, the 10-hour day had spread throughout most of Europe (Messinger et al., 2007: 8).

The demand for an eight-hour workday has a venerable lineage going back to Robert Owen in 1817 when he coined the slogan:

'Eight hours' labour, eight hours' recreation, eight hours' rest'. Australia has a holiday called 'Labour Day' that specifically celebrates the achievement of a working day limited to eight hours. In New South Wales the first legislation was enacted in 1916. The first International Labour Organization (ILO) convention in Washington in 1919 agreed on a maximum eight-hour day and maximum weekly hours of 48 for industrial workers; this was extended to office and commercial workers in 1930. Despite a long list of exemptions, not many nations signed this convention, not even after the ILO became part of the United Nations, whose Universal Declaration of Human Rights recognizes a right to rest and leisure implied in 'reasonable limitation' of working hours (McCann, 2008). Nevertheless, even in the least unionized anglophone nation – the United States of America – it was becoming the typical length of the workday by the second decade of the twentieth century (Whaples, 1990: 394).

The ILO convention urged a 40-hour week in 1935, partly as a measure to reduce unemployment during the Great Depression; but until the middle of the twentieth century, Saturday was for most of the workforce a workday. Nevertheless, many industries in Europe and the United States had introduced a 5-day, 40-hour week by the 1920s, and in 1967 this reality was reaffirmed by the ILO. By the early 1960s, the 40-hour week was an acceptable standard in many jurisdictions, and rising living standards in the advanced economies post-World-War-II favoured the 'Reduction of Hours of Work Recommendation' (ILO convention 116) as 'a social standard to be reached by stages if necessary' (Messenger et al., 2007: 9).

THE DEVELOPMENT OF 'SCIENTIFIC MANAGEMENT'

Despite extensive automation in the textile industry during the nineteenth century, the development of narrow, repetitive, unskilled,

semi-skilled or 'detail' labour in other industries reached its high point only in the early decades of the twentieth century, under a system known as 'scientific management'. Its aim was to determine and implement the most optimal use of time at work, and its core instrument was the stopwatch.

The scientific management system is associated with its most prominent advocate, F.W. Taylor (and is often referred to as 'Taylorism'). Taylor's approach sought to maximize the rationality of the workflow by analysing jobs into discrete units; eliminating waste, including unnecessary repetition; and establishing a standardized best practice which all employees had to meet. As well as the stop watch, he used Eadweard Muybridge's 'freeze-frame' analysis of motion photographs. Muybridge photographed thousands of images that supposedly captured progressive movements imperceptible to the naked eye. His work was regarded as a discovery of the truth of motion. His working proofs, however, show that he freely edited his images to achieve the final results (<http://americanhistory.si.edu/muybridge/>).

Taylor considered that the most profound obstacle to the implementation of 'efficient' workshop practices was the fact that most individuals deliberately worked below their capacity, often in concert with the others. He proposed two methods of overcoming this obstacle: (1) ending the workers' monopoly over their knowledge of how to do the job (especially how long it took complete) and transferring this to the 'planning department'; and (2) introducing individualized payment by output (piece rates).

TIME AND MOTION

Two of Taylor's former associates, Frank and Lillian Gilbreth, publicly broke with him and established what became known as 'time and motion' studies, which were more influential in the UK than Taylor's work. The Gilbreths introduced motion pictures of workers

performing operations, with a chronometer running in the foreground. These early films can be found on the web today.

Later the Gilbreths attached lights to the fingers of workers doing fine manual tasks, in long-exposure photography the motions of hands became a single white line. Later still, they did this with two cameras to produce a 3-D version of the motion, which was occasionally made into a wire model. The Gilbreths claimed to be able to reduce a brick-layer's movements from as many as eighteen to as few as four and one half, often by placing tools and materials nearer the worker's grasp.

By 1915 Frank Gilbreth believed he had discovered the basic alphabet of 18 motions, which he modestly called 'therbligs' (after his own family name almost spelt backwards). Analysing the micro-motions in his films and wire models enabled him to decompose the motions of different parts of the body into therbligs. Each was given a different colour or symbol and plotted on charts showing the time required. Using this system, it was calculated that the process of punching a time clock took 0.1158 of a minute: that is, almost 7 seconds (Braverman, 1974: 223).

It seems the Gilbreths were never able to completely switch-off from their work orientation. They applied the time and motion techniques to the domestic organization of their large family (12 children until one died). This is chronicled in a book by two of the Gilbreths' children published as *Cheaper by the Dozen*, and in a 1950 movie with the same title.

RESISTANCE TO TAYLORISM AND TIME AND MOTION STUDIES

In 1911 the implementation of 'scientific management' principles in one of Taylor's most famous sites – the Watertown Arsenal, Massachusetts – engendered such hatred among the workforce (Aitken, 1985) that the US Congress eventually stopped its use (Kanigel, 2007). In 1923, an attempt to introduce Taylorist methods at the Renault

automobile plant in Billancourt, France, provoked a strike by 4,000 workers.

Gilbreth's progress is also indicative of the resistance to these new 'scientific' methods of management by workers, as well as by supervisors, foremen, managers, and ultimately owners. At company after company, workers refused to have anything to do with his methods, and management agreed with them. If anything, foremen, superintendents and managers were even less cooperative than workers. Perhaps this was only to be expected – the control Gilbreth demanded usurped their prerogatives too, undercutting their sense of job security. Nor were owners generally more accommodating. In 1921 the owners of the Erie Forge Steel Company brought a court action against him to get his contract revoked, even locking him out of the plant, before settling out of court. Of the 17 contracts Gilbreth gained between 1918 and 1924, he managed to complete only five, with another three requiring written recommendations only. Of the six most important contracts, each involving extensive factory transformation, five were cancelled prior to their completion (Price, 1989: 8–9).

Ironically, scientific management had a better reception in the emerging Soviet Union. Both Lenin, who was initially hostile, and Trotsky thought that scientific management successfully harnessed the power of what Marx had called 'the collective worker', when dealing with an untrained, unskilled workforce (such as that found in Russia at the time). It could be the basis of genuine gains in production for the new Soviet economy (Beissinger, 1988). In 1920 the authorized party vision for the transition to 'communism' stated that the Soviet economy would become organized as 'one vast people's workshop' where everything 'would be precisely calculated' (Bukharin and Preobrazhensky, 1969).

FORDISM AND MASS PRODUCTION

The organization of production devised by Henry Ford was similar to that of scientific

management, especially the decomposition of skilled labour into limited tasks performed by relatively unskilled labour. The term 'Fordism', discussed in more detail by Matt Vidal in this volume, describes just such a high volume manufacturing system, designed to produce standardized, low-cost goods. The distinguishing feature of this system is the 'assembly line'. The exemplary product of this process was the Model-T Ford.

Ford did not invent the assembly line but he refined the idea and pushed it to its limits. 'Assembly' is a revealing description of this production process, as it suggests accretion rather than manufacture. Ford used interchangeable, standardized parts which were made by machines and moulds instead of by skilled craft workers, and divided complex tasks into simpler ones in the most original and thorough manner yet seen. He supplied his workers with highly specialized tools designed exactly for their purpose, so that each product was identical to every other product. The workers needed only the skills required for their detailed task, and they did not need much command of the English language, thus permitting the employment of the widely available (and cheap) immigrant labour. The movement of the assembly line set a temporal rhythm for all the workers labouring on it, so that 'the collective worker' took on the appearance of a single entity – part machine, part people, all moving as a synchronized whole.

These methods reduced costs drastically, especially when combined with hitherto unthinkable increases in the volume of production. Indeed, the volume of outputs was so high, involving such a revolutionary increase in scale, that it gave rise to a new expression – 'mass production'. The result was that the Model-T ceased to be a luxury item produced for the wealthy. Moreover, between 1908, when the first Model-Ts were produced, and 1912, when production shifted to a new purpose-built plant, production time dropped by a factor of eight (from 12.5 hours to 93 minutes), while using less labour (Georgano, 1985).

Over the 19 years of its production, the price of the Model-T continued to drop. Shrinking profit margins were more than offset by growing volumes of sales. By 1914 Ford was producing more cars than all other automakers combined. By the time the 10-millionth car was produced, 50 per cent of all cars in the world were Fords.

FORDISM AND MASS CONSUMPTION

Beginning in the 1920s and culminating in the 1970s and 1980s, the term 'Fordism' acquired a specific meaning largely independent of what Henry Ford did. The above discussion focused on the narrowest sense of Fordism, as a labour process – the use of semi-skilled labour around a moving assembly line. However, the term has also been used to refer to a distinctively American style of living based on the idea, not only of mass production, but also of mass consumption.

Through the Fordist system, the price of a once-luxury item was driven down to the point where it could be purchased by the very labourers who produced it. Mass production, when accompanied by a 'living wage', could produce a virtuous circle, described as:

rising productivity based on economies of scale in mass production, rising incomes linked to productivity, increased mass demand due to rising wages, increased profits based on full utilization of capacity, increased investment in improved mass production equipment and techniques, and a further rise in productivity. (Jessop, 1992: 43)

This circle rests on one of Henry Ford's most celebrated, but impermanent, innovations. In 1914 he increased the daily rate of pay from \$2.34 to \$5, double the average wage at the time. The immediate impact of this change was dramatic; absenteeism fell from 10 per cent to less than half a per cent, and labour turnover dropped from the financially ruinous annual level of nearly 400 per cent to less than 15 per cent. This was an important cure

because the assembly line is vulnerable to staffing issues, as a shortage of labour at any one station slows the pace of everyone's work flow. Moreover, the \$5 a day wage had the by-product of giving his workers the means to become customers.

Ford also reduced his employees' 6-day, 48-hour workweek to a 5-day, 40-hour workweek without reducing wages. In an interview in *World's Work* magazine in 1926, he commented, 'Leisure is an indispensable ingredient in a growing consumer market because working people need to have enough free time to find uses for consumer products, including automobiles'. Most remarkably, despite the doubling of wages and the shorter working hours, productivity rose so markedly that production costs fell. Eventually, the 40-hour week became the standard for regular full-time employment, especially in offices.

However, Ford could not afford to pay high wages for long. Gradually inflation eroded the wage advantage enjoyed by his employees, and his competitors undercut the market share of the Model-T. Ford reluctantly had to change his ways, introducing wage cuts and intensifying the labour process through ruthless discipline enforced by company security guards and spies (Clarke, 1992: 19).

Building on the most successful phase of Ford's organization, the French regulation school (Aglietta, 1979; Lipietz, 1982) developed a distinctive usage of the term 'Fordism' to cover the post-World-War-II boom (1945–1970). The minimum features of Fordist regulation were: (a) wages indexed to productivity growth and inflation; (b) Keynesian state-management of demand; and (c) state policies help to generalize mass consumption norms. Fordism is a mode of social regulation, much broader than simply the organization of places of work. It involved a collective bargaining mechanism and it implied a 'mixed economy' where governments took responsibility for full-employment (around 2 per cent unemployment), financed where necessary through deficits.

DECLINE OF FORDISM

'Fordism' marked a watershed in the organization of advanced industrial societies. It was followed by something referred to as 'post-Fordism', which began to emerge at some point in the 1970s (this is the topic of Huw Beynon's chapter in this volume). There were a number of changes that undermined Fordist regulation, both endogenous and exogenous. One of the endogenous influences was that consumer markets had reached saturation levels; another was that mass production had reached its technical limits and there were no large cost savings to be gained by innovations in production. Another change was the globalization of production in search of lower costs. Until the 1970s, underdeveloped parts of world were principally suppliers of minerals and agricultural commodities, but globalization has meant that more production now takes place in these economies. In this 'new international division of labour', labour costs in the Fordist countries are increasingly seen as a drag on economic competitiveness rather than as a contributor to consumption. Consequently, real wages in the Fordist countries began to decline, compounding the problem of stagnating consumer demand, especially as mass consumption lagged behind production in the underdeveloped parts of world: 'the virtuous cycle of Fordism had turned vicious' (Tickell and Peck, 1992: 195). The most obvious symptom of the difficulties faced by the system of Fordist regulation was the combination of high inflation and high unemployment. This was baffling for Keynesian economics, since it was believed that the way out of recession was to stimulate the economy through spending (which would lead to higher inflation), and that rates of unemployment higher than 4 per cent were the cure for rising inflation.

Exogenous shocks to the system included the intrusion of Japanese products into the tight consumer markets of Europe and North America. Then in 1973 there were the 'oil shocks' – a sudden and massive rise in the

price petroleum-producing nations charged for the fuel. Since transport enters into the price of almost everything, this had acute inflationary consequences. Finally, international indebtedness began to proliferate and debtor nations were unable to meet the costs of servicing their loans, throwing the financial system into turmoil (Lipietz, 1989).

POST-FORDISM

Whether it is called ‘post-Fordism’ or ‘neoliberalism’, there was some kind of transition in the 1970s to a new regime epitomized by ‘flexibility’. There was also a switch to monetary policy as the major economic instrument of national governments, along with a celebration of the advantages of markets. Indeed, ‘distorting the market’ is an allegation frequently deployed against anyone proposing to regulate something. In the belief that markets are an inherently superior form of allocating resources, many previously state-owned assets have been ‘privatized’ and markets have been created where before there were none (e.g. in the provision of health services).

The response to the crisis of Fordism in the developed nations was to relocate plants overseas and shed labour at home. This involved closing plants to avoid the so-called rigidity of labour practices that had evolved during the post-war period, and to evade the trade unions that might be sufficiently powerful to prevent restructuring of the existing plants in existing locations. This produced areas of ‘de-industrialization’ in the developed nations, as the regions that had been the pillars of Fordism became ‘rust belts’.

As a result, employment in formerly Fordist countries is clustered in higher-skilled or capital-intensive production. There is also a shift into service-sector employment (Bell, 1973; Kumar, 1978). If the ‘industrial revolution’ was marked by a decline in the rural population engaged in agriculture and a vast growth in manufacturing, the years since

the 1970s have seen a sharp decline in manufacturing employment, resulting in a clear dominance of service-sector employment. In the last quarter of 2014, 73 per cent of the US and UK workforces were employed in the service sector, 71 per cent in Canada and Australia, and 66 per cent in New Zealand, while less than 10 per cent were in manufacturing (author’s own calculations from OECD database). The leading sectors in all countries are now ‘high technology’ industries (including their suppliers and subcontractors), and business, financial and personal services. The high technology industries, characterized by a high level of product differentiation, customization and frequent technological upgrading, concentrate their research, development, design and marketing in the developed world (Silicon Valley, Tokyo and Seoul), while much of the manufacture of the hardware takes place elsewhere. The US Bureau of Labor Statistics’ projections for 2022 show that the greatest job growth will occur in service-sector occupations and the fastest growing health-related occupations, namely, ‘personal care aides’ and ‘home health aides’ (http://www.bls.gov/emp/ep_table_104.htm [accessed 1 May 2015]). This leaves the ‘newly industrialized countries’, with comparatively low consumption despite rapid export-oriented economic growth, to staff the less-skilled, labour-intensive jobs involved in manufacturing and heavy industry, as well as the routine clerical and service functions that can be ‘outsourced’ using modern telecommunications.

Importantly for the study of trends in working time, there has been a significant fall in the proportion of trade union members in the workforce. This has enabled firms to adopt three kinds of ‘flexible’ labour practices: negotiation with individual employees rather than traditional collectivist pay bargaining; deploying labour in a range of activities rather than encouraging specialization and strong job demarcation; and using marginally attached forms of labour – short, time-limited appointments, and part-time employees (typically women who juggle

employment and family responsibilities) without any definite job tenure, whose hours can be constantly adjusted – so-called zero-hours contracts. Firms also use ‘on-call’ labour with no predictable regularity of hours of work. This allows employers to hire and fire staff as the firm’s order book requires, and has further weakened the power of organized labour to resist. These contingent jobs are often staffed by socially disadvantaged groups (e.g. blacks, immigrants and women), and result in an increasingly segmented labour force. Alternatively, firms use sub-contracting arrangements, avoiding any employer-employee obstacles altogether.

DASHED HOPES OF A LEISURE SOCIETY?

Between the late 1950s and the middle of the 1970s, following successive reductions in working hours post-World-War-II, sociologists were describing a process called the ‘leisure revolution’, which would result in a ‘leisure society’ where leisure-time pursuits displaced paid work as the core of personal identity (Veal, 2009: 25–56). Drawing on Weber’s (1930) idea that secular occupations had acquired the status of a religious ‘calling’, there were calls to abandon the Protestant ethic that ‘work is morally good, unemployment is bad and being unwilling to work is sinful’ (Strom, 1975: 496). The coming of automation was seen to herald the arrival of an abundance of leisure and a concomitant need to revise commonly accepted notions of work.

The publication of Juliet Schor’s *The Overworked American* in 1991 cast some doubt on these claims. The book’s subtitle, ‘The Unexpected Decline of Leisure’, drew attention to a reversal of what the public had been taught to expect. Economic progress, they had been told, should mean increasing freedom from drudgery. The suggestion that, on the contrary, ‘economic progress’ had resulted in reduced leisure caused ripples of alarm.

Schor (1991) gave voice to an issue that had been bothering people, especially women in dual-income households (now the numerically dominant form) – whether economic progress and the advancement of women had led to the perverse result of more work and less leisure. Instead of increasing prosperity and freedom from laborious tasks, people’s lives had become more constrained and pressured than ever. For women born during the ‘baby-boom’, comparing their lives to the lives of their ‘stay-at-home’ mothers at the peak of the mid-twentieth-century valorization of ‘domesticity’, this seemed like a palpable loss.

TRENDS IN SELF-RATED TIME PRESSURE

Perhaps the strongest indication of decreasing leisure is the increasing proportion of the population reporting feeling pressed for time. Since 1965, the US time use researchers John P. Robinson and his collaborators have been asking respondents: ‘Would you say you always feel rushed, even to do the things you have to do, only sometimes feel rushed, or almost never feel rushed?’ The proportion of workforce-age adults who report the most extreme level (‘always feeling rushed or pressed for time’) rose from 24 per cent in 1965 to a peak of 38 per cent in 1992, declining slightly in 1995 (Robinson and Godbey, 1997: 231). Statistics Canada has reported a similar pattern (www.cbc.ca/news/canada/more-canadians-pressed-for-time-1.912509 [accessed 14 April 2015]; Zuzanek, 2005: 48). Australia has a less consistent time series, but the proportion reporting low time pressure indicates that it follows the pattern of other anglophone countries (Bittman and Rice, 2002). The question about being pressed for time has been asked regularly as part of the Harmonised European Time Use Survey, and comparable countries in Europe also conform to this broad pattern (Garhammer, 2002). So there seems little doubt that people

perceived they were living through a ‘time squeeze’ between the 1980s and the 1990s.

TRENDS IN HOURS OF LEISURE AND PAID WORK IN THE LAST DECADES OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

Yet there are studies that contradict Schor’s ‘overwork’ thesis. There are two separate lines of contestation: (1) trends in leisure time; and (2) trends in hours of paid labour.

Although Schor’s claims confirmed many people’s perceptions, they also provoked a reaction from specialists in leisure. Among specialists studying how people use their time, the term ‘free time’ is defined as the time remaining after deducting the time spent in market and non-market work and in meeting physiological needs (sleeping, eating, attending to personal hygiene and grooming). It represents the time available for leisure activities. Using data from time-diaries – the most direct and reliable method of measuring free time – Robinson and Godbey have produced evidence contradicting claims that the quantity of free time available to people in the United States declined between 1965 and 1985 (1997: 131–133). Indeed, they found that free time has increased over the last three decades, a finding that has been replicated in 36 surveys across 19 separate countries, including Australia (Bittman, 1998; Gershuny, 1992, 2000).

It is difficult to escape the conclusion that, in aggregate, the time available for leisure is indeed increasing. This makes the perception of inescapably mounting time pressure somewhat bewildering. Robinson and Godbey (1997), following Linder (1970), have suggested that the perception of time famine is an illusion based on the growth of choices about what to do with free time.

Unfortunately, there is a good deal of talking past each other in this debate. According to neo-classical economic theory, the day is composed of only two parts: (a) market work; and (b) the remainder, which is described as

‘leisure’. The leisure specialists’ notion of ‘free time’, as we have seen, divides what the economists treat as a remainder into three parts: (i) non-market work (chiefly housework and childcare); (ii) meeting physiological needs; and (iii) free time. Schor tacitly relies on the economists’ definition of leisure, and barely cites any direct measures of anything other than paid work. I shall return to the question of the origins of perceived time ‘famine’ after examining Schor’s other claim: that over recent decades (paid) working hours have increased.

Those relying on employers’ estimates argue that the average workweek is shorter now than it was in 1947 (Bluestone and Rose, 1997). Most estimates based on official labour-force surveys find that, while the average workweek barely changed over the last few decades of the twentieth century, the dispersion increased markedly (ABS, 1999; Bluestone and Rose, 1997; Campbell, 2002a; Jacobs and Gerson, 1998). There were increases in the proportion of those working long hours (more than 45 hours per week), but also in the proportion of those working part-time. Using the average hides this important change in the distribution. Figures 28.1 and 28.2 illustrate the changes over the decade from the mid-1980s in the proportions falling at these extremes, separately for men and women.

With the exception of Japan, Germany, Portugal and Austria, the proportion of males working more than 45 hours per week grew in the countries shown. The reductions in long hours in Portugal and Japan are due to legislation limiting working hours. Both countries had long hours of employment. The Japanese have even given us a word – *karoshi* – for death from overwork.

During the 11 years between 1984 and 1995, in most of the English-speaking countries (and Japan), about a third of the male workforce worked very long hours. Since that time, the proportion working long hours has plateaued, especially since the employment upheavals associated with the global financial crisis (beginning 2007/08). While

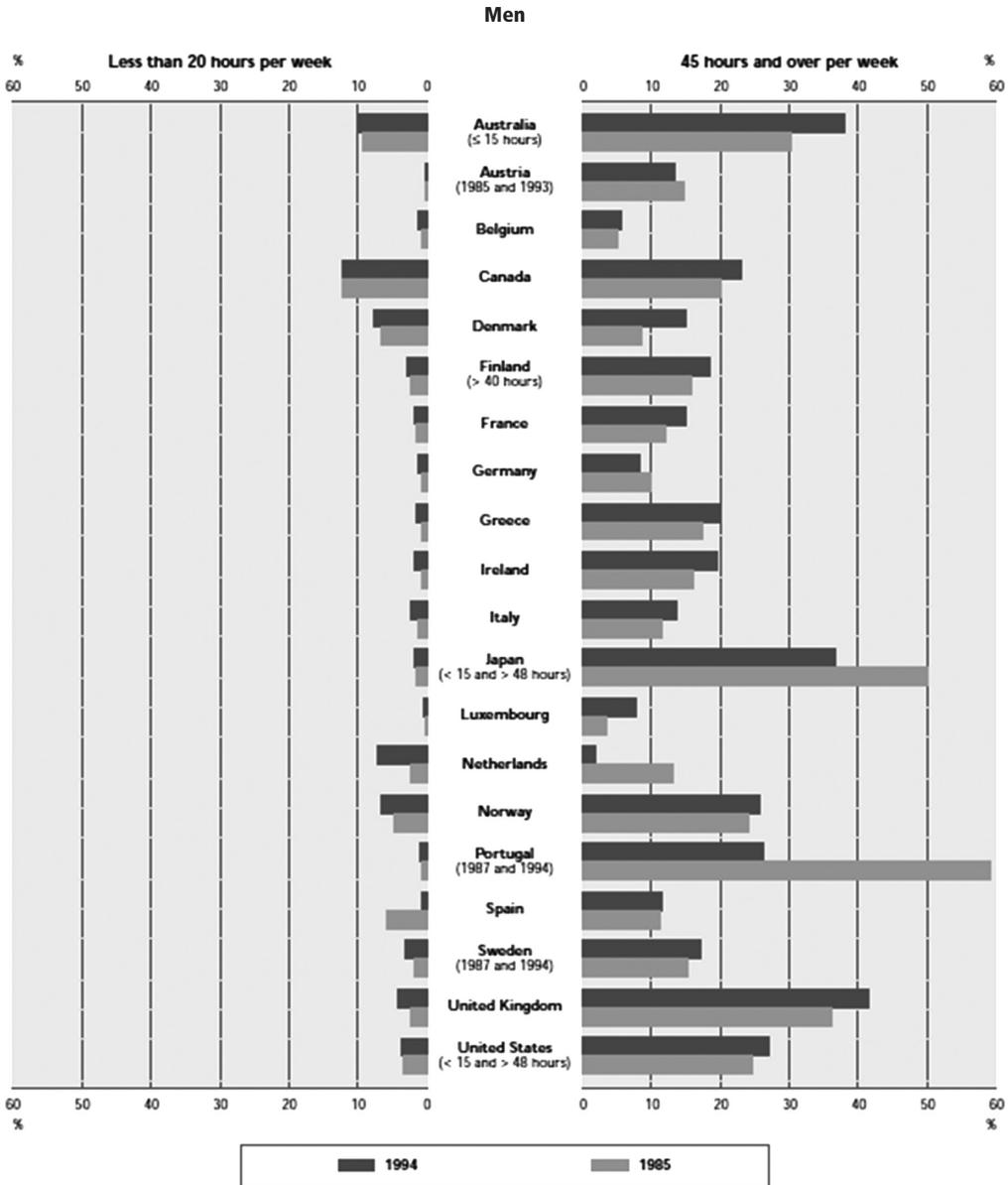


Figure 28.1 Proportion of male workers working short and long usual hours, 1994 and 1985

the proportion of women working long weekly hours also increased, overall fewer than one in eight worked more than 45 hours in this period; and a much higher proportion of women than men were at the opposite extreme, working less than 20 hours per

week. Women specialize in part-time employment to reconcile work and family, particularly in countries with a strong assignment of domestic roles by gender, weak working-time regulation and large gender gaps in pay rates (Fagan, 1996; Rubery et al., 1998).

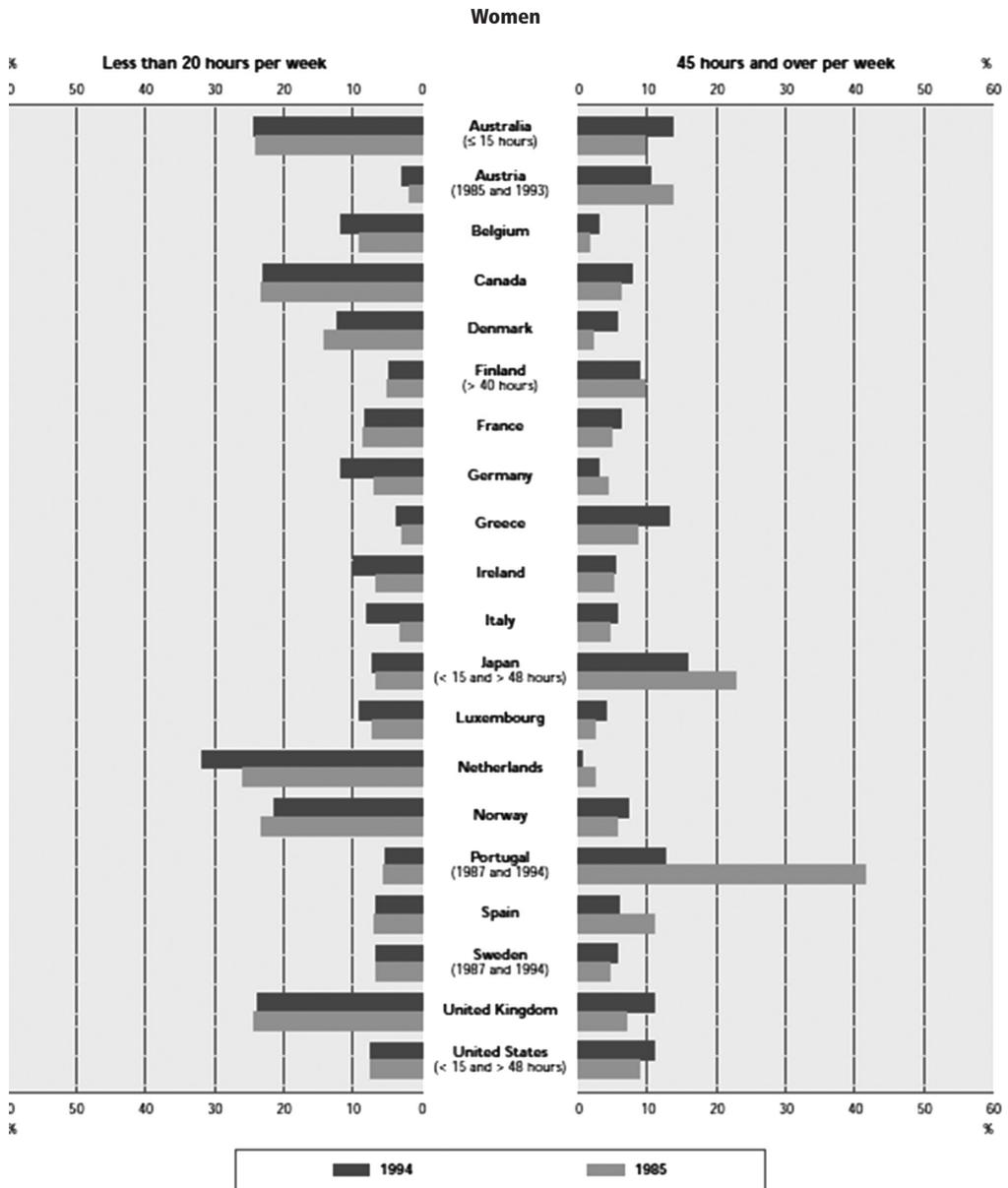


Figure 28.2 Proportion of female workers working short and long usual hours, 1994 and 1985

Source: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Employment Outlook 1998.

Peattie and Rein (1983) claim that the mass entry of women, especially married women, into the labour market is ‘the greatest social change since World War II’. Between 1940 and 1998, the labour force participation of

married women in the United States rose from 13.4 per cent to 72.6 per cent, while in Great Britain between 1931 and 1998 it grew from 10 per cent to 74.9 per cent. In Australia their participation rate increased from 6.4 per

cent in 1947 to 63 per cent in 1998 (ABS, 1998: 112; Eccles, 1982: 316). By 2001 the labour force participation of women in all developed countries hovered around 70 per cent, while men's participation rate hovered around 80 per cent (Johnston, 2005). Female participation has accompanied a less pronounced decline in male participation. In aggregate terms, there has been a significant transfer of hours of market work from men to women.

While in aggregate terms there has been a transfer of per capita hours of market work from men to women, there is not strong evidence of a reciprocal process of the transfer in *per capita* hours of non-market work to men. Arlie Hochschild, in the *Second Shift* (1989), complains of a 'stalled revolution' and asserts that men's failure to change obliges women to work a 'second shift'. However, a thorough investigation of the data shows that the 'second shift' is not a quantitative doubling of total work hours but reflects the fact that women somehow retain responsibility for managing most of the unpaid domestic work. Although the gap between men's and women's average time spent in unpaid work has decreased, this has come about because of an unexpectedly sharp reduction in women's hours of unpaid work rather than any large change in men's hours (Bittman, 1999: 30). This process makes it difficult for women to balance employment and non-employment responsibilities, sometimes called achieving 'work-life balance' (the subject matter of Abigail Gregory's chapter in this volume).

A concurrent trend, which complicates the process of achieving work-life balance further, is the growing amount of time both parents devote to being with their children. However, despite signs of emerging father involvement in parenting, most parenting is 'women's work' (Craig, 2006). It is important to avoid assuming that maternal employment means that children have less time with their parents. Contrary to this conventional wisdom, maternal employment has barely reduced mothers' involvement in parenting. Thirty hours per week of non-parental care

reduces mothers' time in the physical care of children by less than one hour per week (Bittman et al., 2004). Moreover, mothers protect their time with children in all the other activities apart from physical care, especially the developmentally important 'interactive time' (Bianchi, 2000; Bittman et al., 2004).

Parents now spend longer with each individual child than they ever have in the 90 years this has been measured (Bryant and Zick, 1996a, 1996b; Sayer et al., 2004; Vanek, 1974). In the twenty-first century, in contrast to earlier centuries, the emphasis is on having a relationship with one's child; this suggests that non-parental care is a device used to reschedule childcare to suit employers; it is not a substitute for parents' own time (Bittman et al., 2004). Lyn Craig (2007) has demonstrated how mothers go to great lengths to make time for their children, even when they have substantial work responsibilities, by rescheduling childcare activities from weekdays to weekends, or to earlier or later in the day, and squeezing the time devoted to personal care, child-free leisure and housework. It seems that in the twenty-first century parental 'love is spelled T-I-M-E' (quoted in Sayer et al., 2004: 10).

Jacobs and Gerson propose an ingenious solution to the riddle of the increase in perceived time pressure and an apparently unchanged length of the average work week (1998, 2001). Following on from Bluestone and Rose (1997), they suggest that what has been fuelling the sense of increasing time pressure is the spread of the dual-earner household. Households are now likely to be supplying more labour to the market than in the days when only the male provider specialized in market work. The sense of increased time pressure, they speculate, may reflect the dual-earner household's need to manage a greater load of work, both paid and *unpaid*, than the specialized division of labour practised by their parents.

Jacobs and Gerson's explanation makes sense of all the information. Shifting to the household level in studying labour supply explains the lack of change in the average

work week by exposing the wider dispersion of work hours – longer hours are offset by the growth of women’s part-time employment. It also draws attention to the fact that households manage the work-life balance. Jane Lewis (2001) distinguishes dual-earner households according to husbands’ and wives’ hours of employment, and whether the source of child care is private (families), the state, the market, or some mixture of these. English-speaking countries vary significantly in this regard. In North America, couples are likely to be dual-career families who rely on private care in the US but have relatively greater state support in Canada. The United Kingdom, Australia and New Zealand have more state involvement than the US, but they also have a high proportion of households Lewis would describe as ‘one-and-a-half earner’ families. A version of Lewis’ typology is adopted by Gornick and Myers (2003) in their highly influential book *Families that Work*, which outlines the policies that best promote work-life balance (i.e. a dual earner, dual carer society).

Population projections for the coming three to five decades add an extra edge to the problem of reconciling work and family. This involves ‘structural aging’, the outcome of increased life expectancy and lower birth rates. What makes planners anxious about this situation is that the ever larger group of people retired from the workforce will expect to consume the goods and services produced by an ever-dwindling proportion of the population of workforce age. One solution to this unbalanced ‘dependency ratio’ is a more thorough mobilization of women’s working hours. However, if dependency ratios are to be improved, this increase in female labour-force participation cannot come at the expense of lowered fertility.

NON-STANDARD HOURS OF EMPLOYMENT

‘Non-standard hours’ refers to the time of day and the day of the week when employment

takes place. To some extent this overlaps with ‘overwork’, since extra hours of work occur at non-standard hours. The issue of scheduling work-time acquires more urgency in an economy where most employers are firms offering services. The growth of employment in retail, hospitality, security and health care has meant a higher proportion of employment that has spread beyond the usual working hours. Since many workers in these occupations work part-time and are employed under ‘casual’ (i.e. less secure) terms of employment, issues of non-standard hours overlap with precarious employment as well.

The US demographer, Harriet Presser, who wrote the most influential work on the growing trend towards a ‘24-hour economy’ (1999, 2003), defined ‘standard’ work hours as ‘35 to 40 hours a week, Monday through Friday, on a fixed daytime schedule’. She estimated that, in 1999, ‘only 29.1% of employed U.S. citizens worked a standard work week’, and ‘two-fifths of all employed Americans work mostly during the evenings or nights, on rotating shifts, or on weekends’ (Presser, 1999: 1778). Among a sub-sample of employed persons, one in five worked ‘other than on a fixed daytime schedule’, and one in three worked on weekends (most of whom also worked on weekdays). Rates of evening employment were similar for men and women, ‘but a somewhat higher proportion of men than women work fixed nights, rotating and variable hours, and weekends’ (Presser, 1999: 1778). These high-growth occupations were composed disproportionately of women and blacks, leading Presser to believe that ‘non-standard work schedules are disproportionately concentrated in jobs low in the occupational hierarchy’ (Presser, 1999: 1778). The precarious nature of contemporary employment at non-standard hours was also striking, with the most marked differences between those working full-time and those working part-time.

Presser also found that the social impact of non-standard hours could be seen more clearly in the labour supply of households

(rather than of individuals). Among dual-earner couples, 'the prevalence of non-standard work schedules is especially high'. Where there are children under 14 years, 'those with both spouses working fixed daytime schedules and weekdays are a minority; 57.3% do not fit this description' (Presser, 1999: 1779).

The shift away from 'standard' hours work is not confined to the US. Colette Fagan found that 'a diversification and de-standardization of working time schedules' was 'the general trend across Europe' (2001: 1202). Fagan used data from a 1989 Equal Opportunities Commission dataset, which characterized 'unsocial hours' as scoring at least two of the following: (1) started work before 8:00am four times in a four-week period; (2) worked after 6:00pm at least four times in a four-week period; and (3) worked rotating shifts. She found that 33 per cent of men and 14 per cent of women in the UK had unsocial hours. Rates were higher among manual workers. Like Presser, Fagan found that analysing the labour supply of households amplified the rate of people affected by working unsocial hours (Fagan, 2001: 1204–1207).

Using 2005 data from 12 European countries, Presser, Gornick and Parashar found that 'a substantial amount of work is being performed at non-standard hours': '15 per cent or more of all employees aged 25 to 64 years *usually* work' outside daytime hours, and in five countries the rate is as high as 25 per cent. They also found that the prevalence of weekend work is 'also substantial': 10 per cent or more of all employees *usually* worked weekends in all 12 countries, and in 7 of these 12 countries the rate was 20–33 per cent (Presser et al., 2008: 99).

NON-STANDARD HOURS AND LOST OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOCIAL COORDINATION

The decline of standard hours matters because paid employment is time that belongs

to the employer, and the scheduling of this work affects opportunities for other social relations. These are important in themselves, but the market economy itself is unable to reproduce without inputs from the daily and generational reproduction that happens elsewhere. For this, advanced industrial societies rely on non-market institutions – family households, voluntary associations and communities. There is widely collected data that allows us to study how the scheduling of employment affects these institutions, but it is not found in the places where analysts expect to find statistics about employment. The relevant information is found in Time Use Surveys, which ask questions of all adults in the household about their weekly scheduling of employment (Bittman, 2005; Bryant and Zick, 1996a, 1996b; Craig and Brown, 2014; Lesnard, 2008).

Respondents keep a diary recording all activities in a 24-hour period, noting the start and finishing times, accompanying activities, and some of the context of the activity, like location and persons present. These surveys can be used to provide a precise description of the coordination of employment schedules within households, even showing how the ability to resist de-synchronization of couples' work schedules increases the higher up the social ladder they are (Lesnard, 2008). Moreover, since there are only 24 hours in a day and increased time spent in one activity reduces the time available for other activities, these surveys can show what activities are displaced when employment is undertaken at non-standard times, for example rest, housework, recreation, less time spent with spouses, children, family of origin, friends and neighbours, as well as in community activities (Bittman, 2005; Craig and Brown, 2014). These 'losses' are not trivial. Reconciling work and family has become a critical issue, not only for ending gender discrimination, but also for securing the future labour supply. Furthermore, as Robert Putnam has pointed out, participation in civic associations may ultimately be correlated with sustainable democracy (Putnam et al., 1993).

JOB TENURE AND JOB SECURITY

The whole span of a working life is the broadest aspect of working time; it necessarily raises the issues of job tenure and job security.

The international convention for calculating the ratio of the national workforce to the whole population uses 15–64 years as the workforce population. This convention dates from early in the twentieth century and is now antiquated. Labour force entry well after the age of 15 years is now typical, early retirement is the norm, and many analysts do their calculations using an age-span of 24–54 years, i.e. ‘prime-aged’ workers. This tacitly acknowledges that many employees retire ‘early’, are made redundant, are medically unfit for work, or are unable to find work, well before they reach the age of 65. Moreover, many governments have extended the formal age of retirement beyond 65.

After the Great Depression, parents had hoped their children would have ‘steady’ jobs and a life-time career perhaps guaranteed by a single employer. The contemporary collapse of this belief is captured by the renowned sociologist Richard Sennett: ‘the institutions which enabled this life narrative thinking have now “melted into air” ... The end of life-time employment is one such, as is the waning of careers spent in a single institution’ (2006: 24–25). Economist Chuck Piore has estimated US workers’ job stability by analysing data on 10,000 individuals who were 14–22 years old in 1979. He found that they had held 10.8 jobs on average before reaching the age of 42 (quoted in <http://www.social-hire.com/career-interview-advice/2722/the-job-of-a-lifetime-no-longer-lasts-a-lifetime> [accessed 1 May 2015]).

Guy Standing (2011) has argued that the lack of predictable employment, and the uncertainty of current employment, has given rise to a new class he calls the ‘precariat’, a product of the global ‘liberalization’ of labour in the post-Fordist phase:

[The precariat] consists of a multitude of insecure people, living bits-and-pieces lives, in and out of

short-term jobs, without a narrative of occupational development, including millions of frustrated educated youth who do not like what they see before them, millions of women abused in oppressive labour, growing numbers of criminalised tagged for life, millions being categorised as ‘disabled’ and migrants in their hundreds of millions around the world. (2011: 1)

Standing also notes the growth of unremunerated ‘work-for-labour’ activities, internships, jobseeker diaries, etc., that this group is obliged to perform. The contrast group, which Standing calls the ‘salarariat’ (salaried workers), is a privileged elite. But while it may be true that the salariat have more secure employment, many of their conditions increasingly take the form of subcontracts. Under this system of organization, employees complete a task by a fixed deadline. This may explain the high level of ‘unpaid overtime’ reported in surveys (Aronsson, 1999; Bell et al., 2000; Campbell, 2002b).

Standing has brought to public attention the issue of uncertain tenure and thwarted career prospects associated with transitions into and out of the workforce. The ‘motherhood penalty’ has been recognized as a problem for women, but other career disruptions, such as those resulting from professions made obsolete by rapid technological change, and especially the consequences for youth, have not yet been recognized, let alone adequately addressed.

HEALTH

Long hours of work, work at unsociable hours and precarious employment are all interconnected as elements of the new flexible organization of post-Fordist labour. These conditions coincide with the contemporary predominance of employment in service-sector occupations. These ‘flexible’ working conditions, as with innovations in previous periods, are aimed at increasing productivity. However, much of the output of ‘service’ is

notoriously difficult to measure; and there are signs that there are limits to the process of expanding the 'flexibility' of labour. Just as happened in the case of factories, the first warnings of unsustainable practices have come in the form of an association of work with poorer health.

In the early twentieth century, the greatest threats to health came from communicable diseases. In this century the greatest threats in advanced societies come from non-communicable diseases related to lifestyle behaviours and social environments (e.g. obesity, diabetes, cardiovascular disease, mental illness). There is also a greater recognition that 'impairment'/'disability' is not purely a medical condition but also a social construct (Bellaby, 1999: 1–2, 29–47). The UK 'Whitehall studies' demonstrated an association between job-based social class and mortality from a wide range of diseases. The series began as a study of British civil servants in the 1960s, and revealed a higher mortality rate among those in lower grade jobs than among those in higher grade jobs. Twenty years later 'Whitehall II' commenced as a longitudinal, prospective cohort study of 10,308 women and men, all of whom were employed in the London offices of the British Civil Service at the time respondents were recruited (1985) (Bellaby, 1999: 177–179). This study concluded that 'more attention should be paid to the social environments, job design, and the consequences of income inequality' (Marmot et al., 1991: 1387).

There is also research showing that working at night and getting too little sleep can have a number of adverse effects on safety, health and productivity. Fatigue is the most common cause of road accidents, and night work, prolonged hours, long periods of wakefulness and inadequate sleep are major causes of fatigue, because they alter the body's circadian rhythms. Among their recommended solutions, eminent researchers recommended 'improved scheduling of work hours' (Åkerstedt et al., 2000).

OTHER INDIVIDUAL COSTS

The workplace, especially the contemporary workplace, is a psychosocial environment. Two concepts of the hazards of workplaces as psychosocial environments are 'job strain' (Karasek, 1979) and 'effort-reward imbalance' (Siegrist, 1996). The job strain theory uses the metaphor of a seesaw, where hazardous stressors are counterbalanced by 'protective factors'. The stressors are job demands and the protective factors involve 'decision latitude', i.e. having the autonomy to exercise control over work and use one's skills. 'High-strain jobs' are those where demands are high and decision latitude is low, so that workers lack the resources to succeed. These are high-risk occupations likely to result in fatigue, anxiety, depression and physical illness. A modified version of the job strain theory recognized the significance of support received from supervisors and co-workers. This support buffered the effects of high demands and low control (Karasek and Theorell, 1990).

The effort-reward imbalance theory argues that jobs offer opportunities to gain self-esteem, a sense of efficacy and social integration. Hence, workers who invest effort expect rewards in return. If the job-holder who puts in high effort at work receives little reward in return in salary, promotion or esteem, the worker is likely to feel they are demeaned and powerless at work, and will not identify with workmates or the firm. This effort-reward imbalance has been shown to be a powerful risk factor for ill-health (Siegrist, 1996).

Research has repeatedly found a link between job strain, effort-reward imbalance and poorer health outcomes (Stansfeld and Candy, 2006). Moreover, there are now studies showing that long hours, non-standard schedules and job insecurity are all predictive of poorer mental health outcomes (Strazdins et al., 2004b). The psychosocial effects of the job environment may be expressed individually (via the bodies and behaviour of

particular employees) but their origins may lie in socially determined, asymmetrical employment relations (Bellaby, 1999: 1–2, 139–220).

SOCIAL COSTS

The social consequences of ‘flexible’ employment have received little attention in the health literature, although working long hours and non-standard schedules may be significantly altering the structure and stability of family life. Lyndall Strazdins and her co-researchers have found that parents who worked non-standard schedules ‘reported worse family functioning, more depressive symptoms, and less effective parenting’ (Strazdins et al., 2006: 394; 2004a; 2007). Parents transmit some of their own difficulties in coping with poor quality jobs to their children, who exhibit more emotional and behavioural difficulties than the children of parents with good quality jobs (Strazdins et al., 2010). The lack of coordination between family employment schedules and the institutions that enable employment, such as non-parental child care and after-school care, may result in children with poorer developmental outcomes, as well as a depressed labour supply and low fertility.

CONCLUSION

As we have seen, the development of a labour market where working time is traded for money has been the engine driving a revolutionary reorganization of the workplace and, ultimately, society. In today’s advanced economies employment clusters in service-sector occupations, where productivity is difficult to measure because outputs are often unclear, the effort to increase productivity may be moving us towards extending work, intensifying work, or both, rather than towards a world of increased leisure. When combined with social policies that

simultaneously promote ‘activation’ of the workforce-aged population and increasing the ‘flexibility’ of labour, these developments raise the issue of limits. The indications are that further activating women’s labour supply will depend on the social policy settings that encourage high female participation together with either (a) higher rates of fertility (McDonald, 2000) or (b) currently politically unacceptable levels of migration, making this an urgent topic for future research. Future research is also likely to focus on the nexus between the low quality of jobs (insecure jobs, long hours of work, unsociable hours, poor work-life balance, under-utilization of skills and inadequate job control-support), productivity and health. Present research suggests that creating more contingent forms of employment, extending hours and intensifying the pace of work through ICTs is associated with higher probability of ill health. Awareness of the health effects of job quality brings into question the key pillar of income protection ‘that any job is better than no job at all’ (Butterworth et al., 2011) and mandates a thorough investigation of the links between job characteristics, productivity and health costs.

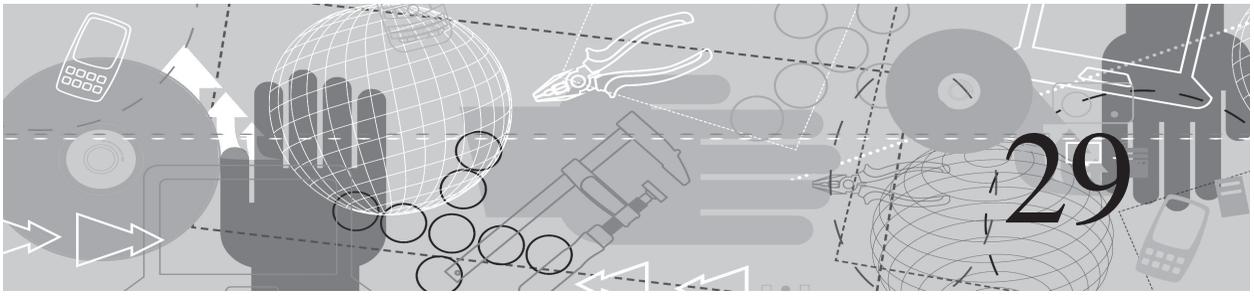
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Work and Social Policy

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INTRODUCTION

Industrialization and the rise of capitalism in the last quarter of the nineteenth century in the Western world are seen as indicators of the Great Transformation described by Polanyi (1957 [1944]). Fundamental changes included the commodification of labour and the end to traditional forms of welfare provision offered by feudal ties, guilds, etc. At the same time, increasing pauperization gave rise to the ‘social question’ in European countries and the US and created demands for the provision of welfare by the state. Overall, the emergence of collective organizations within the labour movement became important drivers of welfare state consolidation and the introduction of social policies in order to create rights to decommodification. The first social policy measures and transfers covered fundamental social risks associated with the generalization of wage work, namely sickness, accident, old age and infirmity. Much later, the

risk of unemployment was tackled. In line with the gradual generalization of the emerging institutions and the introduction of state imposed mandatory membership in systems of social protection, such as social insurance systems, or state provision of social security, such as a national health care system, social policy developed a kind of double-faced character that included a regulating and a limiting as well as a safeguarding function with respect to the commodification of labour. This process also gave rise to the creation of various categories of non-workers (Lenhardt and Offe, 1977), including gender selective patterns of commodification. Due to cultural norms overall, married women were supposed to comply with reproductive functions within the family in order to enable the full disposability of male workers on the labour market (Knijn and Ostner, 2002). Although these institutions developed fully only after the end of World War II, already the process of institutionalization mirrors the basic tension

between commodification and decommodification, including a gendered division of work due to care needs unmet by capitalist production.

Irrespective of these basic structures, both the timing of welfare state consolidation and the institutional frameworks vary across countries, and were inspired by different ideas and principles of social protection often named alongside pioneering policymakers such as Bismarck or Beveridge (Castles et al., 2010). To grasp these differences social sciences have developed various typologies of welfare states (Esping-Andersen, 1996), but also of production regimes (Soskice, 1999). Feminist theory broadened these class-based and production-oriented frameworks by addressing the gendered character and institutional foundation of the division of paid and unpaid work, identifying gender regimes with varying concepts such as the 'male breadwinner', 'gender order' or 'gender arrangement' (Daly and Rake, 2003; Lewis, 1993; O'Connor et al., 1999; Pfau-Effinger, 1999). Scholarly attempts to explain different types of welfare, employment and gender regimes as well as their development over time refer to differences in national political contexts, social cleavage patterns, distinctive national political cultures, actor-constellations and socio-economic problem pressures (Castles et al., 2010). While research frameworks and theory on work and social policy for a long time have focused on Western welfare capitalism in advanced economies, more recently theoretical and empirical interest has been extended to the dynamics of post-socialist countries in Eastern Europe, and developing and fast growing economies in the Global South (Haggard and Kaufman, 2008).

The research on work and social policy therefore is to be seen as a vibrant and expanding multi-disciplinary field, including economic, sociological and political science analysis as well as gender studies analysing changes in work and welfare on a national, supra-national and global scale. The

respective scholarly research does not only address the interrelation between work and social policy, but also tries to explain variations between different countries, or cluster of nations, as well as changes over time. Relevant theoretical streams include: functionalism, institutionalism, power-resource and conflict theory, but also discourse analysis and alignments to normative or cultural approaches. Rising inequality in the course of globalization and neoliberalism points out the political relevance of this field and explains a growing interest of political actors and organizations, both on national and international levels, to identify 'best practice' policy scripts.

The chapter is structured as follows. The next section maps central features of the relation between work and social policy during the 'golden era' of Western welfare state development, characterized by economic prosperity resulting from high productivity increases in the Fordist production regime. The heterogeneity of both welfare states and capitalist market economies and the creation of different gender models in this era are outlined for the Western world. Pointing to economic and socio-structural, but also political developments, we then indicate the change towards a post-Fordist production regime and the emergence of a new welfare paradigm, named the Activation or Social Investment State. Furthermore, we identify variation in activation policies and employment regimes and refer to the outcome of rising inequalities. Subsequently, we address significant features of the development of capitalism and social policy in other world regions, namely reform trajectories and pressure caused by problems in the transition countries of Eastern Europe and the dynamics of work migration from the Global South to the Global North. Finally, in light of the global division of labour, the establishment of transnational labour markets and the increase of informal work, the need for guaranteeing basic social rights and enhanced regulation of work and employment is emphasized.

FORDISM AND THE 'GOLDEN AGE' OF WELFARE STATE DEVELOPMENT – VARIETIES OF WELFARE AND PRODUCTION REGIMES

While the origin of modern welfare states can be dated back to the nineteenth century, the extension of social rights to all citizens followed the expansion of political rights (Marshall, 1963 [1949]). A generalization of social rights to transfers and services only occurred in the post-war era – often called the 'golden age of welfare state development'. Ideas and standards that characterize the respective policy goals are often summarized by the term: Keynesian welfare state (Jessop, 1994). Financial resources underwriting the expansion of social policies were generated through the productivity gains resulting from the Fordist production regime dominated by industrial mass production. The role of the state was assumed to guarantee economic growth and full-employment through Keynesian demand management at the macro-level. The development of social policy aimed at the expansion of decommodification for the male worker and breadwinner, namely the achievement of individual independence from market income. This included high acceptance of redistribution of income through the tax and social security system (Bonoli, 2007b; Esping-Andersen, 1990). Against the background of full-employment and institutionalized collective bargaining in most Western economies, trade union organizations became powerful actors that were able to translate technological advancement and growing productivity rates into wage increases, allowing the working class to participate in mass consumption and growing prosperity. This welfare model relied on family structures dominated by the male breadwinner and female housewife model (Lewis, 1993). During the 1960s emerging labour shortages were covered predominantly through migrant workers in some countries, while others already started to expand social services and integrate (married) women into the labour

market – giving rise to differences in gender employment patterns across countries. The end of this period of massive welfare state expansion is marked by the first oil crisis in 1973, which gave way to the era of retrenchment (Nullmeier and Kaufmann, 2010).

In theoretical terms welfare state development was first explained in functionalist theories. For example, Wagner's law of a growing public sphere predicted that economic and societal changes would generate increasing levels of state intervention and rising public expenditure for social policy (Wagner, 1893). Later on, GDP growth and the related expansion of welfare state spending were attributed to the industrialization process (Wilensky, 1975), while Marxist scholars identified the contradiction that the very growth of the welfare state, though necessary for ongoing capitalist production, at the same time undermined the logic of capitalist accumulation (Gough, 1979; O'Connor, 1973). New theoretical explanations based on power resources (Korpi 2000) or class (coalition), (Esping-Andersen, 1990) as well as (historical) institutionalist explanations (Pierson, 1993; Thelen and Steinmo, 1992), gained importance when it became obvious that in spite of the generalized expansion of welfare states, institutional differences persisted or were even transformed into new ones.

The divergent patterns of welfare state spending and institutional outcomes became subject to various welfare state typologies. Most notably, Esping-Andersen (1990) demarcated 'three worlds of welfare capitalism' divided into: (1) a social democratic or Scandinavian regime; (2) a liberal or Anglo-Saxon regime; and (3) a conservative/Continental regime. The distinction was based on criteria like the extent of decommodification; the governance of welfare production provided by state, market, third sector organizations or the family; and the resulting differences of stratification. According to Esping-Andersen, tax-financed universal policy regimes were better able to counterbalance social inequalities according to labour market status than either market-dominant

or more selective social-security systems. Elsewhere he indicated that the different types of welfare states correspond to different employment regimes based on different labour market regulations (Kolberg and Esping-Andersen, 1991).

In line with this understanding, however, critics claimed that he neglected the gender dimension, highlighting that the respective regimes supported different family models, enabling the commodification of women, especially mothers, to a very different extent (Sainsbury, 1999). Esping-Andersen acknowledged this theoretical gap by introducing the criteria of defamilialization as another relevant indicator to distinguish between types of welfare states (Esping-Andersen, 1996). Accordingly, the supply of reproduction work through social services is seen as being most relevant to enable women with care responsibilities to participate in the labour market and at the same time to create employment opportunities mainly for women. This again highlights a strong alignment between social policy, the structure of labour markets (more or less service-oriented) and the extent of labour demand. Another line of critique is related to the regional selectivity of the typology. Hence a more decisive distinction of the Mediterranean countries or the antipodes is claimed as well as an expansion towards emerging welfare states in Asia, Latin America and Eastern Europe (for a summary of references see Arts and Gelissen, 2010; Castles et al., 2010).

The Varieties of Capitalism (VoC) approach finally shifted the research focus towards the varying institutions in different production regimes, identifying two ideal-type institutional settings, namely liberal or coordinated market economies each distinguished by different kinds of coordination between skill formation, collective bargaining and welfare provision (Soskice, 1999). Accordingly, employers in coordinated market economies follow high-skill, high-wage production strategies, while employers in liberal market economies seek selective advantages through low-skill, low-wage production strategies

(Estévez-Abe et al., 2001). The strong alignment between production regimes and social policies, respectively the structure of labour markets and the resulting patterns of inequality, is underlined by a relevant overlap between different types of market economies and welfare states (Schröder, 2009). Others emphasize that the strong focus on productive industries in VoC also tends to ignore gendered patterns of wage work and skill formation and the role of decommodifying social policies for gender segmentation in the labour market (Estévez-Abe, 2006; Shire and Gottschall, 2007).

CHANGE OF WELFARE STATE DEVELOPMENT IN THE POST-FORDIST ERA

Recurrent economic crisis and new social developments since the 1970s created new challenges and questioned the goals and instruments of social policy in Western welfare capitalism: the increasing internationalization of the economy undermined Keynesian demand management and underscored its failure to maintain full-employment (Scharpf, 1987). Labour shedding in industry caused high unemployment for long duration among many groups. With rising unemployment and tertiarization of the economy, unions' constituencies in many countries decreased (Visser, 2013). The expansion of compensatory policies gave rise to welfare dependency of ever-growing groups within the population. Additionally, the demographic crisis, caused by declining birth rates and an ageing society, raised questions concerning future financing of the welfare state. As a consequence, the growing welfare state expenditure was blamed for the ongoing fiscal crisis of the state.

The political reaction to these developments during the 1980s was the promotion of welfare state retrenchment. Overall, the conservative governments in the US and the UK headed by Ronald Reagan and Margaret

Thatcher became synonymous with radical retrenchment policies that originated in a neoliberal understanding of labour market functioning. Hence, full employment was supposed to be achieved by a withdrawal of the state and a strengthening of market forces. This resulted in the deepening of welfare cuts, deregulation and flexibilization of the labour market and wage-setting mechanisms. A detailed analysis of the respective policies by Pierson (1994, 1996) claimed, however, that radical retrenchment had not been successful.

Despite cutbacks in a number of countries, the OECD average levels of social expenditure, whether measured as percentages of GDP, as generosity ratios, or in real terms, either increased or remained constant between 1980 and 1998 (Castles, 2004: 45). In contrast, the retrenchment thesis was confirmed by an analysis of particular welfare state transfers. According to Korpi and Palme (2003), a decrease in net replacement rates in case of illness, accident and unemployment took place in OECD countries between 1975 and 1995. The highest risk for cutbacks was associated with basic security institutions, followed by encompassing institutions in the social democratic welfare states, while state corporatist institutions faced a low risk of cuts (Korpi and Palme, 2003: 436).

In the economic sphere, ongoing globalization and technological changes, dominated by the development of information technology, deepened the crisis of the Fordist production regime and accelerated a transition to post-Fordism and the service society. Increasing tertiarization of employment was associated with a growing segmentation of the labour market and a polarization of the workforce due to differentiation of skill levels and an expansion of atypical forms of employment. The expansion of the service sector eased the integration of women into the labour market, which in many countries also fuelled the increase of part-time employment as a way of combining work and family. In line with societal modernization and individualization – supported by the

expansion of higher education as part of welfare expansion – Western countries saw a destabilization of traditional family forms and an expansion of lone parenthood. All these developments gave rise to the so-called new social risks that were insufficiently covered by the traditional social policies of the Keynesian welfare state (Bonoli, 2007a; Taylor-Gooby, 2004; Pierson, 2001b). As a consequence, (long-term) unemployment and the number of jobless households – especially among single parents – as well as poverty rates, increased significantly from the beginning of the 1990s in many European countries (Clasen et al., 2006) and also in the US.

Comparative research on the so-called trilemma of the service society (Iversen and Cusack, 2000; Iversen and Wren, 1998) identified different welfare state strategies to adapt to tertiarization. The starting point of these considerations was the assumption of the ‘cost disease’ of service work, due to a lower potential of productivity increases in comparison to industrial production work (Baumol, 1967). This causes a decrease of wage levels for low-qualified workers in the service economy and an increase of social inequality – as long as no redistributive corrections are implemented via welfare state policies. Such a development was associated with the liberal welfare states. However, minimum wage levels set within strong collective bargaining systems impede the increase of low-wage employment, as assumed to be the case for the conservative welfare states. This includes the risk of rising unemployment overall for low-qualified workers (with low productivity) – and a rather low level of employment for women. Alternatively, the Scandinavian welfare states created protected and well-paid standard employment relationships both for women and the low-qualified workers through an expansion of the public sector. This, however, was related to cost-expansion and gave rise to state budget deficits. The solution to the service trilemma of combating social inequality, low employment and high public deficits simultaneously remained a challenge for

welfare state reforms during the 1990s and beyond.

In order to solve the various problems of the post-Fordist welfare states that continued or even increased after neoliberal-inspired reforms, new ideas on the welfare state developed. Newly elected governments, first in the Anglo-Saxon countries, were inspired by new ideas of an 'activating' or 'social investment' welfare state (Morel et al., 2012). This was understood to represent a 'Third Way' between the traditional state-centred Keynesian approach and the market-based neoliberal reform attempts (Giddens, 1998b). International organizations like the OECD also promoted the idea of a new welfare state paradigm (OECD, 1989), highlighting the prevention of social risks through labour market integration. Hence, 'employability for all' became the overarching goal and was accompanied by a reduction of transfers providing only minimal social protection. However, the new goal required rather complex forms of state intervention. In order to enable all individuals to participate in the labour market an encompassing supply of social services, not only related to the labour market, but also in the fields of education and training, childcare or elderly care, etc., was needed. Although the approach strengthened the idea of self-responsibility in order to guarantee the required cooperation of individuals – paradoxically – it also increased the conditionality of social rights. The promoted motto 'no rights without responsibilities' (Giddens, 1998a) indicated a changed relationship between individual and society that inspired some authors to highlight the enforcement of (universal) labour market participation as a development towards a workfare state (Jessop, 1995).

The outlined policy discourse already indicates that the relation of work and social policy has substantially been altered within the new welfare paradigm. According to changing policy programmes, the right to decommodification – as discussed by Esping-Andersen – was weakened, while the duty to work (commodification) was strengthened

(Dingeldey, 2007). This shift of policy goals, the implementation of policy reforms and the effect of this on labour market structures was reflected within welfare state research in many ways. *First*, within quantitative analysis the retrenchment-thesis, as a general characterization of welfare state development, was replaced by more differentiated analyses. Some noted a shift from spending on transfers – overall with respect to unemployment – to spending on services. This went along with a shift of expenses between different policy fields, so that, for example, spending for family policy and education increased (Obinger and Starke, 2009; Tepe and Vanhuyse, 2010). These studies found a steady state or even slight expansion of welfare state spending (Castles, 2004, 2007).

Second, the new discourse on welfare state development shifted the focus of research towards institutional change that was associated with the transition of state–society relations (Cox, 1998: 13). Pierson (2001a) introduced the concept of welfare state restructuring operationalized according to a mixture of three indicators. 'Recommodification', referred to the conversion of the process of decommodification, highlighting both the withdrawal of transfer payments and the introduction of programmes that enable labour market participation. 'Cost containment' was recognized as an independent goal that had to be mirrored within welfare state research. And finally, 'recalibration' pointed at an adaptation of existing programmes and institutions aiming at their rationalization and/or updating according to new norms and challenges.

This gave way to a new wave of comparative welfare state research highlighting overall processes of institutional restructuring that include rather different transformations, such as the change of social rights (Ferrera, 2005), or the increasing demand of self-responsibility and the individualization of social risks, closely related to the privatization and marketization of social services (Ascoli and Ranci, 2002). Furthermore, the

literature re-emphasized the relevance of level and scope of commodification as well as the development of labour markets and the structure of employment (Bosch et al., 2009; Heidenreich and Zeitlin, 2009).

Third, the ‘Welfare Modelling Business’ had an upswing (Abrahamson, 1999). This was caused by the political transformation in the Eastern European countries, which led to an expansion of capitalist production and an emergence of ‘new’ welfare states. Furthermore, activation policies followed different reform trajectories with varying success (Häusermann and Palier, 2008). As overall (re-)commodification was a central goal, differences in labour market policies became the anchor point of newly developed typologies.

VARIATION OF ACTIVATION POLICIES AND AMBIVALENT OUTCOMES

General changes according to the new paradigm contained a transformation from passive, transfer-oriented labour market policies to an activating policy (Hvinden, 2003). This change entailed a new mixture of governance forms (van Berkel et al., 2011), a trend of institutional integration with respect to unemployment protection systems across different countries in Europe (Clasen and Clegg, 2011), and a fundamental change in individual social rights (Betzelt and Bothfeld, 2011; Goul Andersen, 2002) due to the enhancement of enabling and enforcing elements. Barbier and Ludwig-Mayerhofer (2004) associated the dominance of enabling policies with the Scandinavian welfare states and enforcement with the Anglo-Saxon model. Later the interdependence of enabling and enforcing elements in Scandinavia was underlined, while financial work incentives were seen to be dominant within the liberal welfare states. A mixture of these elements plus increased labour market flexibility marked policy changes in the continental-European welfare states (Dingeldey, 2007).

In line with this argument, comparative welfare state research also established that the success of activation strategies was based on the coordination of labour market reforms with other policy fields such as family and tax policies, whether increasing provision of childcare services, entitlements to wage subsidies, or imposing minimum wage regulations (Dingeldey, 2011). The explanation of diverging reform paths drew on factors such as economic conditions plus institutional and normative trajectories, rather than on party politics and power resource theory (Bonoli, 2010). Only recently the influence of parties and government coalitions on new social policies was reanalysed, indicating a much higher complexity of interest representation than in the Fordist welfare state (Häusermann et al., 2013; Iversen and Soskice, 2015).

The outcome of (re-)commodification policies before the global financial crisis of 2008 shows not only declining unemployment rates, but also the growth of flexible employment. Both in conservative and some liberal welfare states, employment growth entailed an overall increase of female part-time employment. In Scandinavian countries, however, (long) part-time employment remained more or less stable while full-time employment grew. This trend goes along with ongoing differences of the dominant gender model: in the United States as well as the Scandinavian and most Eastern European countries, the dual earner model (both working full-time) was dominant among more than 50 per cent of all coupled family households with children younger than 14 in 2008. Sweden and France show rather high rates of more egalitarian patterns (in combination with high part-time rates of mothers), whereas a split between the egalitarian model and the traditional breadwinner model characterizes countries such as Japan, the Czech Republic, Greece, Hungary and Spain. In contrast, we see a high relevance of the slightly modernized male breadwinner model, where mothers of young children either do not work or work short hours, in the conservative welfare states, including West Germany, Austria

and the Netherlands, but also in Anglo-Saxon countries such as the UK and Australia, and in Japan (Gottfried, 2015; OECD, 2015). Disaggregating by class, in some countries we see a polarization in work-family arrangements (highly educated women following the dual full-time earner model and less well-educated women still being outside the labour market), exacerbating income inequality (Hook, 2015). Against this background, 'care arrangements' as emphasized within the citizenship debate, still impact on gendered labour market participation patterns (Pfau-Effinger, 2005). Comparative assessments, therefore, stated a paradox of activation policies referring to increasing economic growth and labour market participation that went along with an increase in poverty and social inequality (Cantillon, 2011; Solga, 2014; Vandenbroucke and Vleminckx, 2011).

The financial crisis from 2008 onwards not only gave rise to unemployment, but also put pressure on labour market and wage regulations. Both national and EU policies reinforced controls on public spending, negatively affecting employment and household income, especially in Southern and Eastern European countries (Eurofound, 2014; OECD, 2014). Even economically strong countries such as Germany and France saw a substantive increase in nonstandard employment and low-wage work, the latter in Germany was only recently buffered by minimum wage regulation (Eichhorst and Marx, 2012; Jaehrling and Méhaut, 2013). Already from the 1990s onwards, the public sector, which in most Western countries employs 15–30 per cent of the overall workforce has become the subject of cut-backs in personnel. Additionally, organizational, financial and personnel reforms following the New Public Management paradigm lead to an alignment of public employment regimes to private employment that varied in Anglo-American and Continental and Scandinavian countries, according to administrative and market employment regimes (Tepe et al., 2010, 2015). The overall trend in most countries, apart from Scandinavia, implies that the state

more and more has given up its former role as a model employer. Hence, in most countries privatization of public infrastructure and marketization of public services has reduced the capacity of both state and non-profit employers to mitigate market risks among disadvantaged labour market groups, be it women or low-skilled workers (Gottschall et al., 2015; Vaughan-Whitehead, 2013).

Social scientists as well as international organizations have assessed the social dimension of these developments in Western welfare capitalism as a trend towards a dualization of society, as characterized by a shrinking segment of labour market insiders who retain social security, while a growing segment of labour market outsiders, including the working poor as well as the unemployed and inactives, struggle with precarization (Emmenegger et al., 2012; OECD, 2014). This divide is not only pronounced in liberal market economies and welfare regimes, but also in countries of coordinated capitalism belonging to the conservative welfare state cluster. Germany and France are cases in point here, as core workforce segments in industry and commercial services as well as civil servants in the public sector are far less affected by re-regulation of employment than mostly female employees in semi-professional social services, new labour market entrants and nonstandard workers in private as well as public services (Eichhorst and Marx, 2012; Kroos and Gottschall, 2012). Part of this dynamic is attributed to the structure and weakening of industrial relations in the process of deindustrialization and expansion of service industries. Indeed, most European and Anglo-American countries saw a substantial decline in union density in recent decades alongside industrial restructuring and tertiarization (Ebbinghaus, 2010). Moreover, the EU as an influential supranational actor has promoted only soft forms of governance of social conflicts such as the so-called social dialogue (Avdagic et al., 2011). Nevertheless, more recently, strike activities in Europe have increased and unions have revised and enlarged their agenda, attacking

unemployment, non-standard work and social retrenchment in order to better represent the 'outsiders' (Adler et al., 2015; Visser, 2013). Scandinavian countries, also undergoing change, differ because actors involved in the governance of employment have, since the 1980s, sought to combine flexibility and social security. Compared to most other countries they have been able to generate and preserve high standards of 'good work' in the public and private sector for both women and men, and higher and lower educated workers (Korpi et al., 2013).

WIDENING THE SCOPE: TRANSFORMATION, GLOBALIZATION AND WORK MIGRATION

Comparative research on the dynamics of post-war welfare capitalism has focused only on Western or core OECD countries for a long time. However, the implosion of state socialism in most Eastern European countries, the opening and deregulation of Latin American economies, the emergence of the BRIC countries as global economic and political players, and more generally the accelerated mobility of capital and workers in the course of globalization not only reinforced the need for more national and supra-national regulation of work and welfare, but also indicated the need to widen the scope of research (Haggard and Kaufman, 2008).

Transformation trajectories of Central and Eastern states (CEE, including Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic, Slovenia and the three Baltic states, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania), in contrast to the states of the former Soviet Union, were characterized by rapid economic recoveries, more or less consolidated democracy and accession to the European Union. During the initial period of the 1990s, economic breakdown and deregulation of the rigid and protective communist-era labour market institutions contributed to a rapid growing inequality across the region. Subsequently, wage

decline, unemployment and poverty slowed down with macro-economic recovery, EU subsidies and welfare state restructuring (Cook, 2010). Nevertheless, these countries do not easily fit in with the established welfare and production regime typologies, nor do they follow the depicted Western change patterns. Obviously the transformation process stretches over a longer period of time; moreover, adherence to high state responsibility for welfare and different cultural and historical legacies between these countries play a role. While an overall trend points less towards static and solidaristic and more towards market-oriented welfare institutions, as compared to state socialism and Western social-democratic welfare regimes, some scholars identify path dependency regarding preferences for public financing and state subsidies. Comparing CEE countries to other middle-income countries of Latin America and East Asia, relatively high levels of public provision and welfare efforts are noted (Haggard and Kaufman, 2008). Rankings in the Human Development Index position the new EU member states closer to the Western member states (Golinowska et al., 2009: 17), shifting these countries closer to the non-liberal welfare regimes. With regard to labour market institutions, however, the neoliberal trend seems to be most prominent. The ILO's Employment Protection Legislation Index indicates that labour market flexibility has increased, and restrictions and protections in all areas of employment and wage setting have been reduced, while at the same time more than half of the labour force is not covered by collective bargaining (Cook, 2010: 681). Persistent unemployment, depressed employment rates among the working-age population, high wage dispersion and declining public provision for health and education negatively affect women. Although in former times they used to be well integrated into wage work, now they have to bear more care work and/or rely on informal networks for care. Moreover, a revival of patriarchal gender ideologies by strong nationalist and rightist parties who favour pro-natalist policies is

reported, while at the same time falling birth rates, and an increase in (documented) domestic violence and sex-trafficking indicate limited voice and representation of women's issues (Rueschemeyer and Wolchik, 2009). Hence, there is little evidence of gender equality improving in CEE countries, although the accession states are bound to comply with EU directives on gender equality and human rights (Pascall and Lewis, 2004).

From 2000 onwards, EU accession of CEE states has also generated a constant flow of East–West temporary or long-term migration of often skilled workers, triggered by poor economic prospects in their home countries as well as rising labour demands in Western countries (OECD, 2013). While EU institutional frameworks allow for and to some extent safeguard mobility of labour between member states, the new work migration on the international level from the Global South to the Global North for the majority of the migrant workers is far less regulated, often depriving them of social rights granted to native citizens. Against this background, boundaries between formal and informal work are dissolving worldwide, increasing not only low-wage work and fixed-term employment, but also undeclared labour and work in private households in Western countries (Pfau-Effinger et al., 2009). These characteristics of the developing global economy have challenged the tenets of methodological nationalism prevalent in comparative welfare state and labour market research and call for an analysis focusing on transnational regulations and practices.

In this context the increasing use of and reliance on migrant workers to provide family care and a range of personal care services in the corporate, voluntary and state sectors of Western countries has become a prominent field of research. It demarcates a major feature of contemporary transnational labour markets unfolding in the context of global hierarchies based on class, gender, ethnicity and citizenship (Yeates, 2009: 5). As many scholars have pointed out, the evolving global care chains involve serious social

risks and problems not only with respect to the migrants' precarious work but also with respect to their families. Care work in private households by live-ins implies deprivation of privacy and 24-hour availability – and, not only as reported for Asian women in Arab countries, sometimes even sexual harassment (Anderson and Phizlackea, 1997; Hochschild, 2000; Koser and Lutz 1998). Moreover, while caring for children or elderly persons in the rich Global North, migrant workers leave their children behind to be minded by grandparents or extended family networks, thus passing on family care needs in their home country. While often born out of existential and economic hardship, in many cases migration might also reflect a 'choice' to earn enough to allow for a better education of their own children or a better living for their family. Overall, those migrants that dispose of international tradable skills in which there is a global shortage may have that choice (Yeates, 2009: 3), for example professionals in the health sector or in technical fields. Beyond the individual level this brain drain from Eastern and Southern to Western and Northern Europe and from the Global South to the Global North often implies that the less well-off countries who nevertheless have invested much in education and training of the younger generation are losing the human capital they need for fostering economic growth and a sustainable welfare state (Beine et al., 2003).

OUTLOOK

Compared to the 'golden age' we see rising inequality and poverty within all Western welfare states, although to a different extent due to the different institutional settings in the various worlds of welfare capitalism. Retrenchment and restructuring of welfare state institutions and regulations produce a reduction of social protection, dismantling social rights to decommodification while commodification increases. Flexibilization

of employment, decreasing coverage of collective bargaining as well as declining trade union membership are giving way to an unprecedented differentiation or even polarization of employment protection and wage levels. The rise of transnational labour markets and new forms of care migration reflect ambivalent outcomes of the 'golden era' of Western welfare states and indicate that basic tensions of capitalist economies between commodification and decommodification are reappearing.

Dynamics of economic growth and welfare state expansion in the 'golden age' not only enhanced individual well-being and gender equality but also generated an erosion of the unpaid domestic work and provision of care by women on the basis of a male breadwinner model and a growing ageing population in need of care (Estévez-Abe and Hobson, 2015). Due to tight public budgets most welfare states seem to be ill-equipped to meet the ensuing needs with sufficient public provision for households, be it in kind or services. Against this background, informal migrant care work can 'prosper', turning dual-earner middle-class and even poorer private households in the Global North into employers and generating a new gender and ethnically biased employment chain. Obviously, provision of care and household services will remain a challenge for social security, and for class and gender equality, in a worldwide labour market.

Along the same lines, the expansion of capitalism commodifying more and more people around the globe exacerbates conflicts between capital and labour, but also gives way to tensions within social classes and between developed and underdeveloped capitalist economies. As scholars and international organizations have emphasized, the more and more global and transnational scope of social conflicts revolving around production, work and consumerism call for implementing socio-economic rights both at national and international levels (Craig and Lynk, 2006; ILO, 1999). The emergence of social policies in countries of the Global

South indicates growing awareness of the need for regulating work and employment, providing basic wages, and social security as well as access to education and training. However, the balance reached between capitalist production and social reproduction in the 'golden age' of Western welfare capitalism and the high time of the Western democratic nation state may be much harder to find in times of post-Fordism and globalization, as interest formation and representation has become much more complex and redistribution has to take place on a global level.

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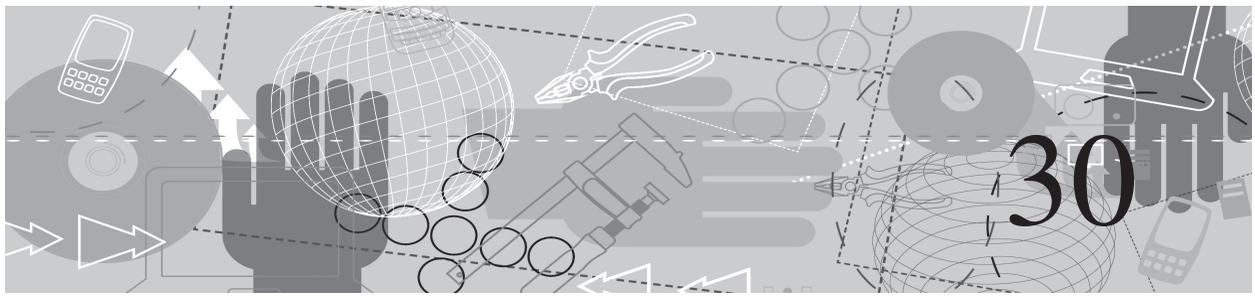
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Global Value Chains, Organizations and Industrial Work

Paul Stewart and Brian Garvey

INTRODUCTION

Scientific enterprises do not subsist in a separate self-contained world. Neither are they related only to very broad and general values. They occur in specific societies at particular points in time, and are, therefore, part of particular historical economic, political and ideological conjunctures. These social contexts are, naturally, especially important to the emergence and formation of enterprises whose specific objective is a scientific grasp of the contexts themselves. (Therborn, 1976: 415)

This chapter is concerned with understanding organization and industrial work on several dimensions. Rather than focusing exclusively on a list of key figures in the sociology of industrial, organizational and work sociology since the Second World War, we locate approaches to organization and industrial work in the context of commonly understood thematic periods in the development of capitalism since 1945. The argument is that the kind of studies of organization and work undertaken throughout the history of our discipline, together with the scope of our

understanding of organization, work (and employment) have always been constrained by the geographies, spaces (not the same thing), sociologies, and temporality of determinate forms taken by the level of development of the capitalist firm. While precarity today may seem like precarity everywhere before the golden years (*Les Trente Glorieuse*, and mainly, as the perception implies, in Western Europe), this would be to misunderstand, as we shall indicate, the contemporary configurations of late twentieth and early twenty-first-century global capitalism. Thus the narrative considers:

- 1 The changing character of key narratives in the sociology of organization and industrial work including a brief assessment of their overlapping and occasionally competing narrative strands viz. *conventional approaches deriving from pre-contemporary globalization; globalization narratives in the form of Development agendas* (as opposed to theories per se); *global value chain analysis* (including radical global value chain analysis); *critical sociology of work and employment* extending radical global value chain

analysis and radical political economy (see our exemplar, Brazil).

- 2 As Therborn insists, the context of discussion of organization and work is framed by historically defined socio-economic context. Thus, while current forms of, *inter alia*, precarious work and febrile labour relations may be reminiscent of the condition of labour in the so-called Fordist era, because contemporary internationalization of capital has transformed the landscape of the employment relationship, any study of industrial work and organizations today cannot begin from the hermetic world of the factory, let alone the firm. Or, to the extent that it can, cognizance of the relationship between the factory, office, and firm will of necessity make more sense when it is situated within the context of global relations of the reproduction of labour and capital: the global value chain.
- 3 There is a critique running through the chapter of the ethnocentric nature of dominant accounts of contemporary changes in the global trajectory of organization and industrial work. Often, it is assumed that this trajectory should typically follow the historically determined path of Western, and more specifically, European capitalism, with its particular and historically derived assemblage of internal class-based workplace relationships and their various antagonisms.

FRAMING THE ARGUMENTS

Seen from the perspective of women, and, indeed, from the perspective of the majority of the workforce in many developing countries, precariousness is the normal condition of labour under capitalism. Given the enormous asymmetries between capital and labour, what needs to be explained is not so much how this precariousness has come about but how it is that in certain times and places certain groups of workers have managed to organise themselves effectively enough to achieve some degree of income security and occupational stability. (Huws, 2011: 4)

This chapter addresses two aspects of the sociological understanding of global changes in forms and patterns of organization and industrial work. First, understanding how change occurs entails some exploration of the assumptions on which various perspectives are derived; second, relatedly, given

arguments about how organization and industrial work is changing, the chapter will explore a number of ways in which labour has responded to new configurations and activities of global capital. We will take as our key exemplar of the second aspect of our exploration of understanding contemporary change, the case of the ethanol sector in Brazil. The key themes of the chapter are thus:

- 1 Understanding the contemporary reformation of global capital and its implications for organization and the fate of industrial work in the global north and the global south; and,
- 2 Interpreting new features and characteristics of labour and other social movements in response to structural change in the global south and the global north.

Behind these considerations of contemporary globalization of industrial work, account must be taken of the way in which arguments are framed. First, the extent to which the process of change is considered to be socially positive or not is dependent upon political but also sociological points of departure. Though the fact is sometimes ignored, it should not be assumed that sociological narratives are without normative inspiration and political implications. For example, in a seminal paper published over two decades ago, Smith (1997) pointed out that the idea of flexibility cannot be seen as a taken-for-granted good, as it is by management, but must, on the contrary be judged in relation to its impact upon, significantly, worker experience. Bearing that in mind, in considering both the evolution of the debate on global organization and industrial work this chapter is concerned more with the fate of labour than with technocratic-managerial and teleological views based on an assumption of a zero-sum, still less win-win, unidirectional pathway of global change.

Unusually, rather than examining work organization and labour responses as separate phenomena, it is argued here that determinate forms of work organization, wherever in the globe we examine them, are as much the result of labour's response as capital's determination.

Certainly they are more than the outcome of supposedly neutral, technocratic, design. This argument brings to the fore the notion that workplace and organizational design, and thus the very condition of labour, are derived from social conflict both within and beyond the workplace in a way that cannot be explained by conventional, bifurcated approaches to either *workplace* or *workspace*. Furthermore, in contrast to more conventional approaches, here labour is understood along two intersecting dimensions. First, labour is conceived as a social category defining how and under what historical conditions people expend effort in determinate ways for remuneration, so that excluded here is domestic work, though not all unpaid activity. Second, labour is also understood as a political-cultural form that defines, in various ways, how people collectively respond to the conditions under which they expend effort. Typically, the former is decided for them and more usually under variant conditions of restraint and subordination. The character of the myriad forms of subordination in turn is historically defined by the degree to which people collectively respond to forms of their domination in and by their work. This is also therefore a story about the forms, character and extent of their insubordination.

INDUSTRIAL WORK AND LABOUR

There are a range of cogent, empirically grounded, and theoretically driven approaches to industrial work and organization in Western Europe (notably the UK), the USA and Canada that are distinguished from a focus on specific aspects of labour and the organization of work in late capitalism. These address, following engagement with wider changes in labour markets and/or workplace organization, changes to patterns of industrial organization or the convergence of work forms. Work methods matter but are rooted in an analysis of capitalist political economies. Exemplary accounts of the former can be found in the long-term research begun in the

1990s in the 'Manchester School' by Marchington et al. (2005), Rubery et al. (2003) and Rubery and Grimshaw (2003). Another key figure, now moved on, is Huw Beynon, and the field is being taken to another dimension by Martinez Lucio as a founding contributor to the Critical Labour Studies network. Developing a critical political economy perspective, these studies have charted the rise and decline of determinate labour markets, work organizations and state engagement in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. Critical comparative work extending beyond Britain can be found in Hardy's (2012) work on the reconfiguration of capitalism in Eastern Europe. Researchers of workplace specific changes involving the study of the evolution in forms of work comprise a number of prominent US researchers including, amongst others, Smith (1997), Milkman (1991) Graham (1995) and Gottfried (2012). The latter is concerned more broadly with contemporary transformations of the global political economy in the context of gender and labour markets and is closer to the developing work of the Critical Labour Studies network. These exemplars are drawn from an impressive number of critical sociologists of work and employment in the US. For the latter and others working from within a critical sociology of work tradition in the US, the issue is not so much a concern with this or that variant of labour market trajectory within late capitalism, though this is not unimportant, as a focus upon identifying the variants to work organization and labour processes that to varying degrees deepen labour subordination.

In France, a critical agenda to work is found at the Centre Pierre Naville, notably the work of Jean Pierre Durand and colleagues (see Durand, 2007; Durand and Hatzfeld, 2003). Thus, one key example of this trend can be seen in the attention given to the evolution of forms of, *inter alia*, lean production. Regarding lean production, and to an exceptional degree, the work of a group of Canadian researcher-scholar activists working with the Canadian Auto Workers' union

in the late 1990s produced an astonishing research paradigm exploring the trajectory of lean production (Rinehart et al., 1997).

That said, though noting that work qua workplace is by no means the ubiquitous focus of research, it is nevertheless the prevalent domain concerning sociologists of work and organization in their various critiques of capitalist social relations (see especially the critical work by Peck (1996) and Gough (2005) on the sociology and political economy of work in determinate social spaces). At the same time, complementing and often utilizing the research of the latter are those within the developing tradition of Critical Labour Studies attending to the wider political economy. The developing oeuvre of the Critical Labour Studies conference exemplifies this emerging strand that seeks to bring together labour process research, sociology of labour market analysis, critical spatial studies and radical political economy in an analytical chain (Mackenzie et al., 2006).

This is important since it can ensure that the focus of radical analytical intervention no longer has to remain at the level of one or other of the specialist research areas. Thus, while more conventional accounts of firm supply chains (Bonacich and Wilson, 2008; Hamilton and Gereffi, 2009) habitually give limited attention to wider political economies (still less the creation of value by labour) researchers within the emerging Critical Labour Studies school have begun to highlight the importance of explaining global value chains (GVC) in the context of international capitalist restructuring. Accordingly, locale is salient and significantly is understood as rooted in the reproduction of capital–labour relations within the new international global economy.

WAYS OF UNDERSTANDING CONTEMPORARY CHANGE

Following on from this discussion, the agenda proposed here includes the conception of political economy as pivotal to understanding global shifts in organization and work.

Setting aside some popular media and policy excitement about a global win-win outcome to contemporary change we identify two other ways of addressing the evolution in organizations and industrial work from a global perspective. Both derive from assumptions about the development of industrial capitalism since the end of the Second World War. One sees historical change as unidirectional in which power especially that of labour in the global north, is depleted through myriad processes of de-industrialization consequent upon the mobility of capital to the global south. As industrialization, the well-spring of workplace and other forms of social and political power, shifts to the global south, one assumption that could be drawn from this prognosis is that both labour and capital will develop enhanced capacities (whether realized or not, especially for labour) to extend forms of social solidarity similar to those established in the global north in the period after 1945. Examples of this approach, which sees capital and development as historically and teleologically bound together, can be found in a range of registers, and while more limited in Sociology, can be witnessed in the work of popular economists, for example Stiglitz (2002) and Augar (2006). Some see labour in the global north as getting its comeuppance because it is perceived to have been one of the historical beneficiaries of colonial and later imperialist largesse, and the emphasis upon the extent of loss of economic and political power by labour in the global north varies according to perspective (and agenda). Stiglitz and Augar, while famously critical of the workings of international capitalist organizations and notably the IMF and the World Bank, at the same time retain a great sense of optimism about the development of the global economy since for them it offers positive long-term benefits: enlightened capitalism based upon a presumed European and best-of-the-US paradigm can eventually save the world and ensure progress for all.

Sociology has been far from free of the joys of one-world development. However, unlike

post-war development theory, it is on occasion ambivalent about the long-term consequences of the inevitability of modernity (see, for example, Giddens, 1990; Beck, 2000). While recognizing on occasion local opposition to global transformation Giddens nevertheless sees this as 'backward' and parochial, an irritant to the iron wheel of positive change). More serious commentators on global synchrony (not the same as convergence) include contemporary French Regulationists who, whilst eschewing teleology, are ambivalent about change. Various, they recognize that obstacles to transformation may also provide the foundation for structural opportunities that do not take everyone along some easily recognizable route to the 'global north' (Amable 2003; Boyer, 2002). The starting point for the regulationists is not explicitly that of macro socio-economic convergence. Giddens' now defunct British version of Third Way¹ optimism aside, pessimistic accounts of the coming cataclysm for workers and employment everywhere is central in much of Bauman's current writing (2004, 2005) where globalization is effectively a one-way street of labour, social and cultural degradation. There is for sure much of this to be witnessed everywhere across the planet, but if we begin from a non-European perspective then the street is less one-way, less unremittingly pessimistic.

While not a straightforward re-run of the convergence debate of the 1960s (Kerr et al., 1960), nevertheless, as with Kerr and colleagues, there is a more or less implicit assumption in the work of Giddens, Beck, and others taking up their agenda that with industrialism comes a range of modernist, or proto-modernist, progressive cultural and political formations. Paramount among the latter is the notion that democratic participation in social and (sometimes) economic life is inevitable. Neither could it be maintained that this is a conscious re-working of post-war development theories whereby capitalism eventually drives out tradition. (For a classical assessment of the development-underdevelopment-modernization debates see, inter alia, Harrison

1988.) Yet, in one respect Giddens and Kerr and others share the assumption that there could be (and should be?) a relative *evenness* to global change: there can be both local and global cultural and political gain for all. This is problematical for at least two reasons, since, as the quotation from Huws above makes clear, the idea of a planned security to workers' lives must be seen as being limited both by particular socio-economic forces and political circumstances together with various cultural and sociological traditions within countries. Additionally, this is a story of the capacity of workers and their institutions to establish forms of (temporally) embedded social, political and economic securities, even if these were, always and everywhere, in their own terms, limited by gender, class and ethnicity within the defined nation state in the global north. For Huws, while workers and other social groups in the global north may retain their various forms of progressive cultural and social capital, including variant forms of representative democracy, these will be much diminished due to the inability, or unwillingness, of the state to continue (and Western capital especially) to pay for the reconstitution of the post-war social settlement.

This is not a straightforward left-right political argument as Streeck has emphasized (2014) and the salient point is that from this perspective, to understand what is happening we need to follow the money, or, in this case, capital investment within and beyond company networks and more widely across national frontiers. Furthermore, since from this vantage point large-scale industrial workplaces are a diminishing feature of capitalism in the global north and industrialization is a zero sum process in which wealth and power increasingly flows to the global south, there is a sting in the tail for capital. Moving to the global south allows the advantages of accumulation witnessed in post-war Europe and the US but without the downside – a well-organized labour movement. 'Accumulation by dispossession', to use Harvey's fine summation. Democracy 'yes', and a labour

movement of sorts perhaps, but it certainly will not be one delivering social democratic welfare and worker rights in anything like the manner of Western European liberal democracies after 1945. Whatever the superficial appearances of global convergence, and these are not to be in themselves underplayed, nevertheless, economic, social and political power will eventually shift to the global south. This usually is taken to refer to the so-called BRIC countries. In other words, whereas in a previous era when labour, due to its ability to mobilize widely in society, was able to benefit from industrialization in the form of social-democratic welfare state compromises, new patterns of capital accumulation are different. The argument is that the contemporary situation will see capital as less constrained by the limits imposed by space, geography and time, and consequently and most significantly, organized labour. Accordingly, this first perspective, whatever the respective differences in terms of political viewpoint, perceives change from the vantage point of the global north.

By contrast, a second perspective sees organizational and industrial work as undergoing transformations in ways that are to be distinguished from the post-Second-World-War European and North American experience of industrial change, though not necessarily at the expense of labour. The process(es) of contemporary global change are to be seen in terms of international capitalist restructuring that is not best understood either in win-win, and still less, zero-sum terms. Thus, while, for example, steel plants, the petro-chemical sector, white goods manufacturing and the apparel industry may be shifting to the global south it is important to note that the generation of trade still occurs within a relatively narrow arc of countries and regions. It is important in other words to distinguish between the geographies of production, accumulation and profit repatriation. The money still to a significant degree continues to flow unevenly to particular countries in specific regions of the (richest) global north.

From the latter perspective, change, which sees increasing industrialization in the global south, is thus not a zero-sum game in which labour is automatically compromised across the globe as a result of increasing industrialization in the global south and its relative diminution in the global north. From this viewpoint, the assumption of a relative evenness of cultural and political gain is replaced by an assumption of *unevenness*. In the north, labour is not weaker per se due to changes in workplace size and the shifting nature of sectoral activity as the mass industries with large workplaces re-emerge in the global south. Of course size and massification matter but they are not straightforward determinants of the power of labour. Neither is labour straightforwardly politically or organizationally 'weak' in the global south because it has been developed in the context of post-colonial, politically repressive, state and employment regimes sustained by external influence, as can be witnessed for example through the aegis of structural adjustment programmes. While social and political repression is not unimportant, it is the nature of historical and contemporary production with variant forms of coordination of global value chains that helps to explain the relative development and underdevelopment of labour unions and other social movements from a global perspective. Moreover, the argument made from this perspective is that it is the relative strength of labour and other social movements, socially and historically determined by locale (in national and regional terms, yet always linked to external processes) that matters more than the seemingly straightforward view that with the erosion of industrial space and spatial scope organized labour is inevitably and irredeemably weakened.

This is understood to be a condition of socio-spatial and political-regional – plus workplace – power. In this case, the assumption is that it is not so much the nature of work (inter alia, work organization and the labour process, though these matter of course), together with its degree of physical concentration, that determines workplace

and organizational capacities of any social group. Rather, of crucial importance are the relationships between the various actors both within the workplace and its determinate social spaces, however these may be defined spatially and organizationally, and, as importantly, globally.

The latter perspective comprises researchers such as Antunes (2011) and Clarke and Godrey (2011). For these critics, it would be possible to contrast the rise of mass industries in the global north since 1945, where production was highly concentrated by region, with contemporary forms of capitalist production. These have witnessed new patterns of value chain development, often centrally controlled from the global north, or even without geopolitical centres at all, as is the case with MNCs spreading across not just countries and regions but continents. This has had a dramatic impact upon the social and political capacities for labour and other social actors to control their fate in an immediate way. Power is often defined by the fact that capital is located quite literally a continent away and can often be shifted relatively quickly to off-shore zones of indulgence. Hence, similarities in appearance are not a best guide to the complexity of cross-class social alliances that might follow: the struggles by auto and other workers in post-1945 Europe and, for example, post-dictatorship Brazil, as we shall see, are not commensurate.

Specifically, industrial concentration, for example of automotive production in Brazil with its attendant large workplaces does not necessarily allow the space for powerful labour movement activity that it once would have done when those industries operated in the global north. This is because the concatenation of broader class and other social alliances takes different forms according to history, space, locale and the culture of socio-industrial conflict. This is important to emphasize despite appearances to the contrary. For example, the understandable excitement attending unionization of the mass industries in Argentina, Brazil and India is derived from the ways in which unionization was discussed

in Western Europe after 1945. Yet the reality is that while of course sociology matters (i.e. the collective worker in situ together with high wages especially with regards to the social wage), politics and state matter as much in the setting of context and discourses around how workers struggle and in accounting for what is achievable within capitalist societies. This is another way of saying that where the latter are born of social democratic settlements, struggles for improvements typically remain economic, whereas where the social wage is weak and macro-supporting context febrile, if existent at all, even basic struggles for pecuniary improvements may often rapidly become political. This is quite typical of circumstances in the global south. One way in which we can link a critical understanding of workplace change within and across national boundaries in an uneven world is by integrating the radical global value chain analysis of a range of researchers, such as Raworth and Kidder (2009), Taylor et al. (2013) and Mulholland and Stewart (2014), with a *critical sociology of work and employment* perspective. This will allow us to integrate a radical global value chain analysis and radical political economy providing a more realistic understanding of the *unevenness* of capital's social, economic and political power within contested global value chains. This provides the basis to begin to explain the differences between the worlds of work today and in the past.

We can gain further insight into this by reference to the case of Brazil in the 1970s. During these years, while under military rule, the large auto strikes led to the formation of PT (Workers' Party). In 2010, 40,000 metal workers at Ford, VW and Mercedes struck and won a 10 per cent pay increase, disrupting German automotive production. While it is unnecessary to point out the extraordinary importance of workers being able to strike without the fear of being shot down, what the dispute also speaks to is the increasingly important phenomenon of the *nature* of the interconnectedness of labour and capital, not just globally but especially structurally.

The nature of capital formation, including its greater capacity to relocate, associated with, *inter alia*, the geographical spread of global value chains, defines the key difference between contemporary forms of industrialization in the global south and post-war experiences of Fordist industrialization in the global north. The salient point here, however, is the paradox central to all new forms of global value chains exemplified by the Brazilian metal workers above. New patterns of value accumulation and production chains are providing new opportunities to disrupt production; a strike in one place has a major downstream and upstream effect. The effects are also lateral where capital in material production is increasingly adumbrated by fictitious capital (financialization). These two broad approaches (power and influence moving *evenly* from 'north' to 'south', or greater complexity of power relationships due to the *unevenness* of the power of capital and labour) to understanding industrial change thus lead to quite distinct ways of interpreting developing forms of industrial and work organization, class formation and class action both within the workplace and beyond. We return in more detail to the case of Brazil below.

CONTEXT-SHAPING FORCES: OF DE-INDUSTRIALIZATION AND NEO-INDUSTRIALIZATION, AND OTHER ARGUMENTS

Contemporary forms of the internationalization of capital are shaping the nature of worker experience of work(places) both in respect of how (the condition of labour, broadly understood) and where people work. While place matters, social relationships defined in and by space matter more. Whereas the story of mass industrialization in post-war capitalism in Europe, the USA, and certain countries in Asia notably Japan, was of industrial societies and cultures providing significant growth in industrial employment

being transformed after the oil crisis in the 1970s, this could only be a part of the narrative. More automobiles are produced in Europe as we write than at any time since the 1960s; what is of particular significance is that considerably fewer workers are required to produce them and this can be said of any industrial sector. It is of course the case that to all intents and purposes whole sectors have indeed shifted to the global south, including the most commonly referred to – apparel and white goods manufacturing and steel.

Yet, the key factor in this shift has not been de-industrialization *per se* so much as an integrally related process of the industrialization of the global south under conditions very different from those experienced by societies in the global north in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. This shift in de- and neo-industrialization processes is occurring in tandem with the reconfiguration of industrial processes in the global north, again under very different conditions to those experienced in Europe during the early period of industrialization. That is to say that the debate is also about social and political power. It is not so much that labour in the global north obtained power simply due to industrial massification and the concentration of social forces; if massification and social organizational concentration were sufficient in delivering powerful social movements including labour unions, industrialization alone would tell the whole story and Indian and Brazilian labour movements would be politically and ideologically more powerful. The whole story however, as we know, would be more than incomplete were it to ignore the peculiarity of the post-war settlement in Europe. This story includes the US willingness, or necessity, to fund European rebuilding and re-establishment of markets via the Marshall Plan and more recently, from the late 1970s, the role of northern imposed trade agreements. Specifically, we are referring to structural adjustment programmes that made the post-war European experience of social development impossible in the global south. Thus, it is necessary to be

able to argue that massification alone cannot explain what is happening in the global south, where we are witnessing a rising concentration of labour as great, or, at least in China and regions of India, greater than was experienced in Europe in the nineteenth century yet without strong internal, let alone external labour (movement) organization. While it is beyond the remit of this chapter to explore the trajectory of post-Second-World-War Keynesian welfare states, suffice it to say that strong labour unions with various attendant social and welfare rights were axiomatic to their formation (Huws, 2011; Streeck, 2014).

REMAKING LABOUR SUBORDINATION – FROM NORTH TO SOUTH-AND-SOUTH AND BACK AGAIN

While analysts and policymakers identify increased unemployment in the global north as industrial work is exported to nation states in the global south, where wages are lower and trade unions are weaker or non-existent, this is but one contestable feature in the current debate about the changing nature of organizations and industrial work. Thus, while this contestable reality holds sway in a number of instances, nevertheless, despite the apparent common sense of popular critiques implying a weakening of labour generally by capital flight to the south, what is ignored is the recent role of labour unions in restoring democracy (Chile, Argentina, Brazil), bringing constitutional change, seeking collective rights as opposed to liberal rights, and introducing recent reforms that run counter to homogenizing discourses of work degradation (Arrighi et al., 2003).

One of the critical aspects to the processes of change in global employment patterns that must be considered is the degree to which forms of labour subordination, including weakened or non-existent labour organization, more usual in the global south are becoming familiar in the global north. Of course, this is not to suggest that weakened labour in France,

or the UK, for example, in any way resembles weak labour organization in the global south, in Brazil, India or China. We know that the numbers of workers in labour unions *beyond* the global north is growing and in absolute terms may be greater than at any time in history when China is factored in. Moreover, notwithstanding the straightened circumstances in which unions in Europe now find themselves, their previous social and political strength gave rise to social formations and socio-cultural relationships that underpinned strongly regulated employment and welfare institutions which often continue to prevail, albeit under much reduced circumstances. But one historical trajectory does not mean that, in this instance, the patterns and processes of industrialization will be the same, or even similar, so that despite the historically unprecedented numbers of industrial workers in the global south, the earlier experience of strong labour unions will be repeated.

Then again, while history is not repeatable, contemporary forms of relatively weak labour unions in the global south do not in and of themselves suggest this will always be so, and especially it does not mean that they will, in different ways and circumstances, be unable to establish other progressive forms of social-welfare states. However, the south had a role as a supplier of raw materials for the north's industrialization. This is relational: the south's trajectory of industrialization and its labour and union power continues to be impacted by these historical and contemporary north–south relations.

An uneven story indeed. While IG-Metal in Germany, in contrast to previous periods, may not be able to greatly impact on policy formation in GM Europe, despite its sectoral strength, this will be the height of its ambitions. At the same time, sections of the trade union confederation, CUT, in Brazil joined protests at the 2014 World Cup, a direct challenge to the state. Again, as mentioned previously, this perhaps tells us something about the need to situate labour struggles and our interpretation of them firmly within the context of the relationship between economic and

political actions: whether labour and labour actions push up against an accommodating political context (as highlighted earlier) or whether struggles by workers are inherently antithetical to this context. Accordingly, the argument being made is that global value chain analysis within a political economy framework best explains the fate of global organization, industrial work and hence the actions of labour today. To illustrate our argument about the emergence of new patterns of labour actions in the context of the shifts in global capital formation over time, we focus on the exemplar of Brazil from the 1970s.

BRAZIL

The Brazilian 'economic miracle' of 1964–1973, during which GDP grew annually by 11 per cent, relied heavily on imported oil and foreign credit and involved the vicious suppression of wages and labour activity under military rule. Slashing the minimum wage was counterproductive as the population simply did not have the capacity to support import substitution strategies.

This paradox was thrown into stark relief after the 1973 oil crisis when the price of Brazil's petroleum-based imports escalated and international banks overflowing with petrodollars sought investment opportunities in the global south. Bankers from the US, Europe and Japan invested keenly with the Generals, and new highways, railroads, steel works, power plants, oil and gas terminals appeared. In 1974, Brazil borrowed more money than it had in the previous 150 years. Interest rates shot up after the second oil crisis of 1979, however, and in 1982 Brazil underwent the largest (at that time) debt default in modern history, with the government forced to the table by the International Monetary Fund (IMF). Debt servicing replaced social priorities, and the poorest 20 per cent of the population saw their share of income drop from 3.9 per cent in 1960 to 2.8 per cent in the early 1980s. Meanwhile, social protests

gained momentum in a decade of immense pressure for labour, land and social reform in Brazil. The new syndicalist movement (CUT; and PT) that emerged from the autoworkers' strikes of 1979, and social movements such as the Movimento dos Trabalhadores Sem Terra (MST – Landless Peoples' Movement) found, however, that the restoration of democracy and constitutional reform in 1988 did not translate into economic rights.

The imposed structural adjustment programmes of the IMF and World Bank, along with membership of the WTO in 1995 demanded the deregulation of state-owned enterprises and an end to import tariffs and to credit support for the rural poor as foreign debt servicing replaced national welfare spending. Rural to urban migration intensified, swelling the favelas that hosted 15 million unemployed people by 2001 while work informality peaked. It was a stark indication of Brazil's reversion to primary production for export under IMF-inspired neo-liberalism as agricultural exports increased to 41 per cent of total exports and automotive manufacturing fell by one-third between 1980 and 1990, while unemployment continued to climb, more than doubling between 1994 and 2000 (from 6.1 per cent to 15 per cent).

Although the volume of foreign direct investments rose 14-fold between 1994 and 1998 this materialized in neither growth nor jobs. Eighty-three per cent of investment went to the privatized service industry of non-traded goods (the financial sector, telecommunications and electric power), while automotive parts workers who had confronted the military state of the 1970s were wrong-footed by the sectoralization, outsourcing, automation and fragmentation of the autoparts manufacturing process under foreign owners who increased their control of the sector from 12 per cent to 70 per cent in just three years (1994–1997). This reduced both the number of workers (by 22 per cent between 1995 and 1999) and their militancy (Pinto, 2006). Hence, the elimination of jobs and the ideological and organizational undermining of trade union strength under neo-liberal restructuring could be detected in a

drastic reduction in the total number of workers on strike between 1990 and 1999 (Alves, 2006: 466–467). In contrast to the global north with its long period of post-war welfarism, in Brazil the century closed on a period of autocratic military, and then IMF rule. To illuminate several extraordinary outcomes: more than half of the working population was employed informally while only one-third of Brazilians had a registered job by 2002 and 25 per cent were living below the poverty line.

Brazil: Neo-developmentalism or Neo-corporatism?

The electoral victory of the Workers' Party in 2003 symbolized, arguably, a rejection of the neo-liberal formula that had been administered since the late 1980s. In taking a more central role in industrial organization, however, the government combined modest social reforms that reduced social inequality with a distinct economic shift back to primary commodity production and export, and an increasing reliance on the demand for ores, foodstuffs and grains by China (Goncalves, 2013; Wilkinson and Wesz, 2013). Foreign direct investment in minerals, agriculture and cattle leapt from US\$2.4 billion in 2000 to US\$13.1 billion in 2007, the latter increasing its share of GDP to 24 per cent (from 21 per cent) between 1993 and 2009, while transformative industries fell from 75 per cent to 66 per cent of total GDP during the same period.

The epoch-defining patterns of economic growth in populous countries such as Brazil, India and China have added considerably to the global working class, and have been accompanied by paradoxical developments in industrial and employment relations. Industrial clustering has led to many examples of labour strengthening in the global south (Silver, 2003), yet state promotion of 'pro-labour legal reforms' typically sits alongside often severe limits to worker self-organization. Furthermore, the persistent unevenness of development between the northern and southern economies continues

to militate against international organization of workers differentially impacted by globalized industrial processes across space (Arrighi et al., 2003).

These distinct features emerge from the following study of Brazil's revival of the centuries-old sugar and sugar-derived ethanol sector. This was one of the indigenous primary industries championed by the governing Workers' Party for the strong command over the supply chain enjoyed by Brazilian firms, its potential to reach new markets for 'renewable' energy, and the subsequent potential to generate revenue for selective state projects of social reform. In the 2007–8 sugarcane harvest, only 7 per cent of the mills had the participation of external capital. Following the 2008 financial crisis, however, Brazil's comparative advantage in sunlight, land, water availability and generous credit incentives attracted leading MNCs in energy, food and biotechnology, and investors fleeing unstable US and European banks. Forbes list favourites such as James Wolfenshen (former World Bank president), George Soros and Vinad Kholsa (Sun Microsystems) were among foreign investors whose share in the sector tripled in the following three years to 22 per cent (Olivon, 2011).

Although aggressively marketed as environmentally and socially responsible, the territorial expansion and political influence of leading MNCs is in stark contrast to the spatially fixed and fragmented character of the trade unions, with very evident implications for labour. Under Brazilian labour law dating to the military rule of the 1940s, limitations to the geographical area and specific occupation that a trade union may represent mean that unions are spatially confined and that sugar cane cutters, drivers and machine operators in fields cultivating sugar cane and in factories refining sugar primarily for food, and those refining it for ethanol distilleries, may all belong to different unions. With several significant exceptions (see below), the result has been that workers' collective organizations have been unable to ameliorate a marked, and sometimes fatal, intensification

of work rate, alongside persistent seasonal hiring and firing, or prevent mass lay-offs due to both mechanization and the closure of smaller plants (Garvey and Barreto, 2015). Yet, despite this, worker-led pressure for progressive political and economic reforms (see also Ecuador, Bolivia and Venezuela) include a continued real increase in minimum wages, a greater formalization of work, a modest reduction in social inequality and a determination to end child and 'slave like' labour. These changes guard against overly prescriptive narratives of endless, downward spiralling of global labour conditions (Silver, 2003); yet, in a period of strong economic growth they have co-existed with, rather than overtly challenged, structured inequality and increasing power asymmetries characterized by the fixed geographical and sectoral nature of fragmented unions.

This exemplar of current tensions in these specific sites of production, however, would be incomplete, as are global value chain studies more generally, if only work relations, tensions and conflicts at the point of production are considered. For sure, the extent to which workers choose to exercise their potential power within GVCs will depend largely on the degree to which they and their unions respond to these new corporate spatialized challenges (Antunes, 2003), forging relations internationally. Beyond the factory floor, and networked nodes of production, the globalized demands for new mines, dams and sources of monocultivated grains and energy are bringing capitalist pioneers once again into conflict with indigenous and rural populations, producing new enclosures in regions of production. In Latin America, Asia and Africa in particular, the willingness of these latter groups to take greater risks appears in direct relation to the extent of their dispossession and marginalization. Those challenging the latter have often very imaginatively opened up new forms and spaces of contestation in the political sphere across the global south (see Antunes, 2003; Porto-Gonçalves, 2006). Restrictions then, but also the inter-linkages between firms within GVCs, present enormous opportunities for

labour paradoxically not present in previous periods when the internationalization of capital was more limited by form (before financialization), geography and sector.

DISCUSSION AND REFLECTIONS

In previous eras and notably in the period commonly known as Fordism, researchers were more comfortable with focused accounts of particular phenomena, separated from wider historical and cultural experiences (see the CLS critique above). Nevertheless, while it remains possible to explicate phenomena separately, as often can be seen with focused research into particular firms, this is becoming a less promising avenue in explaining contemporary forms and processes of work and organization. Since the nature of the interrelationships attending contemporary work are different with the advent of newly empowered and globally enhanced GVCs, firm-limited, not to mention factory-limited, research, is less likely to adequately account for what is actually going on inside 'the firm'. In contemporary political economies, the more or less immediate practical impact of GVCs means that researchers of organizations and work today are no longer able to limit their explanation of what goes on inside the firm (qua the office, factory, warehouse – or the worker's own home) to what appears to be immediately defined by managers inside a particular *workspace*.

The fact that outcomes of internal conflicts at work are determined (sometimes more immediately than in the past) by what goes on outside the workplace means that where production occurs, and under what conditions of subordination, tells us much about the ways in which labour can respond. This too is a factor of the condition of labour within the broader political economy in which work is experienced: while the actual *work processes* in the auto industry, for example, will be almost the same whether we are researching

Brazil or Germany, what determines worker experience is itself a condition of temporal social and economic relationships between factory, labour-union practices, home, community (locale) and the state. The state, notwithstanding the role of MNCs, should not be underestimated in respect of its institutional (labour market regulation), constitutional (critical to the reproduction of capital locally, if not locally owned), and finally, ideological role in terms of the designation of the 'citizen'. Of course, while the meeting places between what John Berger describes as local and abroad (1967) have always been transcendent, the difference today is that the determination of social action within the *workplace* is no longer restricted to the conditions of that workplace in its immediate locale, let alone state, since the *workspace* may extend beyond the boundaries – and in the context of MNCs will do so as a matter of course – of the nation state. Which brings us back to our starting point: the internationalization of capital today ('globalization') ensures that no one is safe in employment terms from the shift in investment to other parts of a company's value chain. Work is not only outsourced beyond the firm to precarious workers but also to other countries and continents. What is more, workers in the firm, however secure they may be today, can have their conditions transformed to parallel those in other parts of the MNC's GVC while they remain in situ. Finally, allied to the pressure of employment precarity is the fact that management-labour and work processes such as lean production are now mobilized by capital in ways that transcend sector, occupation and geography. No one anywhere or at any level in a job hierarchy is safe.

In that case, how can we study resistance? More than a backdrop to what is going on in terms of worker experiences, the circumstances just described necessitate a different route to account for what workers do when they resist. We need to be able to argue that since resistance is conditioned by history and local circumstance, our research narrative will also evolve to account for what is

happening in other places, other nodes, in the *workspaces* which, where we are discussing the fate of labour in MNCs, will have to take account of the rest of the firm in other places. The 'rest' – workers in other areas of the firm's global nexus – may in fact be pivotal to what those at the 'end of the line' can do. Yet again, on one dimension some of this is commonly known to those familiar with the older world we have researched, for example, the world of the automotive industry until the late twentieth century. Worker activists and critical researchers have been working within this register for decades. We know about this in other and positive ways since workers across various automotive assembly plants have been well-organized internationally.

However, the employment circumstances researchers are often faced with today are those in which workers who may indeed be linked to the same firm are in geographical, social and economic terms quite removed from one another. Inter-sector linkages resulting from global changes in the firm, organization, or work and employment relations have transformed the myriad relations between groups of workers who hitherto may have had only the most tenuous relationships. Accordingly, it is not so much a case of first ('developed') world versus third ('developing') world, whereby the conditions of the former are being undermined by the (worse) conditions of the latter. Of course, while this may be so it can no longer be accounted for by the nature of local employment regimes alone. The European and US automotive industries' requirements for new forms of fuel allied to notions of a green economy are indelibly inscribed in what MNCs do in Brazil (and the rest of the global south). Indeed, MNCs are not only outposted in the global south. The fact is that the interlinkages between firms, whether in the realm of the real (production) or the immaterial (finance/financialization), define, in complex ways that demand new ways of explaining, the international, local and spatial production of value. This shift in research narrative will be complex and is being addressed by

researchers in areas of commodity production unknown barely two decades ago, as can be witnessed in the compelling research into Foxconn (Chan, 2013).

This is a developing perspective in which research on organizations and industrial work will include cognizance of the fact that we have to shift our agenda from a view of a de-industrializing West (global north) versus an industrializing 'East' (global south). Furthermore, there is another reason why the latter may be the wrong starting point in explaining an extraordinary shift in global wealth. Whatever the degree of industrialization and proletarianization within the so-called BRIC countries, allied to the rise of the new middle classes in the global south, together with the attendant power of local (and sometimes, as in the case of Russia and China, new) capitalists, this should not be confused with the persistence of another process. This is that the concentration of power, capital and resources in the global north has increased as a result of the current trends in internationalization we have been describing. This is important for our argument here because one of the consequences of the latter is that it is now necessary to tie the evolution of GVCs to new patterns of subordination and insubordination (Selwyn, 2012). While it is beyond our remit to explore the latter beyond our exemplar Brazil, it is nevertheless permissible to at least sketch some of the discernible contours of labour *co-option* and *insubordination* alluded to.

Given the optimism for a more radical change following the election of the Workers' Party, the extent to which neo-liberalism has been accommodated by the government is perhaps surprising but is also reflected in:

- *Reluctance*, or inability, of sections of the trade union movement to detach from their co-option during military rule;
- A *general trend* away from the more radical syndicalism of the 1980s towards a corporate management of discontent, consistent with the ideology of neo-liberalism;
- *Contentment* to participate in tripartite state-capital-labour 'common-sense' negotiation of shared material gains for workers in GVCs.

In contrast, however, the industrial and rural struggles of the 1980s have resonance in:

- *Spontaneous* and largely uncoordinated strikes by manual, rural labourers and cane cutters (e.g. in response to falling wages after the 2008 financial crisis);
- *Continued occupations* of rural (and now urban) land – by landless workers, and precariously employed dwellers in urban peripheries. These continue to be most evident in regions of expanding agro-industry or escalating rents (e.g. Sao Paulo city);
- *Sporadic but coordinated*, collective actions against further outsourcing (e.g. dock workers) and worker lay-offs (auto workers);
- *Formation of new trade union* associations across divisions of labour and sectoral categories challenging the neo-corporatist union structure (e.g. Intersindical, CONLUTAS);
- *Escalating protests against land and water grabs* in which indigenous communities are increasingly represented, and are also victims of violent reprisal.² In 2012 the Guarani successfully prevented Shell from using their ancestral land for sugar and ethanol production in Mato Grosso do Sul, while over 2,000 Guarani and Terena blocked roads in the region to prevent further land loss.

A most intriguing contemporary development in Brazil is that of the Federation of Rural Workers in Sao Paulo, one of the organizations emerging from general social unrest and the spontaneous cane cutter strikes of the mid-1980s. This has combined the 'traditional' industrial action of sugar and ethanol employees while also organizing land occupations that include workers made redundant through lean cost-cutting measures and factory closures. Breaking away from CUT (along with many of CUT's founding members from the metallurgy and auto sectors), a more confrontational stance against outdated labour law and the intransigence of MNCs has earned significant victories. A strike in a Sao Paulo plant in 2012, for example, was achieved by uniting workers across the divisions of labour in field and factory, whether or not they were unionized. The work stoppage, by halting raw material supply and processing, disrupted the entire supply chain,

costing the employer an estimated US\$6 million, and replaced variable salaries, pay by production and the bonus systems with improved wages and conditions. This victory is now being used as leverage in other plants, particularly in new ones. While insisting on centralized negotiations with leading energy and food MNCs, the organization simultaneously advocates radical agrarian reform alongside socially and ecologically committed food and energy production in Latin America as an alternative to the hegemonic, resource-intensive model of large-scale monoculture being exported from Brazil.

Outlining this scope for action by labour allows us to link the study of action to the study of capital in terms of era. We have argued that previous studies of work and organization were limited, by and large, to the factory gate, or the region, according to the characteristic form of capital accumulation. Canonical studies of the 1960s and 70s, not only from within Anglo-Saxon traditions but also more widely (see especially Linhart, 1978) reflected this pattern of capital form, and nowhere more so, arguably, than in Beynon's iconic *Working For Ford* (1972), Burawoy's *Manufacturing Consent* (1979), or Pollert's *Girls, Wives, Factory Lives* (1981). The fact that in telling us about the nature of work at a specific locale this research is also telling us something of the nature of global capitalism at the time is precisely the point. Today, it would not be so straightforward (though this does not mean that it would not be of immense value in other ways) to illustrate key features of the nature of contemporary capitalism by analysing the internal working relationships of a determinate factory in one region of one country.

Contemporary globalization reduces the analytical power of the kind of workplace study characteristic of the period from the late 1950s through to the late 1980s and 90s. There is a proviso of course, which is that focused studies, couched within a radical political economy and radical GVC analysis, are still vital since they will allow us necessarily to look outwards rather than inwards,

the latter being a key feature of a period in which knowledge of one Fordist factory could elucidate the world of much contemporary industrial work ... in the West, of course. The immediacy of global interrelationships involved in commodity production impacted less while it impacted more directly on those located at the immediate site of production in the global south. To put it another way, the responses available to *local* labour today are themselves a condition of the global nature of embedded *global* capital everywhere: a far cry from previous eras of commodity production.

NOTES

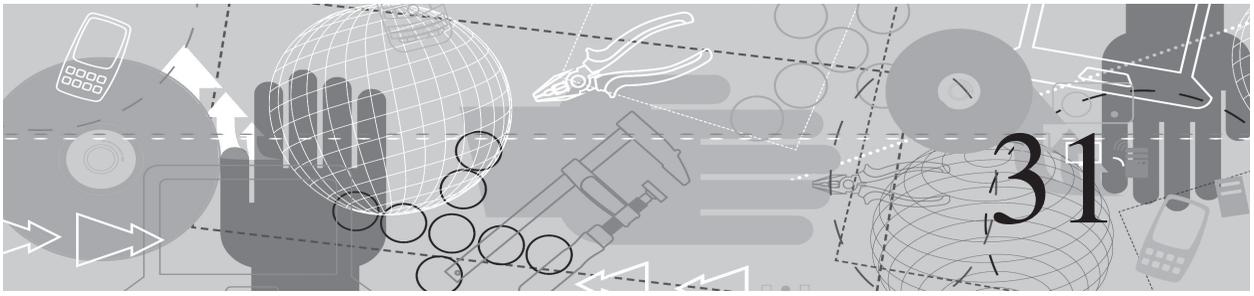
- 1 This is not to say that Third Wayism in general is extinct elsewhere, and it is certainly alive and very significant in the economic and political agenda of the German SPD and the German conservatives. Arguably the homeland of Third Wayism dating back to the 1930s it is known as Ordoliberalism.
- 2 Since 1985, over 1,600 rural activists have been assassinated in land conflicts. Twenty-three indigenous leaders have been killed.

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Globalization and Outsourcing

Winifred R. Poster and Nima L. Yolmo

INTRODUCTION

Labour on a transnational scale has typically referred to global production, international divisions of labour, and offshore factories. In this chapter, we consider how things have changed in the twenty-first century. We begin with a discussion and debates about the meanings of globalization and explicate some of the major dynamics that have transformed labour on a transnational scale. Here we consider neoliberal policies, multinational corporations, and the flexibilization of work and organizations.

Next we move to a discussion on the distinctiveness of outsourcing as the current wave of labour globalization. This is a trend heavily influenced by advancements in information and communication technologies, the rise of the service economy, and the intimate economies of marketization and globalization. Outsourcing, we argue, has put up for transnational exchange a wider and more precarious set of labour activities for workers (especially those in the global South).

'Global labour' is no longer limited to manual work. In recent incarnations, firms are sending abroad highly skilled knowledge jobs as well as unskilled bodily work. To illustrate this point, we highlight three cases: *software development and call centres* as examples of white-collar outsourcing; *big box and direct selling* as examples of retail outsourcing; and *reproductive surrogacy and organ trades* as examples of body, medical, and health outsourcing. We follow this with an examination of local and global strategies for improving and empowering labour, with particular attention to corporate social responsibility programmes, consumer activism, and non-governmental organizations.

MEANINGS AND LANGUAGES OF GLOBALIZATION

The term globalization has been plagued by over-use and under-specification, very often aggrandized to ambiguous flows that cross

borders, or else reduced to a proxy for forces of capitalism and commercial enterprises. However, debates surrounding globalization inhabit a plurality of contexts, imaginings, and discursive formations. We turn to Moghadam (2005, pp. 25–26) in this regard, who reminds of the multi-levels operating in tandem within globalization. For her, globalization is ‘a systemic process of development and change, or a new process of social system building, at a global level, including a global economy, institutionalized but unequal nation-states, and transnational movements and networks’.

Globalization thus includes the operations of capitalism and other political economies, but it is not limited to these alone. It is defined by the activism of varied social movements, including those of labour locally and transnationally. In addition, there is also the need to emphasize the persisting role of the nation-state in determining the conditions of work and social security, even as new political assemblages have displaced old nation-states.

In the field of labour studies, feminist scholars like Heidi Gottfried point out the dynamic features of globalization, including an ‘increasing frequency and intensity of interaction on multiple scales’ (2013, p. 192), ‘between production and social reproduction, between the intimate sphere and abstract economic laws, and between micro-level and macro-level political-economic relationships’ (2013, p. 200). In this way, feminists have alerted us to the need of problematizing fixed categories of analysis with regards to globalization. In particular, these theories have been attuned to the uneven integration and valuation of men’s and women’s working lives in the spaces of the global North and South.

Within the field of comparative industrial relations, the discussion about global labour patterns has emerged from two somewhat opposed viewpoints. One argument is that there has been a *convergence* of work structures worldwide (Frenkel, 1994). Through the process of transferring operations overseas, organizations export their labour policies along with their capital and technology. Some

argue that this happens in an ethnocentric or exploitative manner (Florida & Keeney, 1991; Frobél, Heinrichs & Kreye, 1980). Others see it as a harmonious ‘flattening’ process (Friedman, 2005). In either case, the result is a homogenization of labour. In contrast, the second view points to a *divergence* among work patterns. Because organizations themselves are ‘embedded’ in the social environments where they are situated (Granovetter, 1985), work relations vary greatly. This variation is a result of factors such as regional industrial networks (Saxenian, 1994), the state (Burawoy, 1985), cultural beliefs and practices (Hofstede, 1991), and labour resistance patterns (Belanger, Edwards, & Haiven, 1994).

It is possible, alternatively, that there is a more nuanced and overlaid pattern. There may be simultaneous homogenization and divergence of the labour process, given that corporate organizations inhabit multiple spaces, both local and global. One could say that firms (and other types of enterprises, see discussion below) are themselves embedded in two (or more) social environments – those of their origin as well as those of their physical location.

In exploring contemporary dynamics, we deepen the notion of globalization with regard to labour in a number of ways. First, we consider Moghadam’s notion of ‘unevenness’. The politico-economic processes and struggles for workers’ rights shape each other in multifarious and paradoxical ways that are not captured by the binaries of tradition versus modernity, identity versus strategy, etc. Moving beyond the notion of globalization as a purely hegemonic, homogenizing force of Western rationality can help us see how its discourses and practices are structured by their reception in particular locations at specific conjunctures. Instead, there is a need to evolve a culturally grounded political economy that would take into account the effects of local histories and culture with a global perspective on fundamental rights.

In turn, and as a second point, we seek to account for variable outcomes of globalization and labour. In some cases, the connection

between these two themes has been associated with the dislocation and impoverishment of workers. In other cases, however, it has led to improved global labour conditions and new forms of labour. Adopting a multi-level perspective that is both ethnographic and structural helps to illuminate these varying outcomes, as well as the labour forms and conditions therein.

Third, we chart alternative and multi-directional flows within globalization. Labour processes on a transnational scale are not limited to the movement of jobs from the global North to the global South. Rather, labour patterns are more accurately described in patterns of transnational webs that criss-cross and circulate between borders and sectors (Poster, 2013). It is crucial to recognize how global labour is also generated through reverse flows, such as those emerging from the global South and moving to the North, as well as those between regions of the global South in so-called South-South dynamics.

Fourth, we reconsider the language used to describe the participants. Previous concepts (like First/Third World) present a Eurocentric vision of the world, privileging powerful nations. Similarly, notions of developed/developing imply a linear path that some countries follow to 'become' like others. Instead, we use the terms 'global North' and 'global South' to draw attention to broad-scale socio-economic inequalities among countries (i.e., the US, Europe, and Japan versus South America, Africa, South/SouthEast Asia, etc.). Of course, these terms have their own limitations. For instance, they overlook important nuances *within* regions, such as marginalized nations in the North, and powerful nations in the South. (See Rai [2002] for an informative discussion.) Still, the terms global North and South reflect current geo-political hierarchies in a less normative manner than those of the past.

Finally, there is a need to understand globalization from the perspective of those whose lives are adversely affected by it. The phenomena a exclusion and marginalization are integral aspects of post-colonial

capitalist development (Sanyal, 2007). The dominant frame has looked at these societies as primarily consisting of two sectors: the formal/modern/industrialized/capitalist,¹ and the informal/traditional/pre-modern/pre-capitalist. The latter is often understood as a space that capital has been unable to take control of and mould. Yet, as Sanyal argues, the concept of a 'need-based economy' reflects an in-between space of activity. It refers to production, not for accumulation, but for consumption to satisfy a need. Because 'these activities are entirely embedded in the circuit of money and exchange' (2007, p. 215), they are not classified as part of a 'subsistence economy'. Rather, the work requires access to a market, and, moreover, is often mediated by the state (in the form of welfarist regimes) or by development organizations. An example is that of 'micro-credit', whereby individuals survive through meagre loans. With these, they participate in the market as self-employed entrepreneurs, but are rarely able to earn enough income to expand beyond their needs.

Thus, it is important to see these contractual subsistence sectors as not residual, but actively created in the course of the expansion of the 'accumulation sector'. It operates through the dispossession of marginal workers, and by transferring resources from the accumulation sector to keep it going. This transfer is mediated by the state, which means that, in turn, the need-based sector is more often supported by and dependent upon the state. This account of the need economy helps to elucidate the economic contexts of some areas in the global South, driving individuals to engage in emerging types of globalized labour (as we discuss below).

Addressing the issue of class, we see that people employed in this sector are not workers in the traditional sense, i.e., those *without* the means of production, and able to sell only their labour power. Some may indeed have access to the means of production (e.g., 'self-employed' persons), while nonetheless remaining as part of the dispossessed. As such, unionization and working-class politics (which to a larger

extent are predicated on the exploitation of wage labour) need to be attentive to these changes in sectoral work relations (Sanyal, 2007). The hegemonizing forces of globalization draw their sustenance from the living labour of workers, by producing different hierarchies, social connections, orderings of work relations, and distributions of wealth.

MARKERS OF GLOBALIZATION

When it comes to work and labour, several dynamics of globalization become salient markers: neoliberal economic systems, transnational corporations, flexibilization, and gender, race, class, and sexuality.

Neoliberalism and the Rise of Financial Regimes

Globalization is often put forth as the unrestricted movement of goods and labour across state borders. Yet, the complex interweaving of national regulation, transnational capital, inter-provincial competition, and the nexus of business and local government interests are crucial to understanding the process. The beginning of the twentieth century saw the centralization of capital along with the formation of monopolies and oligarchies in industry and banking. This moment led to the emergence of 'finance capital', with important implications for the role of the state and the globalization of labour. As economies became more intertwined through trade and finance, growth in industrializing countries came largely from commodity exports – with scant productivity, industrial investment, or diversification in technology and economy. This new situation paved the way for flexibilization of work, liberalization of trade and finance, privatization, and deregulation. In addition, it is largely agreed that the agenda of neoliberalism has been not only economic, but also social and cultural. This is evident in its doctrines and programmes to insulate the

market from politics, and in its active constitution of subjectivities like the consumer citizen and shareholder democracy.

In this changed context, legal systems known as the 'investment rules regime' have been significant in shaping the ensemble of rules and institutions associated with economic globalization (Schneiderman, 2013). These transnational legal forms are aligned to cater to the interests of powerful capital-exporting states, mostly in the global North. Institutions like the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund also form part of the nexus of the investment rules regime.

These dynamics have been critical to countries in the South, in terms of corporate responsibility and the potential for labour mobilization. If we look back to recent history, the Marshall Plan of the late 1940s is often seen as a watershed in the emergence of an institutional discourse of development. Its rhetoric proclaimed that policies and programmes would replace the old imperialist exploitation of the Third World with a democratic fair dealing. On one hand, it would bring down levels of poverty (viewed as a threat to the security of both industrializing and industrialized nations), and on the other hand, it would prevent the newly emerging sovereign states from being influenced by Communism (Saunders, 2002).

However in effect, this strategy translated into unequal protectionist policies and structural adjustment programmes (SAP), as the neoliberal agenda was pushed forward by the World Bank and International Monetary Fund during the 1970s to 1980s in the global South (Asher, 2009). Essentially, this mandated a 'stabilization' process: deflating the economy, reducing the rate of growth, and curbing 'excessive' demands through deflationary policies. Reduction of fiscal deficit was deemed to be central to both the stabilization and structural adjustment components of the neoliberal reform package. The idea behind these policies was to create an environment in industrializing countries that would be conducive to and attract substantial foreign capital inflows, in

order to make up for the absence of adequate domestic capital. However, the global implementation of this deflationary agenda has been negligible. Rather, a substantial part of these capital inflows comes from money with high returns (i.e., speculative and footloose funds). Likewise a large part of FDI represents the cross-border financing of mergers and acquisitions by transnational corporations (Mundial, 1997).

The consequences of SAP for labour specifically have been less favorable: a sharp increase in unemployment, a decline in the remuneration of work, an increase in food dependency, a grave deterioration of the natural environment, a deterioration in health care systems, a privatization of educational institutions, a decline in productive capacity and democratic settings, and large-scale external debt.

Furthermore, the interests of labour become increasingly compromised within the legal system. The international arbitration of investment disputes is structured on a model of private law (i.e., requiring governments to function as rational economic subjects whose first and foremost accountability is to investors and not to their citizens). A bias in the favour of powerful states is evident in many scenarios: the negotiation of free trade and investment treaties, the decisions of international investment tribunals, and the responses of investor-state disputes. While some posit the state as key in enforcing corporate responsibility, its participation in this regard is increasingly limited. In reality, the state has multiple and even contradictory roles, such as being home and host state to global business interests, and being regulator and enforcer of contracts and property rights. Thus as a political project, the investment rule regime curtails the redistributive capacity of the states, on one hand, and dampens citizen expectations and rights, on the other. In this sense, economic globalization over the past three decades under the neoliberal agenda has been detrimental to the lives and livelihoods of the larger populations of the world.

Transnational Corporations

Transnational corporations (TNCs) have become a compelling focal point of the globalization process, as movers of technology, resources, and information from one region of the world to another. The United Nations (UN) defines transnational corporations as legal organizations that have branches in at least two countries, all following a common set of strategies (Sauvant & Miroux, 2000, p. 267). McMichael (2000, pp. 95–96) notes: ‘TNCs account for two-thirds of world trade. From 1970 to 1998, the number of TNCs rose from 7,000 to 60,000, with more than 500,000 foreign affiliates. The combined sales of the largest 350 TNCs in the world exceed the GNPs of all Third World countries’. In 2008, 82,000 transnational corporations controlled 810,000 subsidiaries in different countries (Miroux, Fujita, Mirza, & Joachim, 2009, p. 17).

The global South is the recipient for much of this TNC activity. Half of the top 20 economies (ranked by foreign direct investment [FDI] inflows from TNCs) are industrializing countries and transitional economies. However, the global South is also gaining in its participation in TNC activity. FDI by transnational corporations from industrializing countries (along with that from transitional economies) accounted for 39 per cent of global FDI outflows in 2014, compared with only 12 per cent at the beginning of the 2000s (Zhan, 2014).

Flexibilization

A particularly important feature of TNCs is their flexibility. Rather than previous systems of mass production, which tended to be ‘rigid’ (i.e., one product is made in one way and in one place), TNCs increasingly use a ‘flexible’ system of production in which their geography is dispersed, their functions are diversified, their pace is unstable and rapid, and their plans are short-term and changeable. Furthermore, while the meaning of flexibility

is partly *structural*, describing changes from a unified to a diverse organizational form, it is also *relational*, referring to global political manoeuvrability and the ability to exploit global South sites, markets, and populations in new ways.

Two types of flexibility describe the dynamics of TNCs. Horizontal flexibility describes the increasing global interconnectedness of TNCs with other local firms. Rather than being unitary, monolithic organizations, TNCs take the form of a 'global web' (Hoogvelt, 2001, p. 127): 'The transnational enterprise has evolved from company organization to a loosely confederated network structure (global web) in which many discrete fabrication activities and services are bought in for the short term'.

Vertical flexibility describes the intra-organizational changes within global firms, specifically regarding the treatment of labour. It refers to the way TNCs attenuate their connection and/or responsibility to workers, employing global South workforces in a variety of tenuous capacities: '[global] decentralization of operational activity fundamentally changes the capital-labour relation – through part-time employment, if-and-when contracts, and through self-employment and piecemeal work and so on' (Hoogvelt, 2001, p. 145). This process of labour flexibilization is augmented even further by the actions of local governments. As a consequence of the global finance and state reconstruction dynamics described above, global South governments have set up 'export processing zones' (EPZs) to attract the TNCs. Here, TNCs are exempt from local labour laws, undermining their responsibility for fair working conditions even further.

In an era where employers actively favour flexibility and where work travels from the space of the factories to households, work is increasingly fragmented. Firms have curtailed full-time, permanent, in-house employment, and accompanying benefits of health insurance and pensions, in efforts to reduce costs and manage competition. Instead, they

have turned towards reduced work hours, a removal of job security, hire and fire at will policies, and the outsourcing of work to sub-contractors and temporary staffing firms. In turn, workers have to be flexible to fit into these new precarious settings.

Flexibility is multi-scaler in its origins and destinations. Global operations may involve several nodes that are connected through scattered organizational mappings and hidden labour forces. One example is how companies may disperse work within the national landscape, radiating operations out from the parent hub to regional sites (Holtgrewe, 2007). Another is how companies may incorporate temporary workers, both locally and globally. Indeed, research shows that outsourcing firms are associated with a high use of contingent workers (Granter, 2009; Shire, Schonauer, Valverde, & Mottweiler, 2009). In all these ways, globalized work is increasingly likely to draw from marginal workforces and to structure employment in marginalized ways.

Gender, Race, and Class

In more recent times, there has also been an emphasis on the 'gendering' of this process, and the central role of gender in globalization (Collins, 2009; Plankey-Videla, 2012; Poster, 2002; Salzinger, 2003). Examples from within export processing zones show that multinationals often hire women *exclusively* for their workforces. These industries are also internationalizing at a greater pace in comparison to others. Likewise, a well-documented pattern in the sociology of work is the devaluation of a job as it becomes more sex segregated. Wages and other rewards decline as the female labour force increases and the work is labelled as feminine. Accordingly, such occupations are often referred to as 'pink-collar' jobs. This particular aspect of feminization and flexibilization of labour is essential to the expansion of international capital and not a mere consequence of it.

Simultaneously, there has also been a rise in what Poster (2013) calls techno-masculinities within the ICT sector. Here research documents an ascendant masculinity in the global South, by charting the involvement of Indian men in high-end jobs and as decision-makers in the IT industry. In such roles, they are challenging the hegemony of the North and repositioning relations of masculinity.

We adopt a complex view of how race, class, sexuality, and nation play out in labour markets through an approach of intersectionality (Collins, 2000; Crenshaw, 1989; Poster, 2002). This concept points to the way that systems of inequality are interlocking and inseparable. Working-class status, for instance, may be experienced differently by women in the global South compared to women in the global North. It also means that groups may experience contradictory locations of privilege and subordination on different axes of inequality. For some women of colour and/or in the global South, this means experiences of double or triple discrimination, and opposing demands between the multiple subordinate groups they are affiliated with.

In sum: gender, race, caste, and class enter the globalization process in multiple ways. Workplaces are embedded with identities along lines of gender, race, sexuality, and other markers. Stated or unstated, these occupational and organizational dynamics privilege dominant identities of masculinity, whiteness, and heterosexuality. They subsequently enforce social inclusion and exclusion of employees based on displays of those features. Thus, the management of identity is not just about domination, but also about enacting segregation and stabilizing particular workplace practices and habits.

OUTSOURCING: THE CONTEMPORARY FACE OF GLOBALIZED LABOUR

Definitions

Outsourcing is the contracting out of particular functions of a company, either to an employee

or to another firm. This ‘service provider’, as it is called, can often do these tasks more cost-effectively and efficiently. These outsourced functions are not typically central to the output of the originating company. For instance, a real estate company might contract out its advertising and security operations to firms specializing in those tasks. However, the bulk of outsourcing, especially in the early stages of the industry, has been related to routine clerical and billing functions. Over time, outsourcing has come to take many forms, and firms have begun to send a variety of work processes to countries that have cheaper labour and more relaxed regulations.

International outsourcing reshapes the geography of this process by moving the work across national borders. As opposed to onshore firms that operate in their own countries, offshore firms may be either multinational subsidiaries of their originating firms, or else subcontractors of the host country that take on foreign clients. Reflecting the drive for cheaper labour and infrastructure costs, offshoring displaces work from the local business environment further, by separating the production process from both the customer base as well as the employers. Moreover, many firms in the global North are choosing locations in the global South for their outsourcing. Thus, they are not only crossing national borders, but also lines of global economic power. This makes the context and environment of daily operations transnational on multiple accounts – in terms of the physical as well as the geo-political distance from home firms.

This transnational context is what links the twin dynamics of globalization and outsourcing. Both involve labour patterns that traverse national borders, with employers or business owners in one country, and the employees and ‘production’ in another. However, in our conceptualization, outsourcing is unique from earlier forms of global labour in several ways. Classic global labour has been characterized by: (1) a direct and linear organizational linkage between employers and

employees – i.e., through a multinational firm or its subsidiaries; (2) a common production base in manufacturing; and (3) industries that are in the formal sector and/or ‘legal’.

What is happening now through outsourcing is much more obtuse, tenuous, and varied, straddling the lines of ethics and legality. It involves a full range of activities – in terms of industry, occupation, and tasks – from high skilled and high paying, to low skilled and subsistence wages. In fact, what marks outsourcing as especially distinctive is the extent to which it pushes the boundaries of what can (and should) be considered labour. As we will illustrate below, the types of activities that can be hired by transnational personnel run the gamut of what can be considered ‘employment’.

Accordingly, we use the term outsourcing in a broad sense – as the global transfer of many kinds of exchange activities and labours which are traditionally done on-site, in a local market or within national borders.

Motivating Forces

This current wave of outsourcing has been precipitated by several factors. A particularly crucial event for the timing of the outsourcing industry has been the *advancement of information and communication technologies* (ICT). By the end of the twentieth century, ICT took a global turn. The Internet expanded on a transnational scale, linking firms, people, and work. Satellite and fibre-optic infrastructures enabled network connections. Cell phones and voice over Internet protocols enabled communications between employees and employers, but also employees and consumers. For the first time, workers in one country could interact directly with customers in another. All of these developments meant that data, information, and communication could be coordinated cheaply and speedily across countries.

The implications for labour are many. In a direct sense, work which is technology-centred could be exported globally. The most

common forms are information technology outsourcing (ITO) and business process outsourcing (BPO). Furthermore, we are seeing an application of collaborative technologies as well as a rise in virtual teams through outsourcing. This changes and challenges the nature of IT work (Brooks, 2006). In an indirect sense, these developments provide a new global platform for technology-enabled labour. Even non-technology-related work can now be done through ICTs, and thus transferred over sea, land, and air. It should be noted, at the same time, that while the rise in ICT-related industries is profoundly restructuring the nature of work and identities, the bulk of the labour force continues to be employed in traditional industries.

Another critical juncture has been the *rise of the service economy*. If manufacturing was the trademark of the international division of labour in previous eras, services are now the fastest growing jobs in the formal sectors of the economy around the world (Poster, 2007a). This work is fundamentally different from factory work, in that these jobs involve doing something for people rather than making things.

A service can be conceptualized broadly in a number of ways: (1) according to its non-material outcomes, given that it doesn’t directly produce, grow, or extract things (ILO, 2001); or (2) according to its relational characteristics, given that it may provide front-line assistance to customers or the public (MacDonald & Sirianni, 1996). Services are also identified by their roles in particular industrial sectors, like ‘social’ services of health, education, and government work, ‘distributive’ services of transportation, and ‘personal’ services of retail, restaurants, janitorial work, childcare, etc. An increasing proportion of these jobs, however, are in ‘producer’ services that ‘provide information and support for the productivity and efficiency of firms’ (ILO, 2001, p. 109).

The share of employment in services has grown dramatically over the last half of the twentieth century. The world average rose from approximately 20 to 50 per cent between the early 1960s and the late 1990s. While recent figures from the International

Labour Organization continue to mark a decline in manufacturing jobs, service jobs have expanded by 15 per cent in Sub-Saharan Africa, and by as much as 45 per cent in Latin America. In the South-East Asian and Pacific region, the share of employment in services is estimated to have risen from 33.1 per cent in 2002, to 36.7 per cent in 2012 (Ernst & Kapsos, 2013).

Furthermore, Sassen (2008) describes how the organization of the transnational economy is marked by a 'service intensity'. Firms have increased demands for professional and producer services due to trends of advancing information technology, deregulation and securitization of finances, and hypermobility of capital. Polarization of labour markets follows this process. High-income work expands in technical, managerial, and financial markets, which in turn gentrifies the lifestyles of the global elite, and fuels a demand for low-wage workers to provide a wide range of personal and household services (health, domestic, retail, tourism, etc.).

Services, then, are integral for the dynamics of outsourcing. They raise questions about the meaning and experience of transnational labour. For instance, this work is distinctive for its performative requirements, often involving direct relations between employees, customers and consumers around the world. Service labour is therefore racialized and nationalized, as it incorporates global South workers selling brands and providing services for global North capital. Service work is also gendered, as it involves 'communicative' and 'bodily' labour from women, as Lan (2001, 2003) has theorized. In their theorization of 'body/sex work', Wolkowitz and colleagues draw attention to 'a new trend toward recognizing the embodiment of labour and that the body, emotions and sexuality are sites of commodification' (2013, p. 4).

Lastly, our focus on outsourcing emphasizes the growth in what Spike Peterson (2003) calls the *intimacies of globalization*:

Marketization penetrates the most intimate spheres of social life. Activities previously considered

non-waged and private – sexual relations, biological and social reproduction, leisure activities, household maintenance – are increasingly commodified and drawn into circuits of capital accumulation. (p. 78)

Significantly, circuits of capital include the family as well. As many studies have shown, families are increasingly sites of transnational outsourcing. Through the recruitment and hiring of domestic labour (nannies, cleaners, etc.) across national borders, families partake in global employment regimes (Ehrenreich & Hochschild, 2003; Lan, 2006). A perspective on the intimate economy of the family then pushes the boundaries of what and whom we consider to be the primary agents of globalization. Outsourcing, in this conception, is an activity pursued by a variety of actors: from formal corporations, to information enterprises, and family units. Hochschild (2003) refers to this as the 'commercialization of intimate life.'

Globalization is not merely about the logics of finance, technology, material resources, consumer products, etc. It is also about the commodification of the most personal aspects of human capacities – their bodies, identities, and private lives. The global markets in bodies and body parts will be explored as an example of these intimacies, as we see the transnationalism of economies in medicine, health, and reproduction.

SERVICE, SALES, AND SURROGACY: THE SHIFTING DOMAINS OF EMPLOYMENT UNDER OUTSOURCING

Over the past two decades, outsourcing has transgressed further and further from the traditional case of manual labour, and expanded in both directions of the occupational ladder. Here we highlight three domains that involve outsourcing jobs from the global North to the South. Each has its own particular contours of labour and its own opportunities and costs for employees.

Knowledge and Communications Work: Data Processing and Call Centres

The most readily identifiable or oft-cited example of outsourcing in the media is white-collar work. Since the 2000s especially, global North firms began to send their office jobs abroad. This includes both upper-level labour in knowledge work and lower-level labour in clerical work. It is happening across a full range of industries and fields – from high-tech, to medicine and law, education and government. It encompasses a dizzying range of occupations: radiological analysis, tax preparation, primary-school tutoring, legal transcription, and even theological counselling.

Outsourcing operates in many regions of the world, from Eastern Europe, to Africa, to South-East Asia, and South America. Here, we focus on India which is among the top destinations (along with the Philippines). Close to three million Indians work in this sector. Aside from English-language proficiency and lower wage rates, this workforce has been carefully groomed by the Indian government through the development of IT schools and universities. These complement other inducements from the Indian state, including industrial parks, tax exemptions, and subsidies to outsourcing firms. Eighty per cent of Fortune 500 companies now outsource some of their functions abroad, and 50 per cent outsource to India in particular.

The higher end of Indian outsourcing work is in software engineering. These employees write code and develop computer programs for firms in the global North. The median annual salary for these workers is 290,000 Rupees (or \$6,444). It tends to be male-dominated, with women averaging 20–30 per cent of the workforce. Because the work is digitally mobile in its production, labour process, and output, but stable in the grounding of workers' bodies, Aneesh (2006) has referred to this process as 'virtual migration'. Outsourcing creates an invisible workforce that can be paid a fraction of wages in the

US, while also decoupled from that country's employment laws, policies, and benefits.

The lower end of outsourcing is back-office clerical work, such as data entry, transcription, and customer service. This is called 'pink-collar' work, for its association with secretarial work and its feminized workforce in many countries (Freeman, 2000; Zaidi & Poster, 2013). Call centre employees, as a prime example, work as inbound help-desk operators or outbound telemarketers and collections agents for customers in the US, UK, and elsewhere. These jobs have noteworthy returns for the primarily young and educated workforce. Workers receive a median salary of 143,000 Rupees a year (or \$3,178), along with the social status of professional office employment. This often exceeds the earnings of comparable jobs and, in some cases, even that of employees' parents.

At the same time, there are unique and highly globalized costs of outsourced work in India. Take call centres, for example. Workers endure a *reversal of work time* reconfiguring their work schedules completely to the night, as they cater to foreign daylight hours (Poster, 2007a).

They also face intense working conditions: extreme routinization in the scripts they recite, time pressure to answer hundreds of calls per shift, and high-tech monitoring through their computers. Technological surveillance of workers is, of course, not new. Communications giant AT&T was an early developer of, if not a leader in, systems for controlling the pace of work and scripting interactions with customers (Batt, 1999; Batt & Moynihan, 2002). However, what is happening in the current wave of global outsourcing is more 'intimate', as software programs automatically track the emotional states of participants in these service exchanges (Poster, 2011). This process, moreover, is transnational, as algorithms operate across borders through the Internet: from firms in the US, to their workers in India, and back to customers in the US.

Global call centre workers face additional challenges. Some are asked by employers to perform *national identity management* (NIM), whereby they pose as Americans (and

other nationalities, like those in the UK) for the job. Workers change their names, accents, and/or styles of conversation to convey that they are in the US (Poster, 2007b). This may aid in communication across borders, and ease the discomfort that US consumers have about talking to foreigners. Yet, it has costs for Indian workers in terms of emotional distress and mental instability. Workers report nightmares and crying episodes as a result of the hostilities they experience on the phone, and, in a few cases, multiple or split personalities as a coping mechanism to manage their American and Indian selves.

Needless to say, national identity management does not necessarily work as envisioned by managers, given that consumers are often able to see through the façade. Moreover, workers do not always perform NIM to its full extent. In fact, many resist the process to varying degrees, which Poster has shown in her research. Outsourcing is, therefore, an ephemeral and/or cyclical process. Factors such as recession, backlash by consumers in the home country, as well as poor communication skills by workers, have led firms (like Dell Computers) to end their contracts, switching them to other countries, or pull out and return later.

Furthermore, these global outsourcing sites ignite or go hand in hand with other social flows like internal labour migrations. In Yolmo's (2011) study, workers are drawn to Delhi-area call centres from the north-east of India. This region is comprised of eight Indian states, collectively sharing borders with China, Nepal, Myanmar and Bangladesh.² It is an area that has experienced a significant history of colonial rule (including the establishment of missionary and eventually private schools that impart English-language learning), as well as current militarization from the Indian state. Thus, prior to entry into the call centre, these workers have been embedded in a context of national struggles and sovereignty movements. This case illustrates how the internal migration of workers within the boundaries of a particular nation-state may reflect transitions between different spaces of

pressure and uncertainty: from militarism and conflict, to contradictions of global identity and time.

Sales Work: Avon Ladies and Walmartization

Outsourcing is extending in other directions as well – to jobs like sales work. An example is 'direct selling' by companies like Amway and Avon (Biggart, 1989). In direct selling, firms market their products *not* in their own showroom, but by bringing products 'directly' to the consumer. This door-to-door model of sales has been popularized in the US through the icon of the 'Avon lady' who sells beauty items to female consumers in their homes. While Avon ladies are less common in the US now, they are thriving in the global South. Focusing on sales work like this, we get a clear glimpse of how transnational employment is shifting towards the service industries, and alternatively, how services are globalizing.

Starting in the 1950s, Avon began exporting these jobs to countries like Ecuador, Brazil, Thailand, South Africa (Casanova, 2011; Dolan & Johnstone-Louis, 2011; Theroux & Moore, 1994; Wilson, 2004). This process spread direct selling globally: first by employing a primary group of 42,000 workers whose responsibility is to 'recruit, train, and motivate', and then by employing another 5.5 million workers to do the actual sales on the ground. The impact has been a dual process of expanding the business scale and weakening the labour chain – as one set of workers is directly employed (with central roles, sufficient benefits, and secure jobs), and another set of secondary jobs are sent abroad and proliferated (with far less pay and security).

Central to this global model of sales is targeting and incorporating the most vulnerable workforces: low-income women in emerging economies of the global South. In Thailand, direct sellers are former sex workers, farmers, and bureaucrats. In South Africa, Avon

takes advantage of the post-apartheid social conditions: a widening gap between the rich and poor, and a 14 per cent rate of high school completion. In this context, the company's promise of economic and social mobility through direct sales is highly appealing (Dolan & Johnstone-Louis, 2011). Women make ideal sales representatives because they 'tap into ... social worlds' of 'extremely local markets', i.e., their circles and networks of other women, classmates, co-workers, and family (Wilson, 2004, p. 171).

These workers are also willing to venture to places that sales representatives from the global North would rarely go – like up the Amazon by boat (Theroux & Moore, 1994). They earn 25 per cent commission, which might be \$12–\$20 on a good sale. To peasant families who don't read or write, Brazilian Avon ladies sell the dream of being young forever and becoming fairer and taller.

The global dispersion and expansion of sales labour is illustrated through another example – big box retail stores. The penultimate case, US-owned Walmart, is the world's largest private sector employer with 2.1 million workers. It ranked second in the Fortune Global 500 for 2013, and has annual revenues of \$470 billion. In China, for example, Walmart employs 90,000 people. Thus, while the manufacturing sector in China gets a lot of attention by labour scholars, the service sector actually exceeds it in shares of total employment, 35 per cent versus 30 per cent, respectively (Otis, 2013).

This 'Walmartization' emerges from the expanding power of the retail giants. Scale and size is a defining feature of this dynamic. Walmart designs its buildings as 'big boxes', gathering many different kinds of sales in a single warehouse store. Some argue that this strategy benefits communities in the global South, by ridding the market of corrupt middlemen and commission agents who drive up prices. Instead, these stores source directly from farmers and their own suppliers, thereby combining wholesale and retail, and ultimately passing on higher wages to retail sales workers.

However, others argue that for every square foot of space, the number of jobs in the local economy actually *reduces*. For instance in Germany, the growth of this industry into larger enterprises has depressed jobs in retail by 4 per cent a year (Christopherson, 2001). Moreover in global South countries like India, legions of street hawkers and vendors – the historic source of local goods – are put out of work by these giant sales outlets (Bandyopadhyay, 2012). In their place, most of the new jobs are part-time, barely above minimum wage, and without health benefits. Walmart – like other global retail chains – is aggressively anti-union (Christopherson & Lillie, 2005).

Finally, the full impact of sales labour is apparent in the expansion of the transnational consumer society, and the emergence of mega-malls in the global South. New Delhi's landscape, like that of many rapidly urbanizing metropolises around the world, is dotted with these mega-malls.³ Retailers from Europe, the US, and elsewhere occupy these venues, especially in the upscale malls, representing global capital and the lure of the foreign brand for consumers (Nike, Body Shop, etc.). Yolmo's (2014) ethnographic exploration of these spaces shows that sales work performed in these malls is undertaken mostly by men and women who have migrated to Delhi from other parts of the country. Their shifts are split in two and thus spread out: first from 7 to 11 am, and then from 5 to 9 pm. The schedule adds up to eight hours in total, but workers spend the middle of the day in the mall as they cannot afford the cost of transport back to the areas where they live. Thus, the mall becomes a circuit of earning and consumption, where employees spend their free time and money on coffee and food (Yolmo, 2011).

The case of big box stores and shopping malls reveals an important trend of globalization in employment, namely the move of TNCs and foreign capital into the service sector. Globalizing jobs in the current era are increasingly in retail and sales. In a broader sense then, what is being outsourced is the labour of service.

Body Work: Reproductive Surrogacy

A third notable trend in global labour is what DasGupta and Dasgupta (2014) call 'outsourcing life'. Combining medical and business imperatives, this model sends abroad the labour of reproductive surrogacy, that is, paying a woman to become implanted with and then gestate the fertilized egg of other biological parents. As such, this case adds a new category of outsourced work to our discussion. Along with jobs in manufacturing, office, and sales, we now have labours of medicine, health and body that move from the global North to the global South.

Transnational surrogacy took off around the mid-2000s, with the onset of two major changes. One was a set of bio-medical advances in assisted reproductive technologies for the development of fetuses outside the mother's womb. The second was the opening of several global South economies to international markets, in particular, sanctioning commercial enterprises in medical arenas. This meant that from the 'consumer' point of view in the global North, surrogacy became accessible to a wider population. Now it would not be limited to the very rich, but also became an option for the middle classes – especially those struggling with infertility, and gay/lesbian couples seeking to start a family (Rudrappa, 2010). India in particular became a popular site for surrogacy, given its abundance of well-qualified doctors and a burgeoning industry of 'medical tourism', in which patients from the global North travel to the global South for cheaper health care.

A conspicuous element of this outsourced labour in India is its caste, class, and gender foundations. Although the surrogates range in their backgrounds, some of the women are residents of slums, lower caste, and/or Muslim. For the full duration of their pregnancies, women may stay in dormitories away from their own families. They receive careful medical attention, but are also monitored in terms of their eating, daily activities, etc. Surrogacy enables these women to open

bank accounts and save for their children's education. However, such 'workers' are paid just a fraction of the wages paid in the global North: \$4,000, compared to \$20,000 and upwards earned in the US. It is not uncommon, furthermore, for women workers to be denied the full sum upon delivery that they were promised at the outset. This was the case for Aasia, whose pregnancy turned out unexpectedly to be twins, an outcome which was not stipulated in the initial contract (Haimowitz & Sinha, 2010). Such a situation reflects the complicated transnational chain of intermediaries between donors and recipients, and their role in setting (or not setting) guidelines for the employment experience. As of 2014, the industry is largely unregulated by the state or international organizations.

This trend reflects a larger process of global commodification in human bodies (Scheper-Hughes & Wacquant, 2002) and the labours accruing therein. Surrogacy outsourcing is akin to industries that sell body parts of living donors: hair and blood, eggs and amniotic fluid, kidneys and lobes of livers (Carney, 2011). With many of these organs, illicit parts are much cheaper and more accessible. Whereas a legal liver may cost \$557,000, an illegal one will cost \$157,000. This fuels the transnationalism of these markets, as desperate patients in the global North seek illicit organs overseas. In fact, many aspects of the supply chain cross multiple national borders. An illicit kidney, for instance, may travel from Kosovo where the donors are recruited, to Turkey and Israel where the doctors are from, to the US and Australia where the buyers reside (Bienstock, 2013).

Such industries are flourishing in places like Africa, the Philippines, India, and China, where structural adjustment programmes, urbanization, and neoliberalism have plunged the working class into poverty, and where few other options exist in the labour market for securing a decent standard of living. People earn \$25 for a pint of blood in India, and \$1,500 for a kidney in the Philippines. For the donor, there are many ironies in the role of bodies, nature, and markets embedded

in this way of earning a living. As Scheper-Hughes & Wacquant recount (2002), some workers spend the income from selling organs to sustain the bodies of other people (e.g., buying food for family members). Others use it to commodify other items from the natural world (e.g., to set up new small businesses in selling flowers).

In sum, these transnational body economies of surrogacy and organ donation reveal how the outsourcing of work has moved into new terrains. They reflect an intimate economy, in which productive and income-generating activities are reconfigured from those of industrial manufacturing, and deepened into the most personal aspects of a worker's 'labour' and corporeal capacities. Certainly, there are parallels to traditional global labour in that 'the gestation of a child may be outsourced in the style of multinational corporations (MNCs) manufacturing their products in Third World countries' (DasGupta & Dasgupta, 2014, p. viii). Yet the distinction here is that 'private reproductive functions are being transformed into usable raw materials and opened up to public consumption' (p. vii). With surrogacy, customers are literally 'renting-a-womb', and workers are 'delivering the finished product' of a baby. That women's bodies are subject to these imperatives of global capitalism speaks to the role of gender in outsourcing.

IMPACTS OF GLOBALIZATION AND OUTSOURCING FOR WORKERS

The structural and lived outcomes of these dynamics for workers are many. Some are psycho-social and identity-based. For instance, under- and unemployment have resulted in depression among workers. In the United States, these 'non-workers' are four times more likely than employed people to have thoughts of harming themselves. Among the many reasons for this, some are financial (e.g., anxiety about not being able to support themselves and their families) and others are

related to identity (e.g., losing a sense of routine, purpose, and meaning). For many, there is a growing sense of confusion over whether or not one is in fact an 'employee'. This has made solidarities among workers more difficult and contingent. It also creates increasing pressure on workers to craft a narrative of the productive self that is legitimate to potential employers.

Alternatively, global dynamics of ICT labour may create identity opportunities, especially to counter work-related biases of race, ethnicity, and gender. In the process of constructing cyber-selves, employees may use virtualization to transcend the limitations of body-linked identities. This has the potential to surpass biases and discrimination prevailing against people of colour, immigrants, and women, just on the basis of features like physical appearance and names.

There are material and structural implications of globalization and outsourcing as well. Take flexibilization, for instance. The breakdown of stable jobs can be cyclical and self-reinforcing, given the way it affects many aspects of workers' social reproduction. This happens through trends like: the spread of in-work poverty; declining money for and access to child and elder care; and increasingly irregular hours and sites of work.

Another growing problem is the cycle of debt associated with globalized employment. Among call centre and shopping mall workers in New Delhi, there are numerous cases of workers falling into debt-traps and fraud. One way this happens is that employers align with credit industries, issuing credit cards right along with salary cheque in the workplace. Consequently, workers tend to switch jobs frequently in part as a means to cope with the debt (Yolmo, 2014).

Significantly, there are implications for workers' rights. Outcomes include: a progressive weakening of workers' bargaining power, limited freedom to move out of precarious work, and ineffective protection of workers' rights and benefits. National policies continue to play an important role in the regulation of labour conditions. For instance,

many disputes remain unresolved in the case of migrant employment, given the heterogeneity of the regulatory mechanisms and inadequate definitions of employer and employee relations.

Finally, the issue of globalization and outsourcing points to critical shifts in transnational relations *between women* across the global North and global South. Movements of work and workers across national borders are connecting women together in new ways, while also solidifying hierarchies of race, class, and nation between them. This has been a key theme in previous discussions of 'global care chains' (Isaksen, Umadevi & Hochschild, 2008). By soliciting transnational domestic labour to their homes, women in the global North become employers to, and sometimes exploitative of, women from the global South.

In the case of body, health, and medical outsourcing, these hierarchies are playing out in a vivid way. Women from the global North are navigating gender tensions regarding beauty standards, reproductive incapacities, etc., through the bodies of women in the global South. Signalling themes of intersectionality, however, these bodily labours reveal a host of complexities that transcend the typical binaries of Northern privilege/Southern subordination. Take for example, human hair as a global commodity. Much of the human hair for wigs is sourced in India, from women who donate it as a religious offering at Hindu temples (Carney, 2011). This hair travels to Europe, where it is processed and dyed, and then to the United States, where it is sold as extensions and weaves for a market of largely African-American women.

Yet without 'straight' hair, some of these women are fearful they may not be able to get a job (Rock, 2009). Thus, the consumption of transnational body products by African-American women is itself derived from the experience of labour market and bodily discrimination. This half-billion-dollar industry, ultimately, is profiting from the devaluation of women's bodies in the US and as well as in India. Serious questions need to be asked about which groups may benefit from this

globalized bodily labour, such as the emerging crop of intermediary (and largely male) entrepreneurs within the medical field.

TRANSNATIONAL SOCIAL CHANGE AND LABOUR ACTIVISM

While transnational legal regimes have been instrumental in impeding acts of resistance at various locales in the world, there also appears to be some mobilization at the global level. This activism has been envisioned in different ways, however, with emphasis on sustained innovation and reinvention in the face of continual setbacks.

Ethics of Global Production Chains

Recent abuses in manufacturing work around the world have pointed to the growing need for ethical practices and oversight in global production chains. An example is the case of electronics labour in China. The electronics industry in this country is massive, operating primarily through contracts from the US. Taiwanese outsourcer Foxconn, who makes iPhones and other products for Apple, is the tenth largest employer in the world, with 1.2 million workers (Chan, Pun & Selden, 2013; Qiu, Gregg & Crawford, 2014). Their facilities, mostly located in China, sometimes hire hundreds of thousands of workers at a single site. While electronics work has traditionally been a female-dominated activity around the world, the gender ratio in the Chinese case has shifted recently to a more equal distribution, partly because the industry has grown so large, and partly because the population base is skewed towards men. The labour conditions in these workplaces have been called 'military-style'. Each year, approximately 40,000 fingers are broken or lost among the workers. Such labour conditions were publicly quiet for many years. It was only when 17 workers committed suicide on the premises of the manufacturing plants in 2010, that

American consumers started to take notice of where their Apple devices were coming from.

Another set of incidences drawing international attention occurred in Bangladesh. Garment-makers in Dhaka had been operating under dangerous conditions for decades. This led to a fire in 2012, and then, a few months later in 2013, a building collapse that left over 1,100 workers dead and another 2,500 injured (Greenhouse & Harris, 2014). Observers called it ‘the worst disaster in garment industry history’. Employees were mostly female and earning the equivalent of \$37 dollars a month (Muhammad, 2011). They were sewing clothes for a huge range of fashion labels, from Walmart and Target at the low end, to mid-range retailers like Gap, to high-end designers like Ralph Lauren and Armani.

Responses to these events were manifold, and with differing implications. Some have resulted in widespread support and enforceable regulations. An example is the ‘Accord on Fire and Building Safety in Bangladesh’, from UNI Global Union and IndustriALL (Hoskins, 2013). It has been signed by 87 retailers, covers 1,500 factories, and is legally binding in case of dispute. Another set of responses is from corporations. Sponsored by firms like Walmart and Gap, these initiatives centre around voluntary self-inspections of factories, and forbid participation by workers or unions. Efforts to expose abuses in global production, as well as hold actors accountable at various points of the supply chain, are therefore ongoing.

Global Labour Standards

One strategy that has become popular recently is establishing sets of ethical codes for firms to follow as they move throughout the world. In principle, these ‘labour standards’ are supposed to develop through global political processes. Yet, labour standards for TNCs are still largely set by the national laws and regulatory authority in the country of origin (Christopherson & Lillie, 2005). In

practice then, global labour standards tend to be enforced through transnational corporations (TNC) themselves, that is, by adherence to voluntary codes. As such, local governments (especially in the global South) have proven unable to hold foreign companies responsible for labour and environmental practices. With the curtailment of the labour unions in an increasingly globalized economy, it is imperative to think of new ways of organizing labour and ensuring basic rights.

Corporate Social Responsibility

Another recent strategy is corporate social responsibility, including public disclosure of the social and environmental practices of firms. This has become important in evaluating corporate activities, regulating adverse economic outcomes, and promoting socially responsible business practices. A crucial initiative towards this end involves monitoring organizations, and sharing factory audits and auditing mechanisms with the public. This requires coordination between different governmental and non-governmental regulations. Increased transparency, improved technical capacities, new mechanisms of accountability to workers and consumers, and non-governmental monitoring are needed to complement existing state regulatory systems (O’Rourke, 2004). It remains to be seen whether non-governmental regulatory systems can support state regulation and help improve standards and monitoring methods.

NGOs, Consumer Campaigns, and Labour Organizing

Non-governmental organizations are engaged both in critiquing work practices and policies of leading brands, and in providing positive information to build new markets for sustainable and ethically produced goods. They are also involved in building regulatory mechanisms and strengthening state regulations. Thus, by no means do NGO campaigns eliminate the

need for government regulation. However, market campaigns appear to be having significant impacts on consumption and production practices in the sectors they target.

Several of these NGO campaigns are based in the global North, like the US and other countries. For instance, the 1990s saw an increase in anti-sweatshop campaigns – especially by students on college campuses – which took different forms: efforts to change legislation in global South countries, direct pressure on firms in global North countries, and newspaper campaigns. Grassroots activists have targeted multinational firms in the textiles, footwear, and apparel sectors, helping to spread consumer boycotts throughout college campuses (Harrison & Scorse, 2010). Yet, there are challenges in designing campaigns for wage gains and better factory conditions, without endangering employment or relocating plants elsewhere. Over time, anti-sweatshop activism has begun to emphasize ‘living wages’, which are harder to define, enforce, and implement (O’Rourke, 2008).

Also based in the global North is a growing ethical consumption movement which seeks to change market behaviour, as studies show that consumer choices can improve workers’ lives globally. It is also now believed that distributing information about the conditions of workers around the world can influence what we buy. This influence may supplement the workings of the watchdog agencies that monitor working conditions and apply pressure on corporations. However, it is questionable whether or not entrusting regulation to consumer efforts can be effective.

Non-governmental organizations have also been at the forefront of emerging governance institutions that involve private and non-governmental stakeholders in negotiating labour, health and safety, and environmental standards. There are a range of NGOs operating in civil society spaces, including labour advocates and hybrid labour organizations that combine trade union characteristics with non-governmental organizations (see the chapter by Jennifer Chun and Rina Agarwala in this volume). These organizations monitor

compliance, and establish mechanisms of certification and labelling as incentives for firms to meet these standards (Fung, O’Rourke, & Sabel, 2001).

How global governance can be made locally accountable is an issue that remains to be explored. Non-governmental regulations that are transparent, accountable, and democratic can be seen as the beginning of a possible response to the adverse impacts of globalization. However, while they may strengthen regulatory systems and mechanisms for motivating improvements in global supply chains, they also harbour the perils of privatizing regulation and making democratic forms of regulation ineffective.

Seeking ways to coordinate the activities of labour NGOs in the global North (where transnational firms are headquartered and where finance centres are, etc.), with NGOs in the global South (where workers are) is increasingly critical. As labour movements are often much more active in the global South, compared to those in the US, for instance, this momentum can be fruitful to both.

Furthermore, it is important to note that states are critical to the maintenance and legitimacy of transnational legality, and remain salient locales for resistance. States are active players in the structuring of economic globalization, as hosts to global business interests, regulators, and enforcers of contracts and property rights. The role of the state is central in binding both governments and citizens to transnational legal structures. Its unique capacity to *undo* those legal constraints, on the other hand, has often made the state an important site for engaging in critical resistance. Thus, the state itself signifies the legal and institutional structures for limiting – as well as expanding – authority over obligations and prerogatives of citizenship (Butler & Spivak, 2007).

CONCLUSION

With these cases of labour outsourcing, we have explored the differentiated, multi-faceted,

and ambivalent nature of the phenomenon of globalization. This view calls for attentiveness to the categories and constitutive assumptions through which we view globalization's influences and impacts. It urges us to find new labour alternatives through engaged historical/genealogical inquiries, and through critical dialogue with the existing and emerging traditions. At the same time, there is an urgency to think about the possibilities of whether a particular globalization project has an enabling or disabling capacity for individuals, societies, and the world as a whole. In the context of large-scale inequality, and the loss of security for workers across North and South, it is imperative to think through the process – not merely in the spirit of questioning – but in a way that also entails a responsibility and risk of judgment.

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NOTES

- 1 By 'formal' sector, we refer to the organized, legally protected arenas of labour, rather than those of agriculture or informal economies. It should be noted that most jobs around the world, especially in countries of the global South, are not in the formal sector.
- 2 This region is comprised of eight states at present: Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Tripura, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, and Sikkim. The region has a largely shared history, in that its territorial boundaries (as well as social efforts to define, enforce, and reshape them) represent ongoing political projects within colonialism and post-colonialism. Yet, the region abounds

in a variety of different languages, cultures, and forms of local governance (Singh, 2005). Most parts of this region have developed diverse social movements to gain national sovereignty, political autonomy, and cultural self-preservation. These social movements have evolved their own militias over time. In response to continued social struggles, the Indian government has deployed its military force and set laws that grant it generous impunity (Akoijam and Tarunkumar, 2005). As a result, the political situation in the region has engendered different types of vulnerabilities and insecurities at various levels.

- 3 There were 172 operational malls across India in 2009. Out of the 79 operating malls in North India, 44 were in the National Capital Region (surrounding Delhi) alone (Srivastava, 2014). According to an estimate in 2010, another 4 million square feet was lined up for development in 2011–12 in Delhi and its suburbs. The number of malls in the country then grew from 190 in 2010, to 280 in 2012 (*Times of India*, 2010).

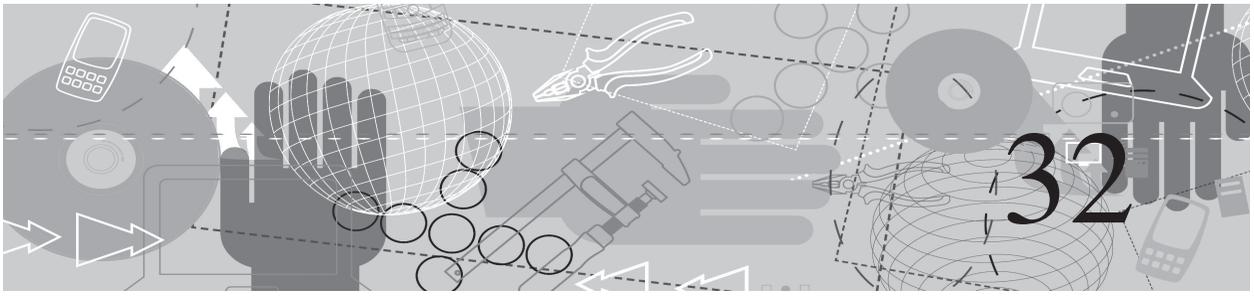
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Globalization and Labour Migrations

Eleonore Kofman

Contemporary globalization has been presented as expanding connections between markets, states and people epitomized by the current age of migration (Castles et al. 2014). Yet, whilst migratory flows have certainly diversified, we should understand them as being uneven and asymmetrical between receiving and sending countries (Czaika and de Haas 2014). Migration from South to North represents the largest flow and receives the most academic and policy attention, but South-South movement too is substantial and likely to be significantly underestimated (Hujo and Piper 2010). Within the South a number of migratory poles, such as South Africa, Russia, Argentina, Venezuela, have emerged. New trading links and geopolitical realities within the South have spearheaded rising levels of migratory exchanges, for example between China and Africa. Two other flows (North-North and North-South), though smaller, are nonetheless significant in regional and global migrations (IOM 2013). There is also considerable intra-Northern migration, especially in the traditional states

of immigration (Australia, Canada, USA) which have maintained high levels of permanent and growing temporary migration. In addition within the North, flows from poorer to wealthier countries have occurred, especially where free movement exists, as in the European Union (Glorius et al. 2013). As crisis and austerity within Eurozone countries have generated high levels of unemployment, especially amongst youth, flows from the North to the South, including to former colonies (IOM 2013), have become noticeable, as has return migration from the North to the South (Ray 2013).

In recent years the number of major destination countries has shrunk (Czaika and de Haas 2014), as these have imposed increasingly restrictive immigration policies privileging the highly skilled while excluding, or at best, imposing severe limitations of residence on the less skilled. Neo-liberal economic management, especially sub-contracting, labour deregulation and the privatization of social reproduction, together with increasingly selective and stratified immigration policies,

have made global migrations more asymmetrical in favour not only of certain countries, but also of cities, regions and classes. In addition, the current economic crisis has resulted in a narrower range of opportunities for legal migration (Castles 2011).

So whilst mobility may seem to have become a possibility for larger numbers around the world, in effect, authorized migration is only open to some, especially the skilled. Mechanisms of exclusion such as visas, border controls and restrictions on legal workers do not prevent migration, but rather push migrant workers into an irregular status and make them more vulnerable to exploitation on the labour market. The mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion have thus produced a highly differentiated and stratified incorporation of labour into the global economy, ranging from the adverse to the preferential (Phillips 2013). To understand the modes of incorporation, we need to place the process within a transnational perspective and the dialectical interplay between globalization and the distinctive impact of neo-liberal policies of social reproduction and the role of the state (Wills et al. 2010) in sending and receiving societies. We also need to take account of how such incorporation differs according to class, skills, gender and nationality (McDowell et al. 2009), which play an important part in the nexus between employment experiences and immigration status.

Theoretically the analysis of labour migrations has moved on from being a mere reflection of differences in living standards and wages between countries which leads to a convergence between sending and receiving countries, as neo-classical economics suggests. The new economics of labour migration critiqued the emphasis on the individual, suggesting that migration decisions depended on family and households seeking to maximize their resources (Massey et al. 1998). Research on networks and transnationalism (Portes et al. 1999) has highlighted how social links have facilitated and maintained migratory flows between sending and receiving countries.

Historical structural approaches, rooted in Marxist political economy, also critiqued the focus on the individual. Rather, migrant labour was drawn from peripheral areas of the world economy to benefit capital accumulation in core countries (see Castles et al. [2014] for a summary) which required both low- and high-skilled labour within segmented and dual labour markets (Piore 1979). Whilst manufacturing has been heavily outsourced, services have grown. In primary labour markets, migrants are selected for their education and skills, but in the secondary labour market, employers seek to fill jobs without increasing wages or improving conditions of work. Neo-liberal reforms and deregulation of labour markets have reinforced this tendency resulting in the expansion of precarious work and migrant statuses (Standing 2011; Vosko 2009). Closer attention has also been paid to employer demand. Employers may choose migrants because they are more motivated and unable to access welfare benefits (Wills et al. 2010), often preferring those from particular nationalities. It has also been suggested that migrants accept low-paid work due to a 'dual frame of reference' whereby they compare wages in their country of origin with those in the country of destination (Waldinger and Lichter 2003).

Segmented labour markets also reproduce gender and ethnic divisions of labour. In earlier research the gender dimension tended to be invisible (Morokvasic 1984), but the increasing feminization of global transfers of labour began to be explained through the lens of global care chains (Hochschild 2000; Parreñas 2001) and global social reproduction (Kofman and Raghuram 2015; Truong 1996). Thus global labour migrations demand a theoretically complex and institutional understanding (McGovern 2007) which takes into account the influence of the state and its immigration policies, labour market segmentation, how different categories of migrants are positioned as performative workers (McDowell et al. 2009), and the role of trade unions, professional associations and civil society organizations. Greater attention

should also be paid to stratifying effects and outcomes in the production of a migrant division of labour (Wills et al. 2010) and statuses (Anderson 2010).

This chapter examines contemporary labour migrations under conditions of neo-liberal globalization, on the one hand, and socio-legal statuses and stratified rights created by states, on the other. Mobility also has been facilitated within regions of free movement, especially the European Union, and to a lesser extent, the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), in particular between Canada and the US. The first section outlines the reasons for the growth of labour migration, especially since the 1990s, and highlights the increasing development of precarious and unfree employment, a condition that even skilled migrants increasingly confront. The second section turns to major sites of migrant labour, such as global cities, as well as selected less skilled and skilled sectors, such as domestic and care work, construction, information technology and health. The chapter further highlights the highly gendered global migrations, with women and men largely circulating through different sectors. The third section focuses on the role of the state and regional bodies of governance in producing a complex stratification of immigrant statuses and entitlements. Temporary statuses and probationary periods maintain both less skilled and highly skilled workers who are tied to employers for at least an initial period during which they bear the onus for their own welfare. The fourth section raises the question of the extent to which international human rights are capable of protecting migrant workers and the role of campaigning organizations in improving the rights of the most vulnerable.

THE GROWTH OF LABOUR MIGRATION

According to the ILO (2014) there were 232 million migrants in the world in 2014, of which 48 per cent were women. The

economic crisis in the early to mid-1970s had led to a closure of mass labour migration in Europe but elsewhere the booming economies of the oil-rich Gulf countries led to structural dependence and exploitation of migrant labour which was increasingly recruited from Asia rather than neighbouring countries in the Middle East (Castles et al. 2014). From the 1990s, labour migration, both documented and undocumented, generally increased in destination countries, as in Southern Europe and the United States. The latter, with the largest number of immigrants in the world, saw the number of foreign-born workers increase from 12.9 million in 1994 to 23.9 million in 2009, with workers from Mexico and Central America increasing from 4.6 million to 9.6 million (Cordero-Guzman and Niñez 2013: 4). Massey and Espinoza (1997) suggest that Mexican–US migration was primarily driven by the increasing integration of the two national economies through NAFTA and the mechanization of several sectors of the Mexican economy, which had displaced large numbers of workers. In turn these processes pushed Mexicans to move to the United States, especially if they had relatives and social networks in the country which then led to further migration.

While the majority of migrants are filling less skilled employment, more and more states have sought to attract the skilled and highly skilled (Shachar 2006): a quest for the brightest and the best ‘knowledge workers’ in an attempt to compete globally. Knowledge workers are wooed by states as modern and productive subjects and as an investment in rational knowledge, with a key role played by science, technology and management. Several traditional settler societies, such as Australia and Canada, had from the mid-1990s boosted the proportion of skilled labour migrants at the expense of family migrants. Though the UK had sought to globalize its labour flows from 2001 (Kofman 2008), more recently several other EU countries have enacted their own national policies and the EU Blue Card to attract non-EU highly skilled migrants (Cerna 2013).

However, inadequate routes of legal entry, especially for less skilled labour markets has generated increasing irregular migration, which Portes (1978) had earlier argued was the result of structural determinants in sending and receiving countries that benefited both types of countries. More recent scholarship has suggested that other factors, such as the disjuncture between economic and political interests, or what Hollifield (1992) called the liberal paradox, and the consequent attempt to micro-manage immigration through a complex series of migrant statuses (Bloch and Chimienti 2011), played their part.

It is difficult to estimate exact numbers of irregular migrants (PICUM 2013). The US has the largest number of undocumented migrants which reached an historical high estimated to be 11 million in 2011, and since the 1990s surpassing the number of legal migrants (Pew Hispanic Centre 2014). For Europe, the *Clandestino* project estimated there were 1.9 to 3.8 million undocumented migrants. Furthermore, the gender distribution varies considerably. In the US, women constitute 39.4 per cent of the adult undocumented population, with 58 per cent of undocumented women in the labour force (Pew Hispanic Centre 2014). In Europe, in 2010, women averaged 18 per cent of the migrants apprehended in the EU-27 (PICUM 2013).

The pressure to emigrate for regular and irregular migrants has been fuelled by a number of developments, such as structural adjustment programmes, marketization of services, poor wages, and high, un- or under-employment, placing the onus for social reproduction away from the state and on individuals and families. Sending states too have been involved in promoting transnational supply chains of labour (Phillips 2009), although few have envisaged or implemented more comprehensive migration strategies of formal labour schemes. Some countries such as the Philippines have developed an elaborate institutional infrastructure encouraging and normalizing emigration and providing assistance prior to departure and at return and reintegration stages. Over one

million migrants are sent abroad annually, with altogether eight million in 200 countries. This diaspora is dominated by women amongst land-based migrants and men in marine occupations (Spitzer and Piper 2014). Other countries such as Indonesia and Sri Lanka have emulated the Philippines in promoting the export of domestic workers through temporary contracts, and to a lesser extent the more skilled, such as nurses (Rosewarne 2012). However, governments have had very limited roles in recruitment which has meant its extensive commercialization through private agencies, which in Bangladesh, India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka undertake over 90 per cent of recruitment (Haque 2005).

Labour migrants have often borne the brunt of job losses due to the economic crisis. Yet, overall, worsening economic conditions have not led to as large-scale returns to home countries as might have been expected (Castles et al. 2014). To some extent that has depended on the conditions prevailing in countries of origin. For example, the labour shortages and rising wages in a number of Eastern European countries following enlargement in 2004 meant that many migrants returned as a result of worsening economic conditions in Western Europe. In some instances women may fare better than men, given the female presence in domestic and care work compared to men's involvement in construction, which was very badly hit in Southern European countries (Bettio et al. 2013) and in the US.

Migrants may also be forced to return because of lack of resources or through compulsory removals. Deportation of irregular migrants from the US, however, has reached historically high levels. In 2013, 438,421 individuals were deported compared to 211,000 in 2003. The majority did not appear before a judge while the number without a previous criminal conviction (240,000) has been on the increase (218,000 in 2012). While the numbers of Mexicans apprehended at the border has decreased substantially, the numbers of Central Americans and unaccompanied minors has increased (Gonzalez-Barrero and Krogstad 2014). Migrants have

also encountered hostility from the citizenry of destination countries who pressurize their governments to repatriate them: for example in Malaysia, Singapore, South Korea and Thailand (Spitzer and Piper 2014). Growing hostility, especially in the UK, has also been expressed towards the free movement of European migrants, as indicated by recent surveys (Duffy and Frere-Smith 2014).

Economic and political crises, national debt and the attendant austerity measures have furthermore generated large-scale emigration from countries that had previously attracted significant immigration. This has been particularly marked in Southern Europe and in Ireland where young and educated people have 'voted with their feet' (Triandafyllidou and Gropas 2014), heading for European economies, such as Germany and the UK, that have been less affected by the Eurozone crisis. Triandafyllidou and Gropas argue that this flight represents not just poor economic conditions (unemployment, under-employment, low salaries), but also a desire to be autonomous as an adult and a crisis of confidence in their society.

Rise of Precarious Labour

The growth of global labour migrations has been accompanied by the intensification of non-standard contracts, contracting out of services and the deregulation of labour, resulting in precarious employment (see Hewison, in this volume) becoming a dominant feature of the social relations between employers and workers in the contemporary world (Standing 2011) and constitutive of a new global disorder (Schierup et al. 2014). As Vosko (2009) has commented, precarious employment is a concept that can be useful in capturing the messy reality of changing employment systems and gender relations in contemporary societies. Precarious work may be defined as work for remuneration characterized by uncertainty, low income, and limited social benefits and statutory entitlements. It is shaped by the relationship

between employment status, form of employment and dimensions of labour market insecurity as well as social contexts and social location (Vosko 2009). Precarious employment is insecure and unstable, often, but not always, associated with nonstandard types of employment arrangements such as part-time or fixed-term obtained through agency work that deviates from the normative model of employment. Welfare restructuring has also led to costs of social reproduction and the transactional costs of entering and continuing in the labour market (e.g. making applications, travel to interviews for a series of temporary employments) being increasingly borne by the individual and families.

Though not restricted to migrants, employers' search for cheap and docile labour has led them to use migrant workers to fill jobs with precarious statuses. In the UK, there has been a dramatic spread of low-paid, insecure and casual work (zero-hours contracts, agency work, variable hours and fixed-term contracts) since the financial crash of 2008. In 2008 there were 655,000 men in the casualized labour market. That number has risen by 61.8 per cent to 1.06 million. The casualized female workforce has increased by 35.6 per cent, from 795,000 in 2008 to 1.08 million in 2014 (Roberts 2014). Furthermore, temporary permits, especially for less skilled work, produce unfree labour (Skrivanková 2010), where migrants are tied to a particular employer and are therefore not free to circulate within the labour market in which they are working (Fudge 2013). At the extreme end, those with undocumented statuses and asylum seekers without the right to work confront conditions of hyper-precarity (Lewis et al. 2014).

SITES AND SECTORS OF LABOUR MIGRATION

Demand for migrant labour is not evenly distributed geographically or between sectors. Sassen (1991) highlighted the significant role

of global cities, such as London and New York, in attracting migrant labour. The expansion of financial services accompanied by the informalization and casualization of labour, she argued, resulted in polarization between high earners, on the one hand, and low-waged employment, on the other. The latter category was increasingly filled by immigrants. In New York City the immigrant population more than doubled to 3 million between 1970 and 2008, rising from 18 per cent to 36.4 per cent, while the native-born population declined by more than one million (DiNapoli and Bleiwas 2010). Most of the growth occurred from 1990 to 2000, when the number of foreign-born residents grew by nearly 38 per cent. In 2008, the five occupations with the most foreign-born workers were nursing, psychiatric and home health aides; janitors and building cleaners; maids and housekeepers; construction labourers; and registered nurses.

Though this analysis of polarization and the shrinking of the middle class had been disputed in its application to London in the 1990s (Hamnett 1994), Wills et al. (2010) have argued that deregulation of labour markets, contracting out, intense competition in private and public sectors (public administration, education, health), together with financialization, have led to growing polarization since the 1980s. By the first decade of the twentieth century, London had come to resemble New York in class and income polarization. In 1986, 18 per cent of Londoners were born abroad, but by 2006, 35 per cent of its working age population had been, a level approaching that of New York. Subcontracting and deregulation has held down wages at the bottom. In London, in particular, the wages of the poorer-paid failed to keep up with average increase in wages and, with the welfare benefits received by citizens, this made such work particularly unattractive for non-migrants (Wills et al. 2010). Thus almost half of those filling elementary jobs (e.g. household domestics, contract cleaners, waiters, hotel housekeepers) were born abroad. In some hospitality workplaces, such

as hotels, less than 10 per cent of employees are British-born (McDowell et al. 2009).

Global cities also reveal a migrant division of labour in which migrants are differentially placed in relation to precarious work, have a propensity to be clustered around agency work, and show a different ability to attain future occupational mobility. McDowell et al. (2009) in their study of two workplaces in London (a hospital and a hotel), highlight differences in the degree of precarity, social entitlements, occupational mobility and scope of transnational movements according to nationality, immigration status, race, gender and educational capital. Thus Eastern Europeans had the right to employment, were often better educated, and had the intention of moving out of the sector into more skilled employment once they had improved their language competence. They also could move freely between the UK and their country of origin, which many did with the economic crisis in the UK and improved conditions in their home countries post 2007–8. Though disadvantaged in some respects, their advantages rendered them relatively privileged. On the other hand, non-EU migrants, many of whom were not entitled to benefits, either because they did not have a permanent residence permit or were undocumented, were forced to accept poorly paid work in order to survive.

Broad sectors could be further divided into distinct sub-sectors, each with their own migrant profile and type of precarious employment. In London hotels, house-keeping was staffed by Eastern Europeans on casual agency contracts; the clerical and management positions, including front of desk, requiring fluency in English, were staffed by Western Europeans, white Australians, Americans and South Africans, with relatively secure contracts. Quite different again were employees doing the less skilled work in hospitals (National Health Service), who were predominantly people of colour from Afghanistan, Jamaica, India and Sudan. Many had lived in the UK for a while, some had the right to remain, others did not.

Their contracts, though short-term, included the option to be renewed. Amongst the skilled workers in the hospital, such as doctors, nurses and occupational therapists, many were also of migrant origin; although they were likely to belong to trade unions and professional associations, and often directly employed by the NHS, nonetheless they experienced discrimination on the basis of their nationality or race and were placed on grades below their skill level or in difficult to fill specialities, such as geriatric care.

Of course though major cities have developed increasingly complex divisions of migrant labour, they are not the only sites to have attracted growing numbers of migrants. Rural areas in developed countries continue, as they did in the past, to draw upon growing numbers of migrant workers, often with seasonal contracts, to perform agricultural tasks. In the US for example, this category increased from 28,000 in 2000 to 139,000 in 2010 (Castles et al. 2014). In Canada, though smaller in number (25,000–28,000 per annum), seasonal, mainly male, workers have been recruited from Central America and Mexico (since 1973) and form a large and entrenched component of agricultural labour (Fudge 2013).

Very different levels of attention have been devoted to specific sectors. Amongst the elementary jobs, domestic and care work have received considerable scholarly and policy considerations. The driving force behind the overall increase of female labour migration in many parts of the world has been the significant growth of domestic workers, from 33.2 million in 1995 to 52.6 million in 2010 (ILO 2013), much of it undertaken either by migrants or historically disadvantaged minorities, though the contribution of migrant women varies between countries. The regions with the largest number of domestic workers are in Asia, Latin America and Africa. There was also extensive intra-regional migration as well as migration to other regions, especially the Middle East.

It was, however, the emergence of domestic and care labour in developed countries

in North America and Europe in the 1990s which generated extensive empirical research and theorization in terms of the globalization of social reproduction (Truong 1996). This new phase of the transfer of reproductive labour contrasted with earlier female internal migrations flowing into export production zones (electronics, garments, textiles) and small-scale production of handicrafts (Mies 1986) which was an element of the New International Division of Labour from the 1970s. International female migration into sectors of production, such as light manufacturing and electronics, also occurred from the South to the North (Morokvasic 1984; Phizacklea 1983). In some instances the rapid turnover of female labour in export processing zones (EPZs), meant that some women continued to migrate internationally, for example from Mexico to the US (Sassen-Koob 1984). Based on the empirical research of Filipinas in Italy and the US conducted by Rhacel Parreñas (2001), Arlie Hochschild (2000) conceptualized the empirical studies of the transfer of emotional and physical labour from the Global South to the Global North as global chains of care to capture the global redistribution of physical and emotional labour from less wealthy regions, whether in the South or the poorer regions, to wealthy regions of the North (Lutz and Palenga-Möllnbeck 2010). Theoretically the global care chains framework has become the dominant lens while the carer in the household has effectively become the emblematic figure of global feminized migration (Kofman, 2013).

However, the global care chains literature has tended to channel research into a narrow set of sectors, sites and skills (Kofman and Raghuram 2015). In particular, its analysis is framed in terms of flows between households, thus rendering invisible the other sites, external agents and institutions of care interacting with the household. Migrants may also be employed in residential homes. Yet in some countries of East Asia, such as Japan and Korea, the existence of long-term insurance schemes and reluctance to use migrant

labour has meant that there is relatively little use of migrant labour in this sector (Teo 2015), except for co-ethnics or those who have married citizens.

The assumption has also been that transnational mothers are the vehicle for transferring care, thus setting aside the diversity of familial arrangements of those providing care and their relationships with their families in the country of origin. Migrant males, too, are involved in providing care, especially for the elderly (Cangiano et al. 2009), as well as other household reproductive activities such as maintenance (Kilkey et al. 2013) and gardening (Ramirez and Hondagneu-Sotelo 2009). Non-nurturing reproductive activities, often undertaken outside of the home, such as cleaning (Aguilar and Herod 2006), cooking and food retailing, and heavily staffed by migrants and minority ethnic groups, are also under studied (Duffy 2005). For example, in the EU-15 the accommodation and food services sector is one that relies most heavily on migrant workers (24 per cent of the workforce) (Cangiano 2012).

Even more than domestic work, migrant sex workers are likely to be undocumented or semi-compliant, or residing in a country without having the right to engage in sex work. More than any other area of labour, major debates rage about its morality, whether it constitutes work and its relationship to trafficking, especially between those arguing that prostitution is always coerced and should therefore be abolished and those who contend that sex work may be voluntary as well as forced (Chuang 2010; Doezema 1998).

Considering the high numbers of migrants employed globally, there has been surprisingly little attention paid to the construction industry. Though numbers employed were heavily affected by the economic crisis in the US and some European states, in other countries such as South East Asia the use of construction workers has been buoyant (in Singapore 180,000 migrant workers were employed in December 2007 rising to 277,000 in June 2012), as it has been in Gulf countries such as Qatar, with its explosion of

infrastructural building in preparation for the 2022 Soccer World Cup for which large numbers have been recruited from South Asia (400,000 Nepalese). Construction workers are important in internal migration, for example as in China, where about one-third of the 150–170 million internal migrants are in this sector. They demonstrate different pathways into employment, generating precarious statuses derived both from the market and the state (Swider 2015).

Although most studies of labour migration focus on the less skilled, there are also other significant workers circulating through the global economy, such as intra-company transferees (ITC), information technology (IT) and health workers at the other end of the skill spectrum. As with the less skilled, these sectors are highly gendered in their composition. Intra-company transfers, largely consisting of information technology, finance and management, have been associated with the mobility ethos of the global economy and a networked society (Castells 1996). This form of mobility is particularly common in liberal economies, such as the UK (470 per million population in 2009), US (211), Australia (283) and Canada (290). In the UK, the growth in ITC visas (from 22,000 in 2009 to 33,260 main applicants in 2013), overwhelmingly taken up by Indians, has been used to bypass the quotas placed on non-EU skilled migrants (Travis 2012). At the same time, the right to settle of this group has been curtailed such that only those earning £41,000 per annum are able to remain for five years and thus become eligible for a permanent visa; those earning more than £24,500 but less than £41,000 may only reside for a year. In the US, large numbers of IT workers are recruited either as students or through the H-1B visa by employers who may support them to apply for a Green Card at the end of five years. Some writers (Matloff 2013) contend that the employers' argument of a shortage in IT and engineering is not borne out by evidence and that the real reason for their championing of H-1B visas has to do with lower wages paid to an effectively immobile

labour force in exchange for sponsoring them for a Green Card, and hence creating a group of de facto 'indentured servants' (p. 224).

One of the other major skilled sectors, that of health professionals, primarily composed of doctors and nurses (including midwives), has risen unevenly since the 1970s, and particularly since the mid-1990s. Health is a sector subject to close regulation from the state and professional associations in relation to accreditation and training, which is often funded by the state. Fluctuations in funding of numbers trained, cost containment in service provision, and shortages, especially in rural and unpopular geographical areas, and specialisms, have led to recruitment of migrant health professionals in a number of countries. In 2000, 18.7 per cent of doctors and 10.7 per cent of nurses in OECD countries were foreign-born (OECD 2007). About half of foreign-born doctors were in the US, 40 per cent in the EU and the rest in Australia and Canada, with large numbers also outside of the OECD in the Gulf countries. Although India (15 per cent of doctors) and Philippines (15 per cent of nurses) have supplied the largest numbers, the debate about the brain drain from the loss of health professionals has been most pronounced in relation to Caribbean and African countries, where, in some instances, over 90 per cent of health professionals are to be found abroad. Evidence from an EU project on mobility of health professionals (Schultz and Rijks 2014: 13) indicates that mobility patterns of doctors and nurses are different: that is, for doctors it is the opportunity to enhance career development, while for nurses, overwhelmingly female, it has to do with earning more money than in the country of origin. In addition, many nurses end up working as carers in private households, and residential and nursing homes where there is a greater staff shortage, or while waiting to go through the various stages of accreditation and registration. As with other sectors, temporary recruitment and stratification arising from differences in procedures for accreditation and registration have increasingly characterized the status of health professionals.

For example, in Australia, only those from English-speaking countries, Hong Kong, Singapore and some EU countries, can obtain off-shore registration; all others need to do so in the country (Boese et al. 2013), thus protracting and imposing greater resource demands on the latter. For this group it effectively produces a continuum between those working in skilled and less skilled sectors.

ROLE OF STATES AND STRATIFIED MIGRANT STATUSES

As discussed in the previous section, the state creates multiple forms of migrant statuses for entrants, reflecting differential rights to work and social entitlements (Dauvergne 2009; Kofman 2008), often in response to the interplay between forces demanding freedom of movement and of control. Through the construction of specific and conditional migrant statuses, migrants are channelled towards precarious and unfree forms of labour in particular jobs and segments of the labour market (Anderson 2010; Bauder 2006; McDowell et al. 2009). Migrant statuses include: (1) work authorization; (2) the right to remain permanently in the country (residency permit); (3) not depending on a third party for one's right to be in the country (such as a sponsoring spouse or employer); and (4) social citizenship rights available to permanent residents (e.g. public education and public health coverage) (Goldring et al. 2009). Migrant status may have long-term effects on where migrants work in the labour market, effects that linger even if the migrant's status has improved (Anderson 2010).

In terms of the highly skilled, states have often sought to attract them through a points based system (PBS) calculated on a human capital model derived from a variety of criteria, such as educational level, language, work experience and potential earnings. However, especially since the 2008 crisis, and due to the evidence that many skilled migrants were working below their qualifications,

most recent adopters have created a generation of hybrid systems that combine elements of both points-based and employer-driven immigration (Sumption 2014). In Europe, the recent opening to highly skilled migrants has been even more closely attuned to the needs of knowledge-based societies through an emphasis on income earned as a key determinant of eligibility to enter. Salary levels serve as the translation of societal and economic value which does not take into account the complexity of skills, and how or where they were acquired. The emphasis on income levels is likely to have outcomes which favour male migrants (Kofman 2014), given their concentration in sectors such as information technology and finance. And while some countries such as Germany and Sweden have expanded their labour market immigration to include the semi-skilled, these too may favour skilled and largely male-dominated trades (Quirico 2012: 29).

In contrast, the economic demand for less skilled labour has not been acknowledged for a number of reasons in the major destination states: the discourse of the knowledge economy and society has led to the idea that less skilled labour is not required; importing migrants to do less skilled work generates competition with a destination society's workforce; and/or the reluctance to permit the settlement of less skilled workers and their families because they are deemed to be unworthy of becoming citizens of a society, or out of fear that they may swamp the smaller number of indigenous citizens, as in the small Gulf countries where the majority of the population are migrants.

Ruhs (2006) suggests that in relation to low-skilled labour there is a trade-off between numbers and rights. Countries are prepared to admit large numbers with temporary statuses and high levels of turnover without giving them rights to prolong their residence beyond a stipulated number of years, and thereby gain settlement rights. Despite the obvious demand for household domestic and care work to ensure social reproduction needs in receiving societies, immigration regimes

largely either ignore or marginalize such labour or, where it is recognized, offer highly restrictive conditions of entry, residence and work. This reflects a general undervaluing of female labour, resulting in the offer of temporary contracts of two to three years, which, even if renewable, cannot lead to permanent residence or citizenship (Surak 2013). In effect, the lack of a local workforce in the face of growing demand 'creates a twilight zone of informal labour markets' (Lutz 2011: 192) and migrants with an irregular status.

Southern European countries with familial welfare regimes have provided quotas supplemented by frequent regularizations of undocumented migrants, especially targeted towards workers in the household care sector. Even in the midst of severe economic crisis, employment in this sector has not declined, although quotas have been withdrawn in countries such as Italy and Spain (Castagnone et al. 2013). The denial of the need for domestic work and care has also led a number of countries to introduce an *au pair* scheme, not only for the common scenario of childcare, but also for the care of elderly persons, as in Denmark (Stenum 2010). For those tied to their employer as a live-in worker under a sponsorship system, as in the Middle East and South East Asia (Rosewarne 2012), this represents a kind of structural dependence.

As the demarcation between the skilled and the less skilled becomes more pronounced, the outcome of such classifications in immigration regulations acquires a considerable bearing on access to social rights and the right to permanent residence and citizenship. Yet permitting the entry of high numbers of temporary migrants with fewer rights even pertains to the classic countries of immigration, where temporary programmes have become a normal element of the immigration system, both for skilled and less skilled workers. It has been argued that in Canada, and in other destination states:

temporariness is being institutionalized in new ways, producing a hierarchy of categories of

migrants ranging from the temporarily temporary to the permanently temporary and temporarily permanent, shaped by entry category, legal residency status and socially recognized skills ... which create 'paper borders' that are made up of the increasing number and range of restrictions, limits and containments regarding legal residency status, access to employment and settlement services. (Rajkumar et al. 2012)

In Australia, for example, temporary statuses have grown rapidly and up to half of permanent migrants are now drawn from those originally with temporary statuses, with the number of the latter category uncapped (Hawthorne 2011). Temporary migrants are not eligible for Medicare except for citizens from a country with which the Australian Government has signed Reciprocal Health Care Agreements, such as the United Kingdom, Ireland, New Zealand and some European countries. They also have limited access to free public school education for their children in certain states and lack access to family assistance or social security payments. Indeed there has been much concern in academic and activist literature about the precarity faced by temporary migrants, including highly skilled ones, due to legal status, lack of institutional security and access to public goods, and dependence on an employer (Boese et al. 2013). Temporary programmes serve as a stepping stone to permanent status and form a preparatory stage where migrants are expected to demonstrate that they have the resources to settle successfully without the assistance of state-funded immigrant settlement and language programmes.

Furthermore, less skilled migrants may be precluded from applying for permanent status. For example, in Canada there are a number of schemes for the less skilled but none, except the Live-In Caregiver Program (LCP) (implemented in 1992), permit access to settlement. Unlike resident workers, workers admitted to Canada under these migrant categories cannot simply quit and find another job; they need official permission to circulate in the labour market. Their precarious migrant status is used to assign them to jobs

that are precarious and this limits their ability to improve their terms and conditions of employment.

These limitations often lead to deskilling. The LCP shows how immigration policy, the workings of a temporary programme and credentializing combine to deskill women and leave them with partial citizenship. From 1993 to 2006, 35,719 women and 919 men entered under the scheme, of whom 83 per cent of entrants had Philippine citizenship. A number of them had nursing qualifications, but couldn't take a licensing exam until they had permanent residence, for which they could apply once the two years of tied employment had been completed. Moreover, they must have practiced nursing at some time in the past 3–5 years. However, activist campaigns have led to some changes in the programme, such as increasing the time during which a caregiver can accrue relevant work experience as nurses for the purposes of conversion of permanent residency status and for those waiting for a permanent residency permit to enjoy an open work permit (Basok and Piper 2013). In November 2014, the LCP system was overhauled, ending compulsory residence in the employer's household (CIC 2014), which after all these years was deemed to constitute a form of modern slavery.

Another form of temporary migration is circularity, defined as repeated temporary migrations, which has also become a buzzword and strongly promoted by the EU in its bilateral cooperation agreements. It is seen as a neat solution to the management of migration, responding to labour market shortages but making no demands on the integration of workers (Triandafyllidou 2013). Patterns of circularity vary across time and space; it may not necessarily be imposed by top-down regulations but may also be created by those seeking to combine the need for income and transnational familial obligations, for example older Ukrainian women in Italy working as carers (Marchetti 2013) or male Polish handymen in Germany who support the social reproduction of middle-class

households through irregular periods in the country (Palenga-Möllenbeck 2013). In some instances, as with Filipina entertainers, the constant circularity may lead to a sense of belonging nowhere and have implications for welfare entitlements (Parreñas 2010).

Although immigration regulations are usually a sovereign matter, they are also influenced by a range of factors that act above and below the level of the state. Apart from free movement zones, there are also examples of new regulations which are forged between countries through bilateral and partnership agreements; such regulations have become an essential element of the governance of international migration and have increasingly involved non-state international actors such as the IOM and the OECD (Kunz 2013). Along with Memorandums of Understanding they offer guidelines for the treatment of migrants from entry through to employment. A wide range of measures have been covered in such treaties, from screening (for health, skills, etc.) to recruitment, training, rights of entry for family, employment rights (rights to switch employers, dispute, union) and return rights (Peters 2013). Partnership agreements as part of broader economic cooperation, such as those signed between Japan and Indonesia (2007), the Philippines (2008) and, more recently, with Vietnam (Mackie 2014), have also facilitated the entry of those working in reproductive sectors such as carers and nurses.

Of course, official labour migration is not the only source of labour; categories admitted for purposes other than work, for example spouses or other family members, students, and asylum seekers and refugees (Pastore 2010), also contribute to labour supply (Cangiano 2012). These indirect labour immigration flows, especially of family migrants, were for a long time ignored, their contribution to the labour market discounted (Pastore and Salis 2013), and their migration conceptualized solely in cultural and social terms. In addition, there are those with irregular statuses outside managed labour migration, many of whom have entered legally but

have become irregular. However, they may acquire a regular status and provide labour following marriage with a citizen, registering as a student, or through a regularization programme. As van Hooren (2012: 143) has shown, 'labour migration policies for care workers only had a limited impact on the employment of migrant workers' since 'many migrants employed in the social care sector rely on residence permits unrelated to employment or ... are already living in the country as irregular migrants'.

MIGRANT WORKERS' RIGHTS AND INTERNATIONAL CONVENTIONS

Given the insecure conditions under which many migrants work, to what extent do international human and migrant workers' rights provide protection? The UN Convention on the Rights of All Workers and their Families has not had much impact. It was adopted in 1990 but took until July 2003 to be ratified, and by the end of 2014 had only been ratified by 47 countries, significantly, none from the major employer countries. However, Fudge (2013) argues that since restrictions on migrant workers' freedom of movement and attachment to employers (workers can be attached for up to two years) are permitted by the ILO and UN, the principle of national sovereignty dominates against that of universal human rights in questions of immigration. Thus, immigrant rights instruments are compatible with, rather than prevent, precarious migrant statuses; what the instruments do is limit the extent of the restrictions placed on migrant workers' rights and how long these last.

There seems to have been more success with putting the plight of domestic workers on the international agenda. The vast majority of domestic workers are excluded from the prevailing labour laws in the country where they work. The ILO (2013) estimated that only 10 per cent of all domestic workers, or 5.3 million worldwide, share the same legal protection as other workers. However, this varies

massively between regions. In advanced countries, 12 per cent enjoy coverage from general labour laws, although 77 per cent are covered by a mixture of general and subordinate or specific laws and 5 per cent have no coverage. In Latin America, with 37 per cent of global domestic workers, 17 per cent benefit from general coverage and none are completely excluded. At the other extreme, and in two regions with large numbers of domestic workers, Asia Pacific has 61 per cent and the Middle East has 99 per cent of domestic workers with no general coverage.

Unlike the Convention for the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and their Families, the ILO Convention 189 on Decent Work for Domestic Workers, was passed in June 2011, and though only recently ratified (5 September 2013), was quickly signed by December 2014 by 16 states, including four European countries (Germany, Ireland, Italy and Switzerland), and backed by the European Commission, as well as South Africa with its large migrant domestic worker population. It may also have an effect beyond non-signatory countries through the improvement of working conditions (minimum wages, days off, annual paid leave, and sick pay), which a number of countries are addressing. For example, Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and UAE are concluding a region-wide contract, but this is not the same as inclusion in national labour laws. It may also give sending states some leverage in bilateral agreements and in the support of migrant workers, as has happened in the Philippines, a country with an extensive diaspora of migrant domestic workers.

The work that went into the adoption of the Convention from NGOs, social movements and unions may also have catalysed improvements in local and national conditions. Regional coalitions and networks, such as the Asian Domestic Network, the Latin American and Caribbean Confederation of Women Domestic Workers (CONLACTRAHO) and Respect and Solidar in Europe, engaged in building alliances to press for the ILO Convention (Basok and Piper 2013: 272–273).

In the US four states (California, Hawaii; Massachusetts, New York), from 2010 to 2014, passed legislation which brought domestic work within the ambit of standard labour laws. The federal government also recognized 2.5 million home care workers as being covered by minimum wages and overtime under the Fair Labor Standards Act (Boris and Klein 2012), for which the Caring Across Generations and National Domestic Workers Alliance had campaigned for some time. Hence, more generally, the Convention may raise awareness amongst politicians and policymakers and assist NGOs campaigning for improved labour rights and working conditions for domestic and care workers.

International conventions may serve to discipline as much as to protect workers and be used more as an anti-immigration instrument rather than for the protection of victims. In 2000 the United Nations Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children (the U.N. Trafficking Protocol) was passed at the same time as the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 in the US. In each, trafficking was defined as the movement or recruitment of men, women or children, using force, fraud or coercion, for the purpose of subjecting them to involuntary servitude or slavery in one or more of a wide variety of sectors (such as agriculture, construction or commercial sex). A coalition of feminists, conservatives and Christian evangelicals came together to promote an agenda for the abolition of prostitution worldwide (Chuang 2010: 1657–1658).

Feminist migration scholars have criticized the tendency to equate sex work with sex trafficking (Agustín 2005; Parreñas 2010). Although the Palermo Convention broadened the remit of trafficking to include other forms of labour, attention has continued to focus on sex work and to conflate it with sex trafficking with the effect of limiting women's mobility and in some cases actually forcing them to use informal routes instead of the previously available formal route. This was the case for entertainers in Japan, classified as skilled workers for the purposes of immigration

entry, and who the US designated in its 2004 Trafficking in Persons Report as being the largest group of self-trafficked persons in the world. As a result the Japanese government substantially tightened the conditions of entry, stipulating that to qualify for a visa the individual had to have two years' experience as an entertainer prior to applying to enter Japan or taking up an internship. Thus from 2004 to 2006 the number of entertainer visas fell by 90 per cent, from 82,741 in 2004 to 8,607 in 2006 (Parreñas 2011).

Construction work has also generated much discussion about the poor working conditions and rights of workers. Pressure to improve conditions has emanated from campaigning by the media. In particular these issues have been raised for Qatar, where 964 workers from Nepal, India and Bangladesh are estimated to have died while living and working in the Gulf state in 2012 and 2013. The Qatari government has claimed that its proposed changes to the *kafala* sponsorship system, which ties migrant workers to a single employer, represent a major step forward, but Amnesty said the proposed changes were at best a minor improvement. Instead of tying a worker to the employer indefinitely, the proposed new law will limit the restriction to the length of the contract, which could be as long as five years (Gibson and Patterson 2014).

CONCLUSION

Labour migrations have become global, but as argued in this chapter in a highly asymmetrical way. Though most attention has focused on the precarious employment and unequal terms of exchange of labour from the Global South to the Global North, the analysis needs to take into account much greater complexity in the circulations within a heterogeneous South and North. In addition, labour migrations are segmented and differentiated by gender, class and ethnicity, resulting in complex migrant divisions of

labour, entitlements and access to welfare. However, future research needs to go beyond the focus on a few selected sites and sectors, such as domestic work and care, and cover the full spectrum of migrant divisions of labour as they have emerged in different places. And as has been noted, those contributing to the labour force may not have entered as migrant workers but also from other flows, such as asylum-seeking, family and students. Research thus also needs to take into account the different pathways into employment. Furthermore, we need to recognize that temporariness and precarity have also been increasingly experienced by skilled migrants, primarily due to changing immigration statuses, which place migrants under probationary periods and seek to make them responsible for their own welfare and settlement. Thus the research agenda should explore the full gamut of stratifying outcomes produced through the interplay of employment conditions, residence and immigration regulations.

Though occurring unevenly, the recession since 2008 has not resulted in the level of return migration which might have been expected. However, there are relatively few studies of what kinds of strategies female and male migrants have pursued to ensure their social reproduction. Some have returned, others may have moved to third countries, as with secondary migration in the European Union, while others may have remained in the country of destination, at the same time accepting more insecure and precarious conditions of employment.

The attempts to improve migrant workers' conditions of employment and social rights have focused on the most vulnerable. While progress has been achieved relatively quickly in the ratification of the convention on decent work for domestic workers, it has been argued that national sovereignty still shapes international conventions in this field, allowing unfree labour to be tolerated for specified periods. The extension of rights therefore needs to bring in a range of organizations and media that are able to operate beyond the state.

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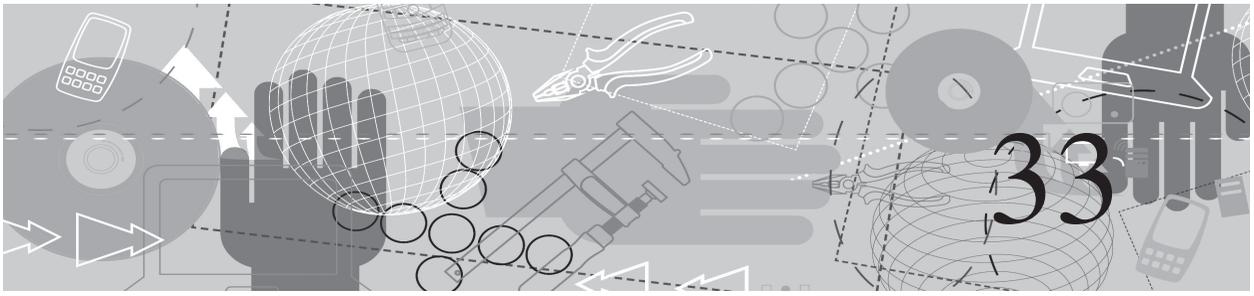
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Critiques of Work

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The critique of work has a rich intellectual history, spanning not only a number of centuries but also a range of academic contexts, bringing together insights from areas as diverse as sociology, existential philosophy and political ecology. This chapter aims to give a flavour of this history, broadly charting the foundations, adaptation and rediscovery of critique by a number of key authors. The chapter's approach is roughly chronological, tracing the development of key themes from their origins in Marx and other early utopian writers, through to the Frankfurt School, and into the sociological debates and post-work theories of the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. Whilst the approaches of the critics are varied, and their concerns differently accented, we are justified in treating these texts as a body of work in so far as they are all broadly concerned with the emancipatory transformation of society. Regardless of their angle of approach, their ultimate focus has typically been on the rift between present realities and future possibilities. To this degree, critiques of work

are a component of (or at least consistent with) the broader project of critical social theory, described by Maeve Cooke as 'a mode of reflection that looks critically at processes of social development from the point of view of the obstacles they pose for human flourishing' (2004: 418).

Whilst critiques of work are usually situated in a Marxist tradition, a number of key themes are also prefigured in the work of early utopian writers such as Charles Fourier, William Morris and Thomas More. Fourier, for example, believed that work had the potential to become a primary source of gratification and the fullest expression of human powers, but was troubled by the rift between his ideal and experiences of the real work provided by industrial capitalism. He referred to the mills and factories of the early nineteenth century as 'veritable graveyards', where the workers were motivated by nothing more than a joyless concern for their own survival. Work was performed with a sense of loathsome necessity, producing a lethargy in the workers that would also poison their

leisure time (Beecher, 1986: 276). Fourier contrasted this miserable reality with a theory of attractive labour, developed in his detailed blueprints for Harmony – a utopian society beyond the historical phase he called ‘civilisation’. In Harmony, work would be organised in such a way as to fill the worker with zeal, rather than dread. Workers would be able to choose their work freely, carrying out a broad variety of productive activities in pleasant surroundings, with both a spirit of co-operation and a healthy sense of competition. Pleasurable work would be the centrepiece of Fourier’s utopia, becoming an almost play-like activity, and virtually eliminating the worker’s need for rest and escape (Beecher, 1986: 274–96).

Fourier’s desire to dissolve the boundary between work and play was later echoed by William Morris, who also blamed the joyless realities of labour on its imposed nature, as an activity ‘forced upon us by the present system of producing for the profit of the privileged classes’ (1983: 44). Like Fourier, Morris was interested in the prospects for transforming work into a source of pleasure and aesthetic delight: it should become a feature of what he called ‘the ornamental part of life’ (1983: 46). He was more tentative than Fourier on the subject of how this might be achieved, though Morris did deviate from Fourier in one significant way. Whereas Fourier believed that even the most menial work could be made pleasurable, in a manner that would permit a welcome extension of the working day, Morris was among those who considered the possibilities for an elimination of unpleasant toil via a wholesale reduction of work. This particular theme can be traced as far back as St Thomas More’s *Utopia*, initially published in 1516, well before the advent of industrial society. More suggested that the need for toil might be reduced by producing more durable goods, by limiting the production of goods judged to be superfluous, and by sharing the necessary work more equally among the population (More, 1962). It is in relation to the prospects for reducing toil that writers like Morris, witnessing the

rapid growth of industry, also began to debate the possible applications of technology. Would the growing efficiency afforded by production technologies allow future citizens a greater degree of freedom from unpleasant work? Morris hoped that it would, such that unattractive labour would ‘be but a very light burden on each individual’ (1983: 51).

In the utopian writing of authors like Fourier, Morris and More, a number of key critical themes were already evident. The possibility of making work more creative and fulfilling, reducing the amount of necessary work and utilising new technologies to eliminate the need for toil, are all key ideas that would later re-emerge in different academic contexts. Whilst this may be true, however, it is Marx’s ideas that are usually credited as foundational in the critique of work. It is chiefly Marx’s ideas that inspired the rich vein of sociological thought on the spiritual and psychological costs of working, with many later authors explicitly framing their contributions as attempts to rediscover or adapt Marxist ideas in light of emerging social problems and conflicts.

MARX AND HIS LEGACY

Central to Marx’s critique of work is a conception of labour as ‘the life of the species’ (Marx, 1959: 75). Through it, humans are said to purposefully refashion the natural world, extending the possibilities of human life: ‘man is forever remolding nature, and with each alteration enabling his powers to achieve new kinds and degrees of fulfilment’ (Ollman, 1971: 101). Humans are distinguished from other species by their ability to transcend the limits imposed upon life by nature and, in a conscious process of self-expression, craft a world of artificial objects. It is on the basis of this moral ideal of self-realisation through work that Marx undertook his critique of work under capitalism. In *Capital*, Marx wrote that the possibility of human fulfilment through the exercise of

productive capacities was being smothered by industrial forms of work, which ‘mutilate the labourer into a fragment of a man, degrade him to the level of an appendage of a machine, destroy every remnant of charm in his work and turn it into hated toil’ (Marx, 1961: 645). Work thus ceases to be an activity that expresses the human need to appropriate the surrounding world, and instead becomes an alienated activity, performed out of the necessity to make a living. In an often-quoted passage from his *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts*, Marx suggests that the experience of alienated labour has a quality of detachment, rather than involvement:

In his work ... [the worker] does not affirm himself but denies himself, does not feel content but unhappy, does not develop freely his physical and mental energy but mortifies his body and ruins his mind. The worker therefore only feels himself outside his work, and in his work feels outside himself. (Marx, 1959: 72)

Following Marx, theoretical writers like Bertell Ollman (1971) helped deconstruct the various dimensions of alienation, whilst more empirically-minded ones like Robert Blauner (1964) or Harry Braverman (1974) helped bring the concept to bear on the realities of industrial workplaces. A recurring theme in these texts, as well as in Marx’s own critique, focused on the alienating effects of the division of labour. Carried to new extremes in capitalist society, the division of labour was said to imprison the worker in a narrow role, diminishing his area of responsibility, draining his work of creativity, and cutting him off from his product. The heightened use of mechanical technologies was also criticised for taking the skill out of work, reducing the worker to a mere supervisor or appendage of machines. As several of the above authors pointed out, these techniques found their ultimate expression in Taylorism: the set of organisational practices famously developed by the American engineer, Frederick Taylor, in the late 1800s. Summarising the effects of Taylorism, Braverman argued that its essential function was to confront workers with a

fully thought-out labour process in which they functioned as cogs and levers, rather than human beings (1974). Sociological understandings of the degradation of work have also been enriched by a number of books that have collected the written and spoken accounts of workers themselves (Fraser, 1968; Terkel, 2004).

Marx’s critique of the labour process continued to inspire critiques of work in a contemporary, post-industrial context as well. There is ample evidence to suggest that Taylor’s legacy of rationalisation lives on in a new era of ‘digital Taylorism’, with computer technologies now standing in for mechanical equipment in ongoing efforts to capture and codify the moves of the labour process (Brown et al., 2011). Though writers have not always used the term specifically, the effects of digital Taylorism are nonetheless being documented in a range of job-types, with researchers exploring the extent to which computer technologies are being used to intensify and discipline conduct in the modern office. In today’s classic example of bad work – the call centre – auto-diallers connect both inbound and outbound calls straight to employees’ headsets, and monitoring software automatically collects data on each worker’s productivity. One study describes the modern call centre as an ‘electronic panopticon’ (Fernie and Metcalf, 2000), whereas another refers to an ‘assembly line in the head’ of the call centre worker, who always knows that the completion of one task will immediately be followed by the uptake of another (Taylor and Bain, 1999).

Marx’s critique of work has also been drawn upon to understand the challenges of working in the modern service economy. Building on C. Wright Mills’ pioneering ideas around white-collar work (1956), Arlie Hochschild developed the theory of ‘emotional labour’, observing the extent to which the worker’s ability to manage and display emotions had come to represent a source of commercial value (1983). Hochschild incorporated observations from her study of female flight attendants in the 1980s, exploring the

ways in which workers in contact with the public are required to induce or suppress their feelings, sustaining an appearance that produces a desired state of mind in the client. Hochschild argued that the company's attempts to manage the interactional behaviour of workers results in a kind of 'emotional Taylorism', which forces employee conduct into narrow, prescriptive channels. Service workers may experience this as a kind of personal violation: emotional labour calls upon an element of the self that we honour as deep and integral to our individuality, and puts that element to work (Hochschild, 1983: 7). Hochschild's ideas represent a novel extension of the discussion around work's degradation, prompting sociologists to question whether the shift from an industrial to a service-oriented economy really represents a reintroduction of the 'human factor' into work, as some had speculated (Offe, 1985: 137–8). Franco Berardi argues that, when set to work on alien goals, human communication actually becomes a job like any other: '[it] loses its character of gratuitous, pleasurable and erotic contact, becoming an economic necessity, a joyless fiction' (Berardi, 2009: 87).

These selective examples help illustrate the considerable legacy of Marx's critique of the labour process in sociological studies of work – an issue explored in more depth elsewhere in this handbook (particularly in Chris Smith's chapter on the 'Rediscovery of the Labour Process') – but of greater concern here is the manner in which theorists have responded to work's degradation. How should an emancipatory theory and politics reply to the degradation of work? What should be its main political goals and who are the main social actors in the conflict? These matters all represent significant points of contention in critiques of work after Marx but, significantly, we can also trace a degree of ambiguity in Marx's own views.

The political project most commonly attributed to Marx is what we might call socialist modernisation. Within this framework, the impoverishment of the worker is

approached primarily as a problem of ownership: the labourer is alienated as a result of his subordinate position in the relations of production. The Marx that students usually first encounter is the one who calls for the abolition of the class system and an end to exploitation, via the collective appropriation of the means of production. According to this well-rehearsed theory, the dignity of work could be restored by eliminating the exploitation of the working class. For reasons I explore below, 'post-work' critics would in later years question the validity of this project. They would shift their focus away from the possibility of a liberation *of and through* work, to instead explore the potential for liberation *from* it, via a reduction of work-time. However, the extent to which the call for liberation from work constitutes a break with Marx should not be exaggerated.

Alternative readings of Marx see his call for collective appropriation – or the 'Plain Marxist Argument' (Booth, 1989: 207) – contrasted with ideas in his later writing, where some believe he tempered his earlier enthusiasm for the category of work. It has been suggested that Marx himself 'could not clearly decide if communism meant liberation from labour or the liberation of labour' (Berki, 1979: 5). In a famous passage from *Capital*, Marx appears to argue for the former, relegating work to the mundane 'realm of necessity': the obligatory toil that must be overcome before humans can really begin living in the 'realm of freedom', where they become available for the world and its culture. Marx was explicit in his suggestion that the realm of freedom can be expanded by shortening the working day (Marx, 1981: 959). His mixed views on machine technologies also reveal a 'post-work' tendency in his thought. For Marx, although machine technologies represented an instrument for the alienation of labour, their tremendous productive capacities could also theoretically be directed towards the reduction of necessary labour, leaving a greater space for autonomy outside the sphere of production: '[Capital] is instrumental in creating the means of social

disposable time, and so in reducing working time for the whole society to a minimum, and thus making everyone's time free for their own development' (Marx, 1972: 144).

Marx's mixed views on technology prefigure a central premise in what sociologists would come to call the 'end of work' argument, which is based on the assumption that advances in production technologies are gradually eliminating the need for human labour (Rifkin, 2000). Whilst this trend is a significant cause for concern within the existing structures of capitalist society – where the replacement of workers by machines leads to forced unemployment – the elimination of work has also been celebrated by the end of work authors for opening up the theoretical possibility of a radical expansion of free-time. We find a version of this idea in a famous essay by John Maynard Keynes, for whom the promise of freedom beyond necessity seemed like a realistic possibility. In his essay on the 'Economic Possibilities for Our Grandchildren', first published in the 1930s, Keynes predicted that advances in production technology might reduce work-time and allow the population as a whole to work less (1932). He discussed this in terms of 'the economic problem' (of scarcity) having been 'solved' by society, and it would be at this juncture that man would have the privilege of confronting a deeper problem: 'how to use his freedom from pressing economic cares, how to occupy the leisure, which science and compound interest will have won for him, to live wisely and agreeably and well' (1932: 366). Whether the possibility of orienting production towards the ends of greater human autonomy could ever be realised, of course, depended not only on technological developments, but also on society's ideological and political commitments. To what extent should society tolerate the unchecked growth of the economy? To what extent does it remain rational to uphold the work ethic as a cultural ideal? In short, how should societies use the time that productivity gains have won for them? It is these sorts of questions that defined the terrain of critical social

theories after Marx, as writers attempted to figure out why, in a time of unprecedented material abundance, people's lives were still characterised by toil and repression.

THE FRANKFURT SCHOOL

What Keynes and sociology's end of work thinkers did not always fully account for is the sheer resilience of capitalism. This was a key theme in the work of the Frankfurt School, whose authors played a central role in the effort to refocus Marxism after its troubled relationship with totalitarianism. The element of Marx that most interested the Frankfurt School was not his dialectical materialism (or 'Plain Marxism'), but his theory of alienation. Alienation in Marx's sense of the word – as the separation of humans from their essence as workers – was re-imagined as the severance of humans from their potential capacities; the intention of critique was to 'show that essential human needs and powers are being repressed and distorted in capitalist society' (Kellner, 1984: 82). Analyses began to focus upon the repressive consequences of an economic system that had become reified, seeming to take on a life of its own through its endless pursuit of profit and growth. At the heart of Critical Theory was an objection to the reduction of humans to functionaries or instruments of this system, which was forcing people to invest more and more time and energy in the service of abstract economic goals, stunting their individuality and destroying the capacity for autonomy. Several key theorists would also turn to Freudian psychology in an attempt to understand the depth of people's integration into the capitalist system, which was no longer simply behavioural, but also profoundly psychological and emotional in character.

Max Horkheimer was among the first to suggest that the novelty of Western capitalism's repressive features – be it unemployment, economic crises, militarisation or

terrorism – is that they increasingly occur in the midst of unparalleled abundance and technological possibility (1972: 213). The critical theorists generally viewed advanced industrial society as one in which human potentialities were being squandered: whilst modernity is pregnant with potential for human flourishing, it remains tethered by a reified system of production. Herbert Marcuse argued that Critical Theory provokes us to ask how society's intellectual and technological resources can be best used 'for the optimal development and satisfaction of individual needs and faculties with a minimum of toil and misery' (2002: xli). This reference to present realities versus future possibilities once again recalls the basic structure of the end of work argument: the potentialities of advanced industrial society mean that humans no longer need to be imprisoned by labour, and yet, in reality, labour continues to dominate all aspects of existence.

Many of these themes played out explicitly in Marcuse's 1955 book, *Eros and Civilisation* (1998), making it worthy of some extended attention here. Marcuse was among those who analysed the repressive character of capitalist society by combining Marxist ideas with Freud. Central to Marcuse's argument was Freud's concept of *sublimation*: the human capacity to mediate instinctual drives and turn them towards higher cultural aims. The repression of instinctual drives is made necessary by the 'reality principle', a Freudian term signifying the limitations placed upon human freedom by the fact of our mortal existence in nature, as well as our need to exist peaceably with others. Sublimation is necessary in order to achieve social harmony and protect humans against the recklessness of their instincts, but Marcuse also argued that sublimation had become 'the privilege and distinction of man' (1998: 38). This is because it introduces the possibility of sublime pleasures like thinking, aesthetic creation and the appreciation of beauty, which can only be accessed when we suspend our immediate instincts and postpone the thirst for gratification. It is through

sublimation, for example, that it becomes possible to enjoy one's work, to the extent that it might even be experienced as a form of creative play.

Importantly, however, Marcuse argued that 'the mastery of instinctual drives may also be used *against* gratification' (1998: 38). This is the case in advanced industrial societies, where Marcuse believed that repression did not represent 'the privilege of man', but a feature of domination. Marcuse shares Marx's view of labour as alienated in capitalist societies: people's labour constitutes 'work for an apparatus they do not control', and 'becomes more alien the more specialised the division of labour becomes'. The largest part of people's lives has become 'painful part of people's lives has become 'painful time, for alienated labour is absence of gratification, negation of the pleasure principle' (Marcuse, 1998: 45). The crux of his argument is that historical development has seen Freud's reality principle replaced by a puritanical 'performance principle', which calls upon humans to renounce their impulses in this alienating form of labour, long after technological developments have made possible a radical reduction of the need for toil (1998: 35). People in advanced industrial societies are thus subjected to a 'surplus repression'; the sphere of life in which humans labour at the mercy of their need to survive – or what Marx called 'the realm of necessity' – has been artificially extended. The word 'artificially' is used here to suggest that the scarcity which motivates people to work no longer represents a harsh fact of nature, but an imposition of the social system, which not only distributes the available resources unevenly across the social hierarchy, but also manufactures new needs in order to warrant the extension of work. Surplus repression introduces '*additional* controls over and above those indispensable for human association' (Marcuse, 1998: 37). It sees work foisted upon people not by natural scarcity, but by a runaway economy focused only on profit-making and its own expansion.

Marcuse's argument culminated in a call for a sensible rebalancing of freedom and

necessity, to be achieved via a reduction of working time. This rebalancing would limit the sphere of unpleasant labour and allow more time for rewarding, aesthetically creative work, outside the formal economy. However, Marcuse also argued that capitalism remains aggressively mobilised against this possibility. It battles against the prospect of work's reduction by constantly agitating the needs of consumers. Not only does the exaggeration of material needs strengthen people's dependence on income earned through working, but it also helps vindicate the creation of an enormous range of dubious, hitherto unnecessary work tasks, based around the manufacture, distribution and marketing of superfluous consumer goods. In a rhetorical move common to a number of critiques of work, Marcuse performs a reversal of conventional wisdom: according to his analysis, capitalist production does not exist to meet the needs of consumers; it is in fact the needs of consumers which are designed to meet the ends of production. Furthermore, he argued that the proliferation of mass consumption was muting people's desire for radical change by producing a veneer of contentment or a 'happy consciousness'. This classic critical theme was perhaps clearest in Adorno and Horkheimer's incisive account of capitalism's 'culture industry', which they believed was encouraging people to accept tranquilising, mass-produced entertainment as compensation for their alienation (1997).

It is fair to say that the popularity of this reading of consumer culture – as a prop for the sphere of production – waned significantly in a contemporary context, where it would be eclipsed by more enthusiastic accounts of the affluent society from cultural studies (particularly the Birmingham School). Authors in this tradition would later approach consumption as an elective practice, depicting an active or 'agentic' consumer who exercises choice, control and creativity in his or her consumption activities (for example, Featherstone, 1991; Fiske, 1989; Willis, 1991). Here the individual is less a manipulated consumer than an expressive *bricoleur*, who stitches

together the symbolic meanings of commodities to creatively author a self-identity. These approaches would often place themselves in deliberate opposition to the Frankfurt School, disputing the view that consumption is a practice chiefly driven by the motive of private profit. If cultural studies has done consumers a service in approaching them as agents rather than dupes, however, it has arguably done so at the cost of a greater crime: that of abandoning the enterprise of critique altogether. Because it emphasises so heartily the value of symbolic goods as markers of identity, some authors argue that cultural studies has reproduced the very ideology of consumerism that critics have usually tried to expose (Lodziak, 2002; Schor, 2007). It has colluded in the troubling message that 'we are what we buy'.

Part of the reason cultural studies abandoned the critique of consumerism derived from a belief that the Frankfurt School's understanding of consumer behaviour – as driven by imperatives from the production side – implied an insultingly low estimation of public intelligence (Schor, 2007). It was commonly held that the Frankfurt School saw consumers as hapless 'dupes', manipulated by the hidden persuasions of advertising and the culture industry. What this line of argument risks ignoring, however, are the ways in which the economic and temporal arrangements of capitalism have reshaped our routines and built-environments, so as to make many forms of consumption virtually obligatory. In its endless pursuit of profit, capitalism has continued to seek new markets by converting a growing range of activities, previously conducted in intimate or community life, into commodified goods and services. Activities that were previously excluded from the economic sphere are being progressively pulled into its orbit, and the satisfaction of a growing range of needs, from social contact to knowledge, transportation, health, fun, shelter, nourishment, safety and self-distinction – needs which were previously satisfied with a lower volume or smaller range of commodities – is now increasingly

reliant on financial transactions in the market. Some theorists argue that our dependency on commodities is bolstered by the alienation of labour, which forces each person's productive capacities into narrow fields, 'resourcing individuals, via income, for consumption, and under-resourcing individuals, by devouring time and energy, for autonomy' (Lodziak, 2002: 89). The proposition that consumption is perpetuated by the alienation of labour also implies that a certain amount of people's spending can be interpreted in terms of an individual effort to find consolation for the miseries of employment. Shopping is seen as a personal attempt to create a niche of enjoyment that compensates for the alienating experience of work (Bauman, 2001: 15; Gorz, 1967: 68; Soper, 2008: 576). There is a sense of critical humility in these theories of consumer behaviour that has not always been appreciated by those authors who have rejected consumer critique on the basis of its supposedly judgemental tone. What we see in the critiques are not pious references to the consumer's gross materialism or doe-eyed manipulation, but the development of a softer and more complex understanding of the various ways in which the market *encircles* us, often making it feel difficult or unnatural to meet needs without recourse to spending (Humphrey, 2010).

If the members of the Frankfurt School are often overlooked as key critics of work, it is perhaps because they are more likely to be cited in their capacity as critics of consumerism – a capacity in which they are often viewed negatively. However, what the distinction between critiques of work and critiques of consumption leaves unacknowledged are the multiple ways in which production and consumption, or working and spending, are analysed in connection with one another. In the critiques of the Frankfurt School, the amplification of consumers' needs under capitalism is viewed as a key component of what Galbraith called 'the elaborate social camouflage', which keeps societies from realising that a reduction of work is possible (1958: 264).

WORK IN CRISIS

Perhaps the measure of good critical social theory is the extent to which it refuses to remain static, and instead adapts itself to changing social and cultural realities. The strength of the Frankfurt School's contribution was that it safeguarded Marx's critical impulse, but also rethought many of his key ideas in light of the new opportunities and constraints opened up by the affluent society. This revaluation of Marxist ideas was taking place in more mainstream sociological circles as well, where Marx's critical utility was questioned in the form of a debate around the 'crisis of work' in capitalist society. The Plain Marxist Argument (calling for a reversal of alienation through workers' appropriation of the means of production) was put on trial, and the project to liberate workers in and through their work was called into question by sociologists who pointed to a decline in work's objective and subjective significance. In his 1985 essay, 'Work: The Key Sociological Category?', Claus Offe also pointed to a decline in the heuristic value of 'work' as an analytical category, i.e. as a principle through which social scientists order the social world, interpret its social conflicts, and discuss the future. Due to the diminishing objective and subjective significance of work, it would no longer be 'the obvious pivot around which social scientific research and theory formation rotated' (Offe, 1985: 132). If crisis authors like Offe were to be believed, the early Marx's call for the liberation of work would have to be abandoned in favour of a new emancipatory politics, featuring new social agents, and new theories of conflict with which to interpret their struggles. It is in this sense that sociological debates on the crisis of work would parallel the ideas of key post-work authors such as André Gorz, whose efforts in the late twentieth century partly consisted in an attempt to incorporate the changing realities of work into the emancipatory project of critical social theory.

Among the changes that needed to be taken into consideration was the widely

documented shift from an industrial to a post-industrial economy, composed increasingly of jobs requiring the worker to perform services or manipulate information, rather than manufacture material goods. It was suggested that Marx's ideal of work – as the productive intervention of humans in the material world – had become irrelevant to the experience of work in a post-industrial economy (Lazzarato, 1996). In terms of the worker's experience, even materially productive work could be considered part of the shift towards immaterial labour. In so far as the worker supervises automated machines rather than directly working on materials, he or she is more like a governor of production rather than a producer. The sociologist Richard Sennett illustrated this well in his case study of a modern bakery, in which workers pushed buttons rather than kneading and baking (1998: Chapter 4).

A second reality that needed to be consolidated was the phenomenon of mass unemployment. Some wondered whether the early Marx's singular focus on the liberation of humans in and through work was ill-advised in a society suffering from long-term job scarcity: 'the theory of the alienation of labour risks degenerating into an ideology of and for the "work-based society" that is now passing away' (Vandenbergh, 2002: 33). The post-work theorists who backed this idea did not suggest abandoning the Left's attempt to humanise and democratise labour, but they did wish to account for the fact that, for significantly large numbers of people, the most pressing problem was no longer exploitation, but worklessness, or the absence of opportunities to be sufficiently exploited. (The poverty and social exclusion that often accompany unemployment have been well documented in sociological research, and are explored further in Ken Roberts' chapter in this volume, 'Unemployment'). Even if it were possible to combat job scarcity through the creation of work, the constant economic expansion that would be required to keep pace with the displacement of workers by productivity gains has very troubling environmental implications.

In addition to the claim that capitalism is eliminating the objective need for human labour, the revaluation of Marx was also partly prompted by the observation that work is losing its *subjective* significance to individuals in contemporary capitalist societies. This claim is itself based on a number of propositions. One is the suggestion put forward by theorists such as Daniel Bell and Zygmunt Bauman, that it is now consumption rather than work that forms the basis of people's identities (Bauman, 2005; Bell, 1976). Another is Offe's proposition that the work ethic 'can only generally function under conditions which (at least to some extent) allow workers to participate in their work as recognised morally acting persons' (1985: 141). In light of the degradation of work by the principles of Taylorism, Offe argued that it had become less and less clear whether modern jobs could offer the sense of moral agency, recognition and pride required to secure work as a source of meaning and identity. In advanced capitalist societies, it is normal for people's professional lives to completely contradict the values and activities that characterise their private lives. According to this argument, 'work' has been severed from 'life', and is only subjectively central in so far as it is hetero-regulated, either by penalties or by incentives like income, security and prestige (Gorz, 1989: 35–36).

A further element of the claim that work has lost its subjective significance points to the increasingly discontinuous nature of workers' biographies. Offe wrote that in the 1980s, a sense of biographical continuity between what the worker is trained for and what job they do, as well as a sense of coherence within working life itself, had already become exceptional (1985: 142). He pre-empted the claims of sociologists such as Sennett (1998), Beck (2000) and Bauman (2000), whose numerous writings on the unstable, fluid or 'liquid' nature of late modernity would, from the 1990s onward, popularise the idea that capitalist societies were entering an age of insecure employment. These theorists claimed that more

and more people would be forced to stitch together patchwork careers, characterised by chains of casual or fixed-term contracts, and interspersed with periods of unemployment. The overriding feeling would be one of insecurity, and with the prospect of meaningful, lasting employment becoming ever more scarce, work would lose its status as a cornerstone of people's identities.

If work fails to bolster a sense of identity or life purpose, the discipline of workers increasingly depends on their more instrumental motives, with work coming to be regarded as little more than a dull necessity, or a mere means to pay for pleasures. However, Offe argued that even the instrumental function of work – as a vehicle to earn money – might become less significant with rises in living standards. He quoted Robert Lane, who represents an argument that has gained an increasingly compelling evidence base in the social sciences. Lane's research finds that commodities, and thus the income to purchase them, are only weakly related to the qualitative or non-material goods that genuinely make people happy, such as autonomy, self-esteem, friendship, a good family life, or tension-free leisure (2000). Offe suggested that should people become fully cognisant of the questionable relationship between material affluence and well-being, the significance of work to people's everyday lives could be undermined even further (1985: 143–4).

The claim that work is losing its subjective significance is explored in more detail elsewhere in this handbook. Here it is sufficient to note that not all of the propositions upon which this claim is based are universally accepted. Offe's proposition that the Taylorised nature of modern production has, in recent times, undermined the work ethic, risks overlooking the fact that work – in civilisations as old as Ancient Greece – has often been regarded by people as little more than an unpleasant necessity (Anthony, 1977). Several sociologists have also marshalled evidence to challenge the claim that work biographies are becoming

more discontinuous, and work more insecure (Fevre, 2007; Doogan, 2009). These objections do carry some statistical weight, even if it is important to recognise that the experience of insecurity is tied to more than the purported rise of non-standard employment contracts (since it is also a feature of today's glut of non-unionised and low-wage work, performed against the backdrop of a receding welfare state). Furthermore, even if it is true that advanced capitalist societies have entered an unprecedented age of job insecurity, it is still unclear as to whether this has diminished, or only strengthened the subjective significance of work. It could equally be argued that the sought-after nature of rewarding and stable employment heightens the personal and cultural significance attributed to work. Part of the problem is that measuring people's level of attachment to work poses a significant methodological challenge. Attitudes to work are difficult to gauge in a society where work is normalised, where alternative modes of social organisation and engagement are not generally acknowledged, and where work continues to be socially constructed as a primary source of income, rights and respect. If people tell social researchers that they want to work, they could be celebrating the intrinsic value of employment, but they could equally be expressing frustration at the lack of other opportunities for fulfilment, possessing the same socially validated status as work (Gollain, 2004: 41).

Many of the above discussions – from critiques of the affluent society to sociological commentaries on the 'crisis of work' – come together in the post-work theories of the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. Authors such as André Gorz, along with Italian Autonomist writers such as Michael Hardt, Antonio Negri and Paolo Virno, replaced Marxist hopes for a liberation *in* work, with a call for a liberation *from* work. The industrialist utopia was abandoned and replaced by a new vision, fit for a society in which work was in crisis. With work becoming more scarce, and work's rationalisation

divesting it of opportunities for expression and creativity, it was argued that work's role in people's lives should be limited, allowing their autonomous capacities to flourish outside the economic realm. Working hours were to be reduced and the necessary work distributed more evenly, allowing people more time to engage in those self-defined, convivial, or political activities that had previously been neglected. Having more free-time would allow the hours outside work to be used for something more than the recuperation, entertainment and reproduction of workers.

These lines of argument can all be traced back to Marx's valorisation of a realm of 'freedom beyond necessity', and also echo Keynes' vision of a society liberated from toil, and hence free for better things. Perhaps the most crucial thing to note about those who endorse post-work theories is that they are not engaged in a refusal of work *tout court*, but a refusal of the *ideology* of work: the notion of work as a moral duty, as life's most noble calling, and the necessary centre of social rights and citizenship. The 'refusal of work', as the Autonomists referred to it, was not a refusal of productive activity itself, but a refusal of the capitalist relations of production which distort workers' creative and productive capacities (Tronti, 1980). The post-work authors did not renounce work, but they did attempt to highlight the dysfunctional elements of a work-centred society and hold open the possibility of alternative ways of expressing and relating.

One of the more practical problems that post-work theories confronted was the problem of how to allow people the freedom to work less without jeopardising their incomes. Integral to the post-work project was hence also a proposal to uncouple work and income, and explore alternative policies of wealth distribution. A range of academics and activists in Europe and North America would debate the merits of a Basic Income or citizen's wage, designed to reduce people's dependency on the wage system by establishing a baseline below which income would not be allowed to fall. This would open up

a series of technical debates around the conditions, size and official purpose of a Basic Income (Widerquist et al., 2013). For the Autonomists, the Basic Income was supposed to free people from the necessity of self-preservation, allowing them a greater degree of freedom for self-extension. In so far as they broke with socially conditioned ideas about what counts as realistic, such proposals were certainly utopian, but this tended to represent a source of pride rather than shame. It should also be noted that these critiques avoided the totalitarian or prescriptive trappings of utopian blueprints: rather than seeking to enrol individuals in some grand scheme or plan, their more modest goal was to furnish people with the time and energy to become active participants in the construction of their own futures; by freeing people from work, the goal was to widen the scope for 'self-valorisation' (Hardt, 1996). The demands for basic income and shorter hours 'prescribe neither a vision of a revolutionary alternative nor a call for revolution, serving rather to enlist participants in the practice of inventing broader methods and visions of change' (Weeks, 2011: 222).

We can learn more about the details of post-work theory by looking at one of its key contributions: André Gorz's *Critique of Economic Reason* (1989). In this – his most sociological work – Gorz would frame the post-work project as a struggle to establish a 'politics of time'. He suggested that the most pressing political question faced by advanced industrial societies, at the pinnacle of their productive capacities, is the question of what should be done with the time being saved by productivity gains: what meaning and content do we wish to give society's new found free-time? Gorz cites Karl Polanyi's definition of socialism as a project to subordinate economic activities to the felt needs and values of the people. A politics of time would promote the usage of savings in working time 'for societal and cultural ends, which will relegate economic objectives to the second rank' (Gorz, 1989: 185). Gorz echoed the Frankfurt School when he lamented the distance between

this socialist ideal and today's 'technicised' society, in which the question of what to do with society's new found free-time is instead left to the dictates of capital. For want of being able to make free-time produce surplus-value, capitalism re-appropriates the time saved by productivity gains by creating new forms of work which are often unproductive, environmentally destructive, and push the realm of commercial activities more deeply into hitherto uncommodified areas of life (Bowring, 1999). Dominated by economic rationality, modern society suffers from a lack of time for tenderness, moral contemplation and aesthetic appreciation; it becomes a society of 'hardened sensibilities' and 'hardened thought', in which people are losing their capacity to gauge the value of activities whose worth transcends economic or social utility (Gorz, 1989: 87). A politics of time would seek to channel the free-time saved by productivity gains to humane ends, allowing a greater scope for the free self-development of the individual and an enrichment of social and political life. A politics of time would also address the need for social justice, because it would aim to redistribute savings in working time 'so that each man and woman can benefit from them' (Gorz, 1989: 191).

Gorz's argument culminated in his call for a politically co-ordinated, staged reduction of working hours, on a society-wide scale. For the greatest impact, Gorz argued that this policy should be accompanied by approaches to architecture and urban design that would help facilitate the autonomous co-operation of individuals. As well as allowing more opportunities for self-development and co-operation, he speculated that shorter working hours might also improve conditions *within* work. A renewed appetite for autonomy, developed outside work, has the potential to rejuvenate traditional labour struggles by encouraging people to be 'more exacting about the nature, content, goals and organisation of their work' (Gorz, 1989: 93). For professional workers, working less might even represent an opportunity to work with greater efficacy and sensitivity, because they

would have the time to update their knowledge, try out new ideas, and diversify their interests (Gorz, 1989: 193–94). Society's failure to develop a politics of time results in the alternative, more destructive scenario, which Gorz believed was playing out in modern capitalism. In this scenario, work-centred visions of progress continue to be promoted, even though work is disappearing. People's everyday lives become dominated by a struggle to find and keep work, consumer needs continue to be agitated in order to maintain levels of production, and governments on both the Right and Left support policies for the creation of jobs, for no purpose other than to provide people with work. Free-time continues to be a scarce, privileged resource, and any work that people do perform under their own volition is usually confined to domestic chores, performed unhappily, under horrid time-pressures.

One of the most undesirable features of modern capitalist societies, according to Gorz, is their ongoing 'dualisation' into a core of elite employees and a mass of low-paid, precarious workers. Many of the latter will be forced to perform servile work (housework, care work, catering), i.e. 'work which those who earn a decent living transfer, for their own personal advantage and without gains in productivity, on to the people for whom there is no work in the economy' (Gorz, 1989: 7). Other writers had referred to this phenomenon in terms of a 'Brazilianisation' of the West (Therborn, 1986) and, in more recent times, the everyday experiences of the swelling service class have also made for some disturbing case studies (Ehrenreich, 2002). To those who would celebrate the growing service industry as an engine for the creation of work, Gorz asked: onto whom exactly are society's elite workers unloading their chores, and what inequitable conditions must exist in order to make people prepared to spend their lives serving? Gorz also prompts us to reflect on the cultural and experiential costs of the conversion of a growing range of activities, previously conducted in intimate or community life, into formalised paid services. When a growing

range of once intuitive or ordinary activities is incorporated into the economic sphere and requires the services of paid workers, what price do we pay in terms of our ability to operate autonomously, co-operate with others, and have faith in our own judgements? These issues were given extended attention in Gorz's *Critique*, but have also been considered elsewhere – in Negri's reference to the 'social factory' (1988: 208–9), in Ivan Illich's critique of the dominion of expertise (1973), in Habermas' commentary on the disintegration of society's 'communicational infrastructure' (1987), and in a compelling study by Arlie Hochschild into the 'outsourced self' of modern-day America, where children's parties, friendship, marriage advice, and even gravesite maintenance can be outsourced to paid professionals (2012).

What must be noted here is the extent to which the political visions of the post-work authors – to reduce work-time and expand the scope for individual autonomy – would require a reconfiguration of theoretical approaches to social conflict and change. One of the goals of post-work theory was to restore the methodological and political primacy of subjectivity. This would see authors broadening their gaze to include a more varied range of sites, actors and conflicts. They would question the early Marx's faith in the objective tendencies of history, disputing his enthusiasm for the industrial proletariat as capitalism's revolutionary class. The critique of work would no longer be a project to restore an essential, prior, or non-alienated self, perverted by the degradation of work; instead it would emphasise future possibilities, undiscovered human capacities, and the right of individuals to determine the courses and actions of their own lives. In the case of the Autonomist writers, this focus on subjectivity would lead theorists to form alliances with a loose coalition of workers, students, feminists and unemployed people protesting in Italy in the 1960s and 70s (Wright, 2002). The goals of the Autonomist movement could not be articulated in terms of any single demand. People protested the wasted time,

lack of variety, and excessive administration of modern life. They not only complained about the injustices of the class system, but also targeted work itself, appealing to the modern worker's diminished sensory experience of the world. In the struggles of the Autonomist movement, we see the new and surprising structures of conflict which contemporary sociologists would try and theorise. Autonomist authors routinely referred to the cultural movements of the day in terms of a 'refusal of work', though sociologists would go on to theorise tensions between ideal types such as 'system and lifeworld', 'industrial production and self-production', or the clash between quantitative and qualitative conceptions of social progress. In many senses, the actors in the Italian movements embodied Gorz's notion of the 'neo-proletariat' – a demographically diverse 'non-class of non-workers' who, sensing that their time and capacities are being wasted in employment, decide to seek fulfilment in other areas of life (Gorz, 1982). It is important to note, however, that the neo-proletariat is not understood as a new revolutionary subject: 'It has no transcendent mission, no unity beyond the common experiences of those who compose it, no prophetic aura, no promise or capacity to reconcile the individual with the social, self and society' (Bowring, 1996: 111). The neo-proletariat embody a cultural disillusionment with work that has yet to find collective expression or political purchase. The anti-work sensibilities that Gorz and others believed were mounting, constituted a revolution only in people's hearts and minds, but whether this supposed disaffection with work would be translated into a genuine social alternative, remained to be seen.

THE FUTURE OF CRITIQUE

This leads us to a pertinent question: what status do critiques of work hold today? Is critical social theory still relevant in the context of a society which enjoys unprecedented

consumer liberties, and in which work continues to be heralded as a primary route to well-being and self-actualisation? It is certainly true that critiques of work retain a radical status, even within sociology itself. Reflecting on the state of the discipline, Fevre suggested that sociology has sometimes acted more like an accomplice than a critic of work. He lamented the extent to which some areas of economic sociology had grown to accept the primacy of economic rationality, neglecting classical theorists like Marx, Durkheim and Weber, whose trademark was to use 'non-economic meanings and values to critique economic behaviour' (Fevre, 2003: 3). In a similar sense, sociological research into the experiences of unemployment – even when conducted with humanistic intentions – has sometimes contributed to the glorification of work, in so far as it has often treated work unquestioningly, as a normal or natural state from which the unemployed person deviates (Cole, 2008).

The critiques seem most radical, however, when considered against the backdrop of society's mainstream political commitments. Offe suggested that the persistence of mass unemployment, particularly if it were concentrated in particular regions, might put an end to the stigmatisation of unemployed people, since the rate of joblessness could 'no longer be accounted for plausibly in terms of individual failure or guilt' (1985: 143). Yet we can now see that his confidence was misplaced, failing to anticipate the ideological fortification of work in neoliberalism, which in Britain has seen a revamped ideological focus on the virtues of 'hardworking people' (Tyler, 2013: Chapter 6). Apart from the Labour Party's cursory interest in 'work-life balance' in the mid-2000s, issues around working hours and job quality have generally disappeared from the mainstream political agenda, replaced by a focus on employability, and the cultivation of a workforce that will ensure the country's competitiveness in a global economy. The stripping back of the welfare state, which in recent times has seen a phased introduction of increasingly stringent

penalties for the non-worker, has also significantly reduced the latitude for resistance to work. Against the predictions of crisis from writers like Offe, work still appears to represent a key source of sociality, rights and status.

Concluding his expansive review of critical social theory, Edward Granter wrote that 'the ideology of work occupies an unassailable position in politics, policy, and popular discourse' (Granter, 2009: 182). Whilst this might be a reasonable assessment of the cultural and political climate in the early twenty-first century, work's critics have not been perturbed. Reviewing the critique of work from a contemporary perspective, Weeks argues that in a time of job scarcity, where post-industrial jobs employ worker's hearts as well as their hands, the ethical discourse of work is more well-fortified than ever, and the need for critique even more pressing (2011: 31). Recalibrating their focus and keeping pace with the latest trends in the world of work, today's critics continue to draw inspiration from critical social theory in their analyses of work's siege on the self.

The academic discussion around work's grip on personal and intimate life is still flowering. Some are taking aim at the modern corporation's attempt to encourage a total identification with work, via management styles that superficially encourage 'being yourself' and 'having fun' (Fleming and Sturdy, 2011). Some have commented on the related phenomenon of work's 'professionalisation', whereby even workers in menial roles are increasingly expected to display a convincing sense of professionalism, commitment and enthusiasm (Cremin, 2003; Weeks, 2011: 69–75). Others are exploring the spillage of work into the home, due to the rise of networked technologies (Gregg, 2011), and others still have taken issue with the fact that even unemployment has now become a form of work (Gorz, 2010; Southwood, 2011). A special issue of the journal, *Ephemera* (2013), turned a critical eye on the modern discourse of 'employability': the responsibility of individuals to improve job prospects by

acquiring credentials, networking, learning how to project the right kind of personality, and gaining life experiences that reflect the values sought by employers. For some critics, the discourse of employability represents little more than a sophisticated form of self-exploitation – it is the activity of the masochistic worker, who anxiously builds his or her résumé, ironing out character flaws, all under the burden of financial pressures and the internalised judgements of imagined future employers (Cremin, 2011). For its critics, the discourse of employability represents the latest step in the creeping subordination of life to work, as well as a masking device which functions to individualise the true, structural causes of unemployment.

Whether these contemporary critiques take aim at the corporation's deployment of the self, the spillage of work into the home, or the disciplinary power of 'employability', they all represent new twists on long-established critical themes. They all echo the central concerns of the Frankfurt School: that the free self-development of the individual is in peril, that people are still being reduced to functionaries in an economic system, and that there are fewer and fewer opportunities to perform activities that, defying the economic directives to work and spend, are meaningful as ends in themselves. Yet what is notable, perhaps, is the extent to which the ecological basis for critiquing work is now being foregrounded. We have seen a renewed focus on the ecological limits of a growth-centred economy (Lipietz, 1992; Meadows et al., 1972) with twenty-first-century critics like Anders Hayden problematising the reliance of employment levels on never-ending economic expansion (Hayden, 1999). In his popular book, *Prosperity Without Growth* (2009), Tim Jackson also cited the mounting body of scientific evidence to suggest that capitalist societies cannot possibly hope to sustain their current rate of production without major ecological consequences. Jackson points to the depletion of vital natural resources, the loss of biodiversity, soil pollution, deforestation, as well as that 'mother of all limits', climate

change, to illustrate the unpalatable consequences of endless economic growth.

Is it reasonable to suggest that growing awareness of the ecological limits to growth could nudge the critique of work outside its birthplace in radical theory? This remains to be seen, but there is certainly evidence of a resurgent interest in the critique of work, much of it with a prominent ecological component. The New Economics Foundation (a UK-based think-tank), for example, explored the potential social and environmental benefits of a shorter working week in their report, *21 Hours* (Coote et al., 2010), and also in their edited collection of essays, *Time on Our Side* (Coote and Franklin, 2013). These publications capture something of Erik Olin Wright's suggestion that social and political justice should be pursued by envisioning 'real utopias'. Wright's proposal involves moving beyond critical diagnosis and utopian fantasy to incorporate systematic reflections on the desirability and feasibility of alternatives, as well as grounded reflections on possible vectors for social transformation. He suggests that the argument for change is also strengthened when it explores already-existing experiments with social alternatives (Olin Wright, 2010). The New Economics Foundation's publications embody many of these qualities.

Critical theories of work have also enjoyed a degree of renewed prominence by way of a growing academic literature approaching notions of happiness, well-being and the good life. Channelling influences from Aristotle to recent statistical research on the factors of well-being, this literature alludes to a putative post-growth society in which leisure time rather than material acquisition would represent the true measure of wealth. Notable contributions have included Juliet Schor's *Overspent American* (1998), which questioned the 'work-and-spend' lifestyles that characterise modern capitalist societies, as well as Kate Soper's theory of 'alternative hedonism', which challenges the assumption that the transition to a post-growth society would need to be premised on a puritanical

commitment to living with less (2008). What this overlooks, Soper argues, are the numerous dissatisfying features of life as it is currently lived – including the time-poverty of a life largely spent working.

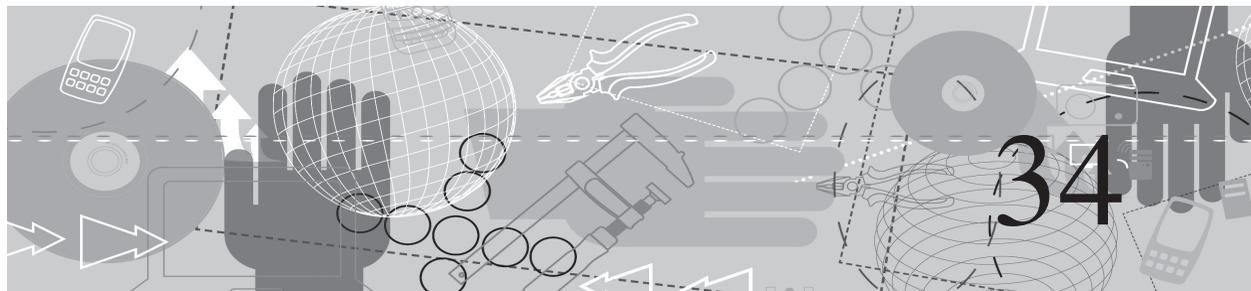
In the context of a society that Marcuse labelled ‘one-dimensional’, in which the prospect of social alternatives is rarely acknowledged, critics of work have striven to provoke the imagination, presenting a valuable opportunity for contemplation on the meaning, purpose and future of work. For today’s students, socialised by an education system with a distinctively vocational ethos, to read the critiques is to receive an education in desire, and a reminder that a long legacy of thinkers believed that social priorities could be realigned, and time spent differently. It is indeed perhaps the hallmark of critiques of work that they have usually attempted to elicit, as well as observe, social change, often by appealing to the casualties of a work-based society: the time for politics, moral contemplation, conviviality and creative activities, which have been displaced by capitalism’s narrow focus on commercial production and consumption.

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34

Global Labour Politics in Informal and Precarious Jobs

Jennifer Jihye Chun and Rina Agarwala

Workers and labour movements face new challenges in the twenty-first century. The organizations and practices that were effective in securing labour rights and improving living and working conditions in the twentieth century do not always meet the needs of contemporary workers, many of whom are employed in informal or precarious jobs¹ and have restricted citizenship and mobility rights as labour migrants and as members of subordinated gender, racial and ethnic groups. This is not only the case in low- and middle-income countries that possess limited economic and institutional resources for alleviating job-based poverty and inequality, but it is also the case in advanced capitalist countries with a longer history of providing secure, formal-sector jobs. Job growth in the US, Canada and the UK, for example, is concentrated in two-tiered urban service sectors, with a high proportion of women, immigrants and people of colour employed in low-paid, insecure jobs with limited access to union membership and benefits (Alberti 2014; Sassen 1998; Vosko 2000). Similarly,

in India and South Africa, where informal work has long been a feature of their post-colonial economies, job growth is still concentrated in areas operating outside the scope of formal labour protections, despite significant levels of industrial transformation and economic diversification (Agarwala 2013; Mosoetsa 2011).

Converging trends across the Global North and Global South can be attributed to the increased flow of capital *and* labour between countries. Firms that are under increased pressure to reduce costs in order to stay competitive in a global marketplace can relocate to other countries where labour and capital costs are lower, or they can recruit low-paid workers domestically by hiring immigrants, youth and the urban poor. Migrant labour flows, both sanctioned and unauthorized, have coincided with neoliberal business strategies to lower costs and undermine union power. The number of international migrants has not only increased in traditional immigrant-receiving countries such as the US, Canada, the UK, France and Australia, but also in new

migrant destinations such as the United Arab Emirates, Singapore, and South Korea. State support for liberalized, globalized markets has further accelerated these trends, enabling both national and transnational corporations to rely on unprotected groups of workers. While women are and have long been over-represented in ‘feminized’ spheres of informal and precarious work, more and more men’s jobs have come to resemble those historically relegated to women, as traditional forms of employment security as well as labour rights and protections have been dismantled across labour markets (Standing 1989).

The seemingly indomitable ‘race to the bottom’ in wages, working conditions and labour rights has fuelled the perception that vulnerable groups of workers are ‘unorganizable’, shorn of any agency in the face of shifting structures of employment and production. However, recent research in diverse national contexts has shown that such workers are *not* standing idle as flexible employment schemes and neoliberal economic transformations further degrade their jobs and livelihoods. Rather, informal workers are cultivating innovative strategies and creating novel organizational forms to decommodify their labour, regain their dignity, *and* address the unique challenges of working in low-paid, insecure and unprotected forms of work (Agarwala 2013; Alberti 2014; Cam 2014; Chun 2009; Milkman 2006). Moreover, their efforts span multiple histories and geographic scales of resistance. While in some countries, informal and precarious workers’ struggles began as early as the 1960s, in others they are more nascent. In some industries, these struggles are limited to the local and national levels, while in others local movements are forging transnational connections (Agarwala 2012; Gottfried 2015). Domestic work exemplifies this point. Migrant domestic workers, who service the growing middle-class urban demand for in-home cleaning, child and elderly care, stand at the intersection of multiple spaces, thereby connecting the transnational and local, the private and public spheres, and productive and reproductive work (Bakan and Stasiulis 1997;

Boris and Klein 2012; Glenn 2010). Although domestic work has long been excluded from most national labour law frameworks and deemed ‘unorganizable’, today it is a leading sector of innovation in both national- and global-level organizing efforts. The International Domestic Workers Federation, comprised of 58 affiliates in more than 30 countries around the world, was officially launched in 2013 to frame and lead the movement at the transnational level.

This chapter explores the shifting global landscape of labour organizing and class politics among workers in informal and precarious jobs. Given the widespread informality and precarity across global labour markets, workers’ struggles remain limited and have encountered mixed success. Nevertheless, their growth throughout the world highlights the beginnings of a potential paradigm shift in the way workers engage in collective action and build collective organizations. To examine this shift in greater detail, we must redefine our understanding of ‘organized labour’. Organized labour is *not* equivalent or limited to formally employed workers. The world’s informal and precarious workers are also organizing. Significantly, we propose that they are initiating novel approaches to holding capital and the state responsible for unjust employment relationships by cultivating what we call ‘alternative cultures’ of organizing.

Such alternative cultures display two noteworthy trends. First, they identify new *subjects* of labour – namely, women, migrants and workers in the Global South – who were largely excluded from twentieth-century labour movements. In the countries we have examined to date, informal and precarious workers’ movements are also being led by and directly addressing the concerns of women, ethnic minorities and migrants. In doing so, these workers’ movements compel labour scholars to integrate these previously excluded subjects into analyses of traditional worker subjects (such as men and local citizens). As the informal and precarious workforce swells, and more traditional subjects labour outside the scope of existing labour

and welfare protections, it is essential to understand the impact of non-traditional subjects' organizing efforts. Second, informal and precarious workers' alternative cultures diversify the spaces and scales of collective organizing beyond the workplace to include neighbourhoods and local communities, as well as transnational networks. In doing so, workers are directly confronting capital's attempts to gain power through contemporary structures of decentralized production, 'spatial fixes' and 'technology fixes'. In short, informal and precarious workers' alternative cultures broaden the labour movement's agenda by combining struggles for redistribution with struggles for recognition aimed at revaluing the social worth and identities of *all* informally and precariously employed workers.

Four distinct yet interrelated features characterize these alternative cultures. First, informal and precarious workers tend to adopt an *intersectional approach* to class politics, emphasizing that the roots of economic subordination are as much about class inequality as they are about social discrimination along lines of gender, ethnicity, family and migration status. This includes an emphasis on wages and working conditions, as well as issues concerning social reproduction such as childcare, education and housing. Second, the struggles of informal and precarious workers draw upon an *expanded repertoire* of strategies and organizational forms for building collective power in the face of legal constraints and employer opposition. Third, the claims-making practices of new worker constituencies reveal *new targets* of collective mobilization, from state actors at the domestic and international levels to economic entities, such as multinational corporations, who are not legal employers but profit from informal and precarious work. Finally, informal and precarious workers are developing *alternative pathways for building collective solidarity* that highlight the primacy of workers' communities and social identities as well as strengthening partnerships with identity-based organizations and issue-based social movements.

We argue that these four aspects of workers' organizing strategies constitute alternative cultures of labour organizing that not only address the unique challenges of informal and precarious work, but also retain their informal economic structure and embrace the multiplicity of workers' identities and social worlds. By elaborating the distinctive characteristics of such alternative cultures, we emphasize the importance of studying the micro-politics of solidarity-building and collective identity-formation topics that had early salience in historical studies of working-class politics but tend to be neglected in the emerging field of global labour studies.

INFORMAL AND PRECARIOUS WORKER ORGANIZING: NEW EXPERIMENTS, GLOBAL TRENDS

Informal and precarious work poses a serious challenge to improving workers' jobs and livelihoods. As firms increasingly rely on employment arrangements that are not bound by labour regulations, employment-based rights and entitlements, and the constraints of job security, workers and their organizational advocates confront myriad barriers to securing decent and dignified work. Not only do informal and precarious workers lack economic structural power due to their dispersed, seemingly peripheral location in production chains, but their associational power is undermined by occupational contexts and regulatory environments that are not conducive to collective organizing because they work in private homes, work for intermediary contractors, or are considered self-employed persons. For example, a worker who is sewing jeans in the isolated space of her own home and interacting only with a subcontractor, is not legally or practically able to launch a strike with fellow workers against management, unlike her counterpart in a garment factory. Temporary agency workers commonly face employer

reprisals if they seek legal recourse or join a union to resolve unpaid wages, unlawful termination or workplace injuries (Hatton 2014; Peck and Theodore 2001). Similarly, an auto-parts manufacturer who produces tyres 'on order' is technically registered as a 'self-employed' worker, which disqualifies him from protection under wage and hour laws, as well as health benefits and work safety regulations.

These developments have done much to undermine traditional labour unions, both in terms of their legitimacy and their capacity to represent contemporary workers. While labour scholars caution against sweeping generalizations about the worldwide decline of organized labour movements, the drop in union density levels over the past three decades has fostered the sense that organized labour's survival depends on the ability of unions to revitalize their organizational structures and membership practices (see Cornfield and McCammon 2003; Fairbrother and Yates 2003), as well as expand their activities beyond the workplace to engage the state and civil society (see Hyman 2001). Recent incidents have also called attention to the limits of industrial unionism in addressing the conditions of pervasive insecurity and inequality characterizing informal and precarious work, particularly across the social fault lines of gender, race, ethnicity and migration status. For example, when a union in the UK decided to organize black and minority food production workers, union staff displayed little interest or capacity to address workplace racism or extend their organizing efforts beyond the factory gates to include workers' ethnic communities, reinforcing the perception that traditional unions are unable and unwilling to challenge the nexus between race and class for socially disadvantaged workers (Holgate 2005: 475). This is partially due to the inability of trade unions to recognize the complex and intersecting identities of migrant workers as workers, migrants *and* members of subordinated racial-ethnic groups (Alberti et al. 2013). Similarly, in Poland, despite the vibrancy of women's trade union activism at the grassroots level,

women occupy few positions of influence and leadership in decision-making bodies at the upper levels of traditional unions. In addition, few industrial union strategies prioritize the need to address the specific issues that women confront in the workplace, such as gendered forms of economic discrimination and the regulation of maternity leave (Mrozowicki and Trawinska 2013: 276, 283–285).

Interestingly, as labour scholars and practitioners grapple with the myriad crises facing organized labour movements, new studies demonstrate that *precarious and informal workers are organizing and taking action in new and significant ways*. In the US, migrant farmworkers in California and Texas set an early example in the 1960s by demonstrating that unprotected groups of workers could, in fact, unionize and win unprecedented demands through worker collective action, despite their exclusion from basic labour rights frameworks such as the National Labour Standards Act (NLRA).² In the mid-1990s, other groups of 'unorganizable' workers such as Latino immigrant janitors employed by exploitative subcontracted cleaning companies, joined immigrant women and women of colour who provide subsidized, in-home care to low-income elderly and disabled persons, to lead the Service Employees International Union (SEIU), which is now the largest union in the US. More recently, the activation of new worker constituencies has occurred outside the sphere of traditional labour unions. Worker centres and community unions combine elements of NGOs, social service providers, ethnic organizations and traditional unions, expanding the forms and practices of worker advocacy and representation (Fine 2006; Milkman and Ott 2014; Milkman et al. 2010). The National Day Labourers Organizing Network (NDLON), the National Domestic Workers Alliance (NDWA), the Restaurant Opportunities Center (ROC) and the National Guest Workers Alliance (NGWA) represent a new generation of 'alt-labour' groups that not only depart from the traditional union

form, but also employ creative methods and strategies to mobilize workers who have historically been neglected or in some cases entirely excluded from traditional labour movements (Eidelson 2013).

Parallel developments can also be seen in countries such as the UK and Japan, which have experienced growth in the informal and precarious worker population, particularly on the bottom rungs of urban labour markets. London Citizens, a broad-based coalition of trade union branches, faith-based groups, schools and community organizations, launched the London Living Wage Campaign in 2001 to improve the living and working conditions of subcontracted workers in the cleaning, food service and hospitality sectors, the majority of whom are foreign-born migrants. While unions were official coalition partners, they were not necessarily active participants in organizing campaigns. In the absence of an existing union, non-worker organizations took the initiative to identify potential worker leaders, create alliances with local constituents, and generate public visibility during the course of a specific living wage campaign (Wills, 2009). In Japan, a diverse array of community unions and region-based amalgamated unions has formed in response to the exclusion of women, immigrants, temporary workers and young workers from union membership ranks. The Women's Union Tokyo (WUT), founded in 1995, recognizes the importance of challenging gender-based discrimination in hiring and firing practices, workplace conditions, and labour market inequities, especially for the large proportion of women employed in temporary and precarious jobs (Gottfried 2015). The Tokyo Youth Union of Contingent Workers (Tokyo Youth Union), established in 2000, not only addresses specific issues that youth workers face such as job insecurity and underemployment, but it has also led struggles against the legalization of labour dispatch practices and spearheaded a broader anti-poverty network (Gottfried 2015).

For several decades, alternative labour organizing experiments have also been taking

place in the Global South, albeit in different social, economic and historical contexts. The Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA) in India has been organizing poor women in informal work since its founding in 1972 and represents a diverse constituency of women who labour as street vendors, home-based garment workers, rural salt workers, urban construction workers, and domestic workers, among others. In South Korea, the Korean Women Workers Association (KWWA), formally established in 1987, recognized the male-dominated tendencies of the burgeoning democratic union movement and created parallel organizations to challenge the concentration of women in part-time, temporary and contract labour jobs, both in manufacturing and service sector jobs. In the 1980s, domestic workers across Latin America and the Caribbean formed the *Confederación Latinoamericana y del Caribe de Trabajadoras del Hogar* (CONLACTRAHO), a multi-country regional alliance composed of labour unions, associations and domestic workers groups that fight for the rights of domestic workers, as well as challenge discrimination and abusive working conditions. In the mid-1990s, home-based workers, street vendors and waste pickers, who had been organizing on a national and regional basis across Africa, Asia and Latin America, consolidated their networks across the Global South. They were supported in large part by the influential global research-action-policy network, Women in Informal Employment Organizing and Globalizing (WIEGO) (Bonner and Carré 2013: 6).³

That these alternative struggles have emerged is not surprising. As Beverly Silver (2003) demonstrates in her study on the evolution of labour movements since 1870, such movements have continually reinvented themselves to accommodate attempts by the state and capital to evade labour power. Therefore, we should expect contemporary labour to launch alternative struggles that can fight capital's recent attempts to avoid twentieth-century labour regulations through informal and precarious employment relations. The limitations

of these struggles are also not surprising. Given the nascent stage of informal and precarious workers' movements and the vulnerable social and economic status that informal and precarious workers occupy, their struggles are understandably limited compared to the preponderance of workers who labour outside formal labour and citizenship protections. Their outcomes also remain partial when viewed through the lens of global capitalist power relations, which have aggressively sought to dismantle twentieth-century regulatory frameworks that ostensibly held capital responsible for decommodifying labour in the form of minimum wages, health care, sick leave and old age benefits, and collective labour rights.

What is surprising, however, is that these new organizing experiments are being led by and addressing matters that concern workers who have long been excluded from twentieth-century labour regulation, rhetoric and organization (i.e. women, ethnic minorities, and migrants). As a result, their efforts display marked differences with earlier movements. These trends generate a momentous question: *Could there be a new global labour movement emerging?* If yes, what does it look like – who are the members and what kinds of organizations are representing them? What are their demands and strategies and to whom are they directing their claims? How are they building collective solidarity among divergent groups of workers across national boundaries and occupational sectors?

REBUILDING THE POWER OF INFORMALLY AND PRECARIOUSLY EMPLOYED WORKERS

To begin to answer these questions, it is crucial to examine the actual struggles being waged by informal and precarious workers around the world. Such an endeavour is ambitious and far-reaching, given the emergent nature of such struggles and their uneven documentation. The authors' previous studies on India, South Korea, and the

US provide a sound starting point. These countries represent areas in which informal workers have a relatively long history of organizing, thereby providing a more sustained lens into national-level strategies and responses to contemporary forces and crises. In addition, we draw from our initial findings in a comparative study conducted by a new global network of labour scholars and grassroots organizations studying informal and precarious worker organizing in eight countries (Brazil, Canada, China, India, Mexico, South Africa, South Korea and the US) (for preliminary reports from the network on street vending, construction and domestic work, see Agarwala 2014a and Tilly et al. 2013).⁴ These countries represent areas in which informal and precarious workers are not only prevalent, but are also organizing across multiple industries and scales (including local, national, and transnational). Despite the varying state structures, economic development levels, and labour histories in these countries, our initial findings indicate that workers' organizing efforts in these countries share remarkable commonalities, which can in part be explained by labour migration channels that transfer organizational ideas and cultures.⁵

Drawing from these sources, we argue that informal and precarious workers in varying country contexts are organizing, but their cultures of organizing differ from those of twentieth-century formal workers in four important areas: class as an intersectional structure; an expanded organizational and collective action repertoire; new targets in claims-making; and alternative strategies for building solidarity. Although these alternative organizing efforts reflect the variety of worker subjects occupying the swelling informal and precarious workforce (including men, ethnic majorities, and local citizens), we focus below on their impact on and involvement of women, migrants and ethnic minorities in large part because these efforts are being led by the latter *and* these movements are distinct from earlier labour movements in that they prioritize the intersectional identities of the latter.

Class as an Intersectional Structure

First, informal and precarious workers are waging struggles that directly address the intersectionality of class and other social identities (including race, gender and migration status). In recent decades, the term ‘intersections of class, race, and gender’, has become increasingly popular in scholarly research. At a theoretical level, few academics today deny that multiple pillars of exploitation (including patriarchy, racism and capitalism) simultaneously affect human experiences in differing ways *and* that these pillars of exploitation interact in ways that differentiate the experiences of members of a single pillar. Black women workers, for example, are exploited in different ways than Black male workers and White women workers (Crenshaw 1991). Similarly, precarity and unemployment define African men and notions of masculinity differently than it does for women (Matlon 2014). At an empirical level, however, race and gender scholars have often dropped the class pillar of the intersection in their analyses of structures of gender and race-based exploitation, and labour scholars have just as often omitted the gender and race pillars in their analyses of structures of class exploitation. Similar patterns of omission can be found in analyses of politics and organization against race, gender, and class-based exploitation (for more on this literature see Agarwala 2014b).

In contrast to academics, informal and precarious workers’ movements are highlighting the deep and significant tripartite intersectionalities between class, race, and gender, revealing the importance of intersectionality as a social movement strategy (Agarwala 2014b, Chun et al. 2013). In doing so, intersectionality has become a central aspect of their alternative labour movement ‘culture’. Through their struggles, informal workers emphasize that the roots of economic subordination are as much about class inequality as they are about social discrimination along gender, ethnicity, family and migration status.

After all, social inequalities such as gender, race, ethnicity and citizenship determine the composition of informal and precarious workers the world over. In addition to forcing governments and the public to acknowledge the intersectionalities in structures of race, class, and gender-based exploitation, informal workers’ organizational strategies and demands are forcing governments to directly address the interacting spheres of social and economic subordination *in practice* through demands for higher wages and improved working conditions, as well as greater attention to issues concerning the everyday practices of social reproduction.

Particularly significant is the relative consistency in this approach across national and industry contexts. For example, in India, South Korea and the US, there has been a disproportionate share of women leaders in informal and precarious workers’ struggles in trades as diverse as street vending, construction, tobacco manufacturing, home care, janitorial and cleaning services, and domestic work. As a result of this female leadership, informal and precarious workers’ struggles have fought to decommodify not only the productive costs of labour, but also the *everyday reproductive labour costs* that women workers have disproportionately borne and that traditional formal workers’ movements have often failed to address (Agarwala 2013; Milkman and Terriquez 2012). Such efforts have resulted in increasing women’s access to welfare benefits, including nearby health clinics, education scholarships, and childcare, as well as placing assets, for instance homes and trade equipment, directly in women’s hands. Similarly, as a result of immigrants’ disproportionately high participation in informal and precarious workers’ movements – especially in Canada, the US, and South Africa – they have highlighted issues of restricted access to resources due to linguistic or citizenship disadvantages and have demanded immigrant legalization, citizenship rights and the decriminalization of undocumented workers (Cranford et al. 2005; Fine 2006; Milkman 2006; Tilly et al. 2013).

As with women's struggles, immigrants' leaders have fought hard for the recognition of immigrants as workers, even in the absence of legal employer recognition. They have also fought to extend benefits that address the unique needs of the workers that have long been marginalized in traditional labour movements, such as domestic workers, home-based manufacturers, and self-employed street vendors.

These approaches and demands underline informal and precarious workers' attempts to adopt an *intersectional approach* to class politics. This intersectional approach not only emphasizes the need to expand the concept of class as an analytic category, but it also reveals the interlocking nature of oppressions that shape workers' job contexts and everyday lives. An important area of future research will be to identify how varying social identities differentially affect informal and precarious workers' demands and their effectiveness across countries and industries, and how various identities interact with one another.

Expanded Collective Action and Organizational Repertoires

Second, informal and precarious workers are developing collective action practices that do not rely solely on labour unions, the workplace strike and collective bargaining. Because many informal and precarious workers face legal complications and, often times, punitive responses when they organize at the workplace scale, workers and their organizational advocates are cultivating innovative alternative strategies and organizational forms to build associational power at multiple scales. In the US, scholars refer to 'social movement unionism' to highlight the significance of union approaches that challenge bureaucratic models focused on service provision to dues-paying members and, instead, embrace creative and strategic organizing campaigns at the neighbourhood and community level to recruit non-traditional and 'hard-to-organize' union members (Clawson

2003; Fantasia and Voss 2004; Lopez 2004; Voss and Sherman 2000). For example, the architects and organizers of the SEIU's signature Justice for Janitors campaign of the 1990s consisted of leaders and staff with experience in and ongoing ties to progressive social movements who applied the principles of community-based organizing and corporate campaigns to unionize precariously employed immigrant janitors in subcontracted firms (Ganz et al. 2004; Milkman 2006). In Canada and the UK, where there has been a long history of social movement unionism and a more active legacy of rank-and-file union democracy, scholars use the term 'community unionism' to describe efforts by worker advocacy organizations to forge alliances with non-labour community groups (Cranford et al. 2005; Wills 2001). Municipal living-wage campaigns that seek to improve the working and living conditions of the poorest workers in cities across North America constitute an important mobilizing force both for social movement unions and community unions (Luce 2005). By participating in cross-sectoral coalitions demanding an end to 'working poverty', especially by well-resourced institutions such as universities, hospitals and global corporations, many living wage campaigns support the negotiating tactics of unions representing low-paid workers in the urban service economy.

While union struggles historically have relied upon contentious and publicly-oriented strategies, the relative weight of symbolic struggles, especially militant tactics, tended to subside as industrial labour movements secured institutionalized pathways for collective representation (Piven and Cloward 1979). However, the inability of informal and precarious workers to access basic labour rights and protections across occupational groups and national contexts has revived the significance of symbolic power for informal and precarious workers. Symbolic power has helped to reshape terms and conditions of employment by raising public awareness about the unjust conditions that 'invisible' groups of workers face in low-paid, precarious jobs (Chun 2009).

The mobilization of a wide array of social actors, including women's organizations, students and other activist groups, strengthen the moral weight of informal and precarious workers' symbolic struggles by recasting labour disputes as broader issues of social and economic injustice.

'Public dramas' have become an increasingly salient feature of informal and precarious workers' struggles in national contexts such as South Korea and China that subject militant workers to high levels of state repression (Chun 2005). Korean workers struggling against unlawful and discriminatory labour practices associated with precarious jobs, especially in the aftermath of the 1997 national financial crisis, have expanded their protest repertoires to include lengthy occupations of bridges, construction cranes, and other public spaces; hunger strikes; and politicized forms of religious rituals (Chun 2013). Chinese workers also have turned to public dramas, most spectacularly in the case of public suicides, in which workers jump from electronics and auto factory high-rise buildings and construction sites to protest low-wages, dangerous working conditions, and the denial of freedom of association (Pun et al. 2010). Interestingly, even in countries where informal workers enjoy a legal right to association, such as in India, precarious workers' organizations have turned to non-traditional strategies to attract women members, such as non-violent protests directed at the state, as opposed to the violent protests directed at employers that were common in the past (Agarwala 2014b).

While innovation and experimentation are occurring within existing labour unions, non-traditional labour organizations are a leading agent of change for informal and precarious workers. New research studies, for example, have documented an array of new organizational forms across eight countries (Agarwala 2014a). The US and Canada (to a lesser extent) are notable for 'worker centres', which combine elements of NGOs, social service agencies, community organizations and labour unions (Cranford et al. 2005;

Fine 2006). These organizations mobilize and advocate on behalf of a variety of informal and precarious workers, but especially undocumented immigrants, sometimes collaborating with traditional unions and increasingly forming national networks (Cordero-Guzman et al. 2013; de la Garza et al. 2013; Fine 2011; Milkman et al. 2010). In Mexico, informal worker organizing typically takes the form of *asociaciones civiles*, a category that encompasses both NGOs and social movement organizations (de la Garza et al. 2013). In South Korea and Japan, labour and women's rights NGOs spearheaded the creation of women's trade unions as well as supporting the activities of regional and general unions which provide labour counselling and advocacy for informal and precarious workers excluded from joining existing unions. SEWA, in India, has led the way globally in organizing informal women workers, through a unique organizational form that functions as a hybrid of a union, a cooperative and an NGO. Even in China, where organizing is tightly constrained by governmental surveillance and repression, precarious workers have developed new labour NGOs that offer workers legal and social services while also helping foster some forms of mobilization.

The expanded collective action and organizational repertoires for informal and precarious workers have important implications for the kinds of demands workers articulate and the alliances they forge. One important area for future research will be to identify *when and why* informal and precarious workers choose a particular organizational form and whether any one form has yielded more success than another. Additionally, more research is needed to understand *when and why* informal networks choose to build or avoid a partnership with another social movement, and *which* movement(s).

New Targets

Third, given the tenuous, invisible nature of the employer-employee relationship in

informal and precarious work, workers have had to diversify the targets for their demands to move beyond a sole focus on the employer. By definition, employers are not held legally accountable for the conditions in which informal and precarious work takes place. As a result, employers hold unrestricted power to fire informal and precarious workers, thereby pushing most workers away from making demands on employers. Again, this shift in bargaining power does not necessarily undermine all informal and precarious workers' struggles toward employers; indeed some informal workers' movements continue to make demands on employers. However, the shift in bargaining power has forced informal and precarious workers to expand the terrain of their struggles *beyond* the employer to include a range of alternative targets over which they do still retain some leverage. Doing so has also shifted the nature of workers' demands.

One of the most common alternative targets of informal and precarious workers' struggles in a variety of national and industry contexts is the nation state. While early industrial labour movements also targeted the nation state, the passage of national-level labour regulations and the institutionalization of collective bargaining agreements directed many industrialized workers' discontent to employers. In recent years, as the state has retreated from enforcing the labour standards that held employers accountable, scholars have bemoaned the dwindling power of nation states as a symptom of the twin forces of 'neoliberalism' and 'globalization' (Harvey 2005; Held et al. 1999; Tilly 1995).

In this context, it is ironic that informal and precarious worker organizations have shifted their sights to the state or, more specifically, multiple levels of government, to ensure that minimum labour standards and social safety provisions are guaranteed to informal and precarious workers (Eade and Leather 2005; Evans 2010; Hepple 2005; Vosko 2011). India's movements are the leading example of these efforts: informal workers' organizations have pressed the state to establish tripartite

Welfare Boards for informal workers across industries, and have attained state-sanctioned worker identity cards, neighbourhood health care clinics, education scholarships for workers' children, houses in women's names, and old-age pensions. These Welfare Boards are funded by contributions from workers, the state and employers. Although Indian Welfare Boards have had mixed success, they are operating as an important role model for global informal workers' movements (Agarwala 2013). In South Korea, the women workers' movement has been a leading organizational voice calling for increased national minimum wage standards, and national labour federations such as the Korean Confederation of Trade Unions have been outspoken advocates against regressive policy changes that weaken the regulatory climate for precarious workers (Chun 2009). In China and Mexico, where trade unions have traditionally been subordinated to the state, new NGO and social movement formations have had some success in pressuring the state (de la Garza et al. 2013; Xin 2013). Similarly, in the US, the success of hundreds of municipal living wage campaigns (Luce, 2005), as well as recent efforts to raise the minimum wage, such as the 'Fight for \$15' campaigns across the US and Canada, highlight the significance of state targets in the struggles of informal and precarious workers. Immigrant rights advocates have also had some successes in targeting the state to alter immigration policies and to alter the rhetoric around immigrant workers (Milkman and Ott 2014).

In all these cases, workers have drawn on their power as citizens and appealed to state interests in addressing livelihood politics to retain power. In democratic contexts, such as India and Mexico, informal workers leverage their power as voters to hold politicians accountable. This includes participation in formal electoral politics, as well as engaging in patronage ties (Agarwala 2013; de la Garza et al. 2013). In non-democratic contexts, such as China, informal workers are using their power to disrupt political leaders' legitimacy through public protest and

demonstration (Friedman and Lee 2010). Not surprisingly, by shifting their target from the employer to the state, the nature of workers' demands has also shifted to things that states can provide. In the case of India, these include social welfare rights. In India, South Korea and the US, informal and precarious workers have demanded state legitimation and recognition for their work, even in the absence of employer recognition. In China, demands have included a policy focus on increasing domestic demand through improved wages. Lastly, in many cases, the language of demands has also shifted from those of 'workers' rights' to those of 'citizen rights'. Particularly striking has been the use of this rhetoric of 'citizenship', even among non-citizen, immigrant workers in the US (Fine and Meyer 2013).

In addition to targeting national-level states, informal and precarious workers have also increasingly targeted international-level institutions and consumers (Agarwala 2012). In both cases, workers tend to appeal to public norms of justice and morality. Workers and organizations in the apparel and rug industries, for example, have been particularly active in targeting consumers (again with mixed success). To draw on the symbolic power of moral norms, these organizations partner with human rights groups, private churches and journalists, and they explicitly employ a language of 'human rights', rather than 'worker rights'. Unlike efforts to target the nation state, consumer-targeted efforts tend to call on consumers to hold employers accountable, thereby by-passing the state and appealing to market dynamics (Brooks 2007; Chowdhry and Beeman 2001).

At the international level, home-based workers, street vendors and domestic workers have been particularly active. Like consumer-targeted approaches, these efforts have appealed to global norms of justice; unlike consumer-targeted approaches, they tend to use international agencies to pressure national governments to improve work standards. In 1996, for example, HomeNet, a transnational network of home-based workers' organizations and academic researchers pressured

the International Labour Organization (ILO) to pass Home Work Convention 177, which aimed to give home-based workers equal rights to formal workers. Since then, HomeNet has pressured national governments to ratify and implement the convention through local legislation. Similarly, StreetNet, a transnational network of street vendors, was formed in the late 1990s to pressure municipal-level governments to increase the visibility of street vendors' contributions to urban economies, attain local licences for street vendors, and incorporate street vendors' representation in urban development policies. Lastly, domestic workers have been particularly active at the transnational level, and, in 2013, they succeeded in pressing the ILO to pass Convention 189 concerning Decent Work for Domestic Workers.

In addition to pushing states to adopt labour standards for these vulnerable workers, these efforts have granted these workers visibility by officially recognizing their productivity and efforts *as work*. Future research should examine the varying effectiveness of these targets. While we argue that it is vital to recognize these efforts as 'labour organization', despite their alternative targets and demands, we also call for a deep examination of the varying costs of different targets and the conditions under which some succeed and others fail. Such examinations are vital to ensuring the sustainability and effectiveness of the future of these alternative labour movements.

Alternative Pathways to Building Cultures of Solidarity

While new strategies, organizational forms and institutional targets are an important topic of study for innovative forms of worker organizing, the literature has tended to disregard the importance of less instrumental factors in the struggles of the informally and precariously employed workers in informal and precarious jobs. How are new constituencies becoming activated as empowered political groups with

shared agendas? What kinds of cultures of organizing are being cultivated to promote solidarity and collective identities among divergent groups of workers?

A significant feature of informal and precarious worker organizing is the primacy of communities and social identities as key vehicles for building collective solidarity. Numerous examples of working-class formation highlight the importance of community-based solidarity and class identities in forging 'cultures of solidarity', as Rick Fantasia (1988) aptly put it. To date, the workplace has figured prominently as a site of oppositional consciousness-building and solidaristic collective action in past workers' struggles. For example, spontaneous wildcat strikes among industrial workers emerged from the spatial and relational logics of the workplace itself, when workers who were already integrated into cooperative workplace relations could walk off the line collectively in response to an individual act of defiance. While many informal workers in China and India's automobile factories and Bangladeshi garment factories remain employed in large enterprises, many other informal workers are no longer concentrated in large, socialized factories, and instead perform paid work in their private homes or in small-scale, unregistered workplaces. In addition, employers have developed an effective arsenal of anti-union strategies to suppress workplace-related union activities, from direct intimidation and harassment (Clawson, 2003) to the use of temporary agencies as strike-breakers (Hatton, 2014). Building cultures of solidarity among informal and precarious workers, thus, necessitates cultivating mutual affinities and associational bonds beyond the workplace and in other spheres of workers' everyday lives.

Organizations that challenge anti-immigrant sentiment and ethno-racial discrimination operate as important sites of collective identity formation among informal and precarious workers in the US. The early generation of US worker centres represented ethnic community organizations such as the Chinese Staff and Workers' Association (CSWA) in New York

City's Chinatown; and Korean Immigrant Workers Advocates, which later became the Koreatown Immigrant Workers Alliance in Los Angeles; as well as ethnic women's groups such as Asian Immigrant Women Advocates (AIWA) in Oakland Chinatown and *Mujeres Unidas Y Activas* (MUA), or Women United in Action, which represents low-income Latino immigrant women workers in Oakland, California. These worker centres not only provided ethnic-specific services such as English-language education and gendered services such as domestic violence counseling, they also called attention to the urgency of developing the grassroots leadership and political empowerment of immigrant workers denied voice and agency. The proliferation of worker centres in the 1990s and beyond built on this grassroots empowerment tradition by creating national-level organizations that fought for labour *and* immigration reform. In many ways the phenomenon recently coined 'alt-labour' cannot be understood without recognizing the central role that immigrant workers and the immigrants' rights movement has played in the revitalization of the American labour movement.

Outside the US, national political movements as well as the terms of integration into global capitalist dynamics have influenced the characteristics of informal and precarious worker organizing. Pat Horn, the International Coordinator of StreetNet International, explains:

Where there have been national liberation struggles, the organisation of informal workers will often adopt perspectives and characteristics arising from those struggles (e.g. the Gandhian perspective of SEWA; the socialist perspective of many informal economy workers' associations in post-colonial African countries; the social movement perspective of waste pickers' cooperative movements in Latin American countries with active anti-neo-liberal popular struggles) and corresponding organisational forms. (Bonner and Spooner 2011: 130; cited in Horn 2008: 45)

The systematic dismissal of gender-specific demands in class-based and national liberation

struggles also contributed to the emphasis on gender in informal and precarious worker organizing. The Korean women workers' movement, for example, rejected calls to disband gender-specific organizations, and instead developed creative organizing strategies to convince women that had never previously considered joining a 'militant' union to become involved in unions. This included supporting leadership development activities to build the confidence of women workers as union leaders, as well as foregoing the labour movement's militant tradition of waging confrontational and prolonged strikes that required union members to abandon their caretaking responsibilities, a practice that dissuaded many women with children and families from participating in union activities.

Unlike many formal workers' movements, informal and precarious workers' movements have been especially innovative in establishing links with identity-based social movements, including women's movements, immigrant rights movements, indigenous movements, faith-based groups, and youth and student groups – and, quite importantly, formal worker movements themselves (Agarwala 2014a; Chun 2009; de la Garza et al. 2013; Fine 2006, 2011; Milkman et al. 2010; Tilly et al. 2013). For example, broad-based alliances and coalitions have formed among workers, students, and labour and human rights NGOs to challenge the resurgence of sweatshop labour practices by global corporations. In the US, ethnic-based community organizations such as Asian Immigrant Women Advocates in Oakland Chinatown and the Los Angeles Garment Worker Center, influenced by proponents of racial justice and immigrant rights, waged historic campaigns against garment retailers such as Jessica McClintock and Forever 21 for exploiting Asian and Latina immigrant women workers. At the same time, media reports of sweatshop labour abuse in Honduras, Mexico, Bangladesh, Vietnam and China, as well as other garment factories in the Global South, sparked a burgeoning global anti-sweatshop movement

led by university students, consumer advocates and human rights organizations in the 1990s and 2000s (Anner 2011; Brooks 2007; Ross 2004). The transnational activities and campaigns of new labour NGOs, such as the Hong Kong-based Student and Scholars against Corporate Misbehavior (SACOM), reveal the activation of new publics in opposition to the super-exploitation of Chinese migrant workers in global retail and supply chains (Chan 2013).

The importance of alternative pathways for building solidarity among informal and precarious workers does not preclude the importance of class or class identities. Rather, they challenge *a priori* assumptions that reject the salience of workers' multiple social identities and communities for building worker solidarity. Future research is necessary to better understand how the micro-politics of organizing – that is the rhetoric, persuasive techniques, social interactions, spatial and temporal logics, affects and feeling states, and embodied experiences that convince workers and their advocates to wage collective struggles – shapes the broader political agendas of organized labour movements in the twenty-first century.

CONCLUSION: BUILDING A TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY GLOBAL LABOUR MOVEMENT

Informal and precarious work creates one of the most significant challenges to ensuring just, safe and stable conditions for workers across the global North and global South. While these challenges are formidable, recent studies have documented important trends in cases of organizing among informal and precarious workers – namely, the cultivation of what we have referred to in this article as 'alternative cultures' of organizing. These alternative cultures emphasize the need to go beyond the traditional image of the twentieth-century industrial worker and union model and, instead, develop alternate sources

of worker associational power that combine struggles for redistribution with struggles for recognition – that is, efforts to revalue the social worth and identities of women, immigrants, people of colour and other socially marginalized groups of workers. In doing so, these efforts promise to launch a new labour movement that recognizes a greater number of workers and includes *all* informal and precarious workers. Four distinct features characterize these alternative cultures: class as an intersectional structure; an expanded organizational and collective action repertoire; new targets in claims-making; and alternative strategies for building solidarity.

Recognizing *class as an intersectional structure* highlights the significant effect of social inequalities such as gender, race, ethnicity and citizenship on the composition of the informal and precarious workforce, as well as on the organizational forms and strategies cultivated to address overlapping spheres of social and economic subordination. Whereas informal and precarious workers were often excluded from traditional workers' organizations in the past, new organizational forms not only recognize and include these workers, but also explicitly aim to mobilize migrants and ethnic or racial minorities. *Expanded collective action and organizational repertoires* include examples such as worker centres, which advocate on behalf of a variety of informal and precarious workers, but especially undocumented immigrants, sometimes collaborating with traditional unions and increasingly forming national and transnational networks. They also include separate women's organizing models in India and South Korea and international-level federations such as the International Domestic Workers Federation, whose membership consists almost entirely of women. As increasing numbers of men enter the informal workforce, further studies should investigate how male gender identities intersect with informal and precarious worker identities, and whether these intersections are being addressed by organizing efforts.

The challenges that informal and precarious workers face due to their exclusion from

existing labour laws and protections have not only shaped organizational forms and strategies, but they have also influenced the identification of *new targets of claims-making* and *alternative pathways for building collective solidarity*. In addition to targeting employers, informal and precarious workers' struggles are increasingly oriented to state actors at multiple levels, from municipal governments to the nation state and international governance agencies. They also target the moral responsibility of corporations and consumers for ensuring safe and fair working conditions, despite their non-contractual obligations. In doing so, these struggles generate new affinities and associational bonds that link informal and precarious workers to diverse constituency groups, including feminists, women's rights groups, student activists, consumer rights advocates and human rights organizations. While these cultures of solidarity can exist on a fleeting level, linking divergent individuals during a single protest or campaign action, they can also generate more lasting social connections and dependencies that can be transported across issues and places.

To understand how informal and precarious workers' alternative cultures of organizing can lay the basis of more lasting solidarities across different national contexts, social groups and employment categories, we need to first and foremost *recognize* them as part of the heterogeneous lexicon of 'workers' movements'. We must then pay closer attention to how the micro-politics of forging solidarity across difference both shapes and is shaped by broader regulatory structures and historical contexts. Emergent struggles among informal and precarious workers indicate that the twenty-first century global labour movement looks different both in form and content from the past century. Not only are informal and precarious workers addressing the unique challenges of organizing by retaining their distinctive informal economic structure, but they are embracing the multiplicity of workers' social identities and social worlds to build new social connections and affinities across a range of social difference.

NOTES

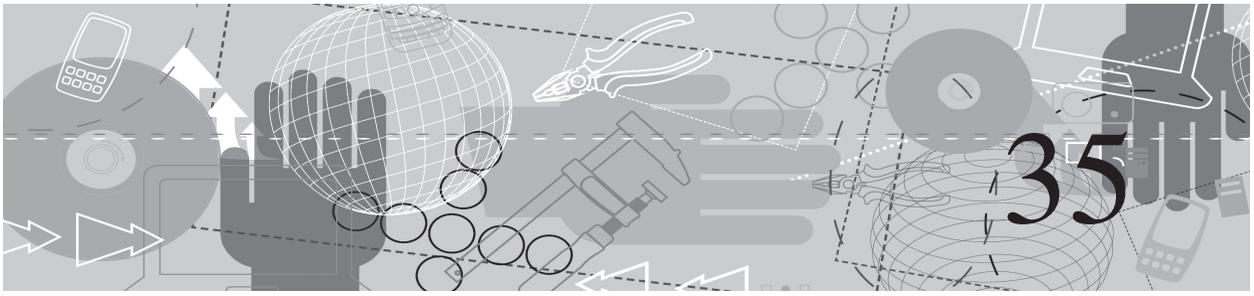
1. Since terminology varies across national contexts, we retain the usage of both terms. However, we prefer the use of the term informal to encompass all workers who labour outside the scope of formal employment and welfare protections.
2. Agricultural workers gained protection under the Fair Labour Standards Act (FLSA) in 1966 securing legal access to the minimum wage and other basic wage and hour provisions.
3. WIEGO supported the creation of StreetNet International (2002), HomeNet South Asia (2000), Latin American Waste Pickers Network (RedLacre) (2005), the International Domestic Workers Network (IDWN) (2008/9) and the Global Alliance of Waste Pickers (2009). See Bonner and Carré (2013: 6).
4. The Experiences Organizing Informal Workers (EOIW) is a global network of labour scholars and labour organizations that seek to expand knowledge of new organizing efforts taking place among informal and precarious workers around the world. The authors are founding members of EOIW.
5. We must note that at present, the EOIW network does not include Europe. This is in large part a function of the limitations in our resources and networks. Further study should examine whether the consistencies in organization cultures and migration channels among these countries also hold for European countries.

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The Future of Work: Escaping the Current Dystopian Trajectory and Building Better Alternatives

Peter Evans and Chris Tilly

INTRODUCTION

As the Great Depression was getting firmly under way, John Maynard Keynes predicted that by the end of the first quarter of the twenty-first century the workweek would be a maximum of 15 hours. Sounding curiously like the young Marx describing communist society, he envisioned that the principal challenge facing the ordinary citizen would be ‘how to use his freedom from pressing economic cares, how to occupy the leisure, which science and compound interest will have won for him, to live wisely and agreeably and well’ (Keynes, 1930, p. 367). As we head toward the end of the first quarter of the twenty-first century, the role of work in society could hardly appear more different. Either people have been increasingly sucked into a vortex of punishing, oppressive work that absorbs many more hours than the standard 40 per week, or they have been excluded from any possibility of jobs that provide decent livelihoods.

Mid-twentieth-century analysts continued to voice optimism that automation would

soon minimize the need to work. Key premises of optimistic mid-twentieth-century theories of ‘modernization’ included the notions that leisure time would inevitably increase (Granter, 2008) and that the ‘natural’ trajectory of change in the structure of employment would lead to an increase in the availability of good jobs, with shifts of employment from agriculture to industry, and increasingly to the less onerous ‘white-collar’ jobs of the service sector (Bell, 1973).

Unfortunately, mid-twentieth-century optimism with regard to the transformation of employment structures was not borne out, even in the rich countries of the global North. Instead, the political and economic transformations of the past half-century have turned holding a good job into the privilege of a shrinking minority, even in the modern urban economy.

Our Argument

In this chapter, we first set out a simple schema for thinking about work, an ideal

typical division into ‘bad jobs’ and ‘good jobs’. Then we elaborate why and how the current structure of capitalism pushes work in a dystopic direction in both North and South. Finally, we identify potential building blocks for a future in which work is organized to promote human flourishing.

The likely dystopian future of work features both a disjunction between unmet needs and the allocation of resources, leading to a dearth of jobs, and an increase in the ability of capital to dictate conditions of work, making precarious livelihoods and oppressive working conditions increasingly characteristic of available jobs. These shifts, though partially caused by technological and demographic trends, are driven primarily by politics and the power of capital. The starving of the public sector is a prime cause of both unmet needs and the undersupply of jobs. The private hoarding of knowledge capital assets ensures that workers, especially in the global South, do not have access to the tools that would enable them to engage in productive work.

Our analysis of dystopia has five parts. First, we outline the ways in which technological change has been deployed to the disadvantage of workers. Labor-saving technologies are powerful tools for reducing the number of available jobs. At the same time, we highlight how the politically protected monopoly control of the most fruitful productive capital – ideas – takes away workers’ access to new means of production that could otherwise generate a flowering of new opportunities for productive work. Second, we summarize how organizational restructuring and neoliberal politics help propel the degradation of work. Third, we analyze the deleterious effects of shrinking resources for public investment to meet the massive unmet needs for key productivity-expanding, welfare-enhancing services. Fourth, we note the ways in which North-South asymmetries exacerbate the dystopian scenario in the South. Finally, we analyze the rise of precarious work as the dominant form of new employment in the contemporary global economy.

Our analysis of countertrends has four parts. First we consider the ways in which at least some democratic states, principally in the global South, have moved to limit or partially reverse the advance of precarity, expanding the scope of social protection and the ‘social wage’. Precisely because these are modest ‘reformist’ efforts by imperfect capitalist democracies like Brazil and India, they suggest that reversing the current trend toward increasing precarity is more broadly possible. Second, we focus on strategies of mobilization and worker organization that are essential, not just to provide political foundations for more progressive state strategies, but, even more important, to shift the calculus of employers away from ‘low road’ strategies toward strategies more compatible with positive changes in the structure of work. Third, we highlight the persistence and even resurgence of old ‘Owenite’ visions of the cooperative organization of production that would make ‘good’ jobs a priority, most recently in experiments labeled the ‘solidarity economy’. Finally, we emphasize that while technological change has been used as a tool to choke off the growth of good jobs, degrade work, and disempower workers, the current trajectory of technology also has subversive possibilities that undermine the power and legitimacy of capital and have the potential to support a modernized Owenite vision. We close with an assessment of the political prospects for shifting work’s evolution in more utopian directions.

Defining the Parameters of Work

The fundamental definition of a ‘good’ job is that it expands the capabilities of the person who holds it. Multiple facets of good jobs contribute to the quality of life and human development of workers. Most basic is the connection between jobs and livelihoods. In modern market society, jobs provide the dominant metric for measuring the resources that society owes its individual members. The nonmaterial rewards connected to work

are also fundamental. Jobs that are esteemed bring social recognition and define positive identities. And since jobs absorb most of our waking hours, what we do at work is a prime determinant of development of our capabilities.

The impact of jobs on human development in society at large is as important as their impact on jobholders themselves. Ideally, what workers do at their jobs facilitates the ability of others to ‘achieve the kind of lives that they have reason to value’. Just as the creators of the Human Development Index settled on life expectancy and mean years of schooling as the most easily measurable proxies for the non-income components of human development, it is uncontroversial to identify the provision of health services and education as ‘capability-enhancing services’. A number of other social services, as well as care work as a whole, also qualify.

Using this simple conceptual frame, we can then ask two questions. First: What are current trends in terms of the structure of employment relative to jobs expanding the capabilities of the people that hold them and providing services that contribute to the capabilities of others? And second: What policy interventions might move the structure of employment in a more favorable direction?

THE CURRENT DYSTOPIAN TRAJECTORY

How should we understand the transformation from optimistic mid-century modernity to the dystopian present? In this section, we first look at the politically determined impact of technology. The basic argument is that technological change continues to be used, as it has been used since the beginning of the industrial revolution, as a means to reduce the collective power of workers and transfer returns from workers to capitalists. Next, we consider how capital-driven organizational restructuring and changes in public policy have contributed to these shifts. We then look

at how the politically mediated effects of demography and geography exacerbate dystopian technological, organizational, and policy impacts, especially in the global South.

We round out our tour of dystopia by surveying the resulting precarity and informality that characterizes more and more work in the world. In closing, we underline again the pervasive role of politics, rather than technological or demographic inevitability, in creating this outcome.

The Use of Technological ‘Progress’ as a Tool for Destroying Jobs

Keynes and the young Marx agreed that the increased productivity generated by technological change could dramatically reduce the number of working hours necessary to produce the tangible good required by the ‘realm of necessity’, but only Marx went on to point out that under capitalism this ‘progress’ was more likely to generate new possibilities for exclusion than to expand the realm of freedom.

The current combination of technology, property rights, and political power produces projections that the pessimistic must consider terrifying and even the most optimistic must consider challenging. The problem starts with the manufacturing sector, considered for two centuries to be the prime generator of relatively well-paid jobs. From at least the 1990s the worldwide total number of manufacturing jobs has not just been growing too slowly to absorb a significant share of new workers; it has been shrinking, not just in the North but globally (see Evans and Staveteig, 2009).

The disappearance of the manufacturing sector as a significant source of new jobs is only the beginning. Capital’s efforts to replace workers with machines have spread to a variety of service jobs as well. On the basis of a comprehensive assessment of the US economy, Frey and Osborne (2013, p. 38) project that within perhaps two decades 47 percent of *all* jobs currently held by US workers are likely to be performed by computers or robots.

One obvious implication of this analysis is to refute one of the most politically powerful contemporary memes: the idea that inducing capital to invest is the only way to increase the number of jobs available to the rest of us. Since capital's goal is to apply technology to *destroy* jobs, subsidizing capital to invest is subsidizing the destruction of jobs. The fewer hours of human labor necessary to meet the overall needs of society, the fewer the number of people granted status as legitimate recipients of a livelihood. This is, of course, a politically constructed reality. A world like the one envisioned by Keynes and the young Marx in which the fruits of productivity are shared in the form of increased leisure time is not just possible; concerted political effort is required to prevent its emergence.

This is an old story, but its dynamics have shifted in important ways. The most important element, the ability of capital to control the consequences of technological change is no longer based on the ownership of physical capital. As Nicholas Negroponte (1996) pointed out, rearranging strings of bits rather than rearranging atoms is what generates new value in the contemporary economy. Having effective control over rights to the returns that accrue from the productivity generated by the software is more important than owning the machines that build the hardware.

The hardware that constitutes the tangible face of the iPhone is relatively incidental to Apple's \$75 billion a year profits. Rather, these follow from Apple's ability to extract rents from the right to use the operating system and the network externalities generated by the connections to the multiplatform software. And it is not the technological complexity of Apple's OS that makes it valuable; it is the fact that Apple has the political power, embodied in the legal apparatus of 'intellectual property rights', that allows it to exclude others from using these ideas. An economic model in which elites are able to sustain their economic dominance primarily by extracting rents from ideas rather than by garnering returns from production is potentially more ominous for workers than the

nineteenth-century model in which owning the machines enabled capital to dictate terms to workers.

A small minority of the workers who manipulate bits rather than atoms – those whom Robert Reich (1992) once dubbed 'symbolic analysts' – enjoy a share of the vast returns that accrue to capital in the modern information economy. Aside from this small number of well-rewarded bit-manipulators, plus those necessary to train these workers and those who are part of the apparatus necessary to protect property rights, the vast majority of workers can be effectively excluded from all but marginal roles in the productive processes of the 'information economy'. When making the majority productively superfluous is projected to the extreme, we have what Peter Frase (2011) calls 'exterminism', 'the genocidal war of the rich against the poor'.

We cannot blame these dystopian prospects on technology. On the contrary, if technology rather than the power of capital was what mattered, a shift to ideas as the most potent means of production would add a new dimension to the utopian visions of Marx and Keynes. Unlike machines and other tangible goods, ideas are 'non-rival' goods. You and I can both consume the same idea at the same time. Even more important, you and I can both use the same idea at the same time to produce new ideas of value to others and ourselves. Set aside monopoly control over productive ideas and they would become, in Steve Weber's evocative term, 'free steam engines' (Weber, 2004, p. 77).

Organizational Restructuring and Neoliberal Politics

In addition to capital-controlled deployment of technology, businesses' organizational restructuring and the global grip of neoliberalism both feed business's dominance over workers and are further consolidated by that dominance. Organizational restructuring grew out of the limits of capitalist success. Marx posited that the factory disempowered

workers by removing their control over the means of production, alienating their products from them, and subjecting them to close monitoring. But Marx also argued that the factory-based division of labor would begin the process of organizing the proletariat, and the twentieth-century rise of industrial unionism ratified this prediction. In response, businesses began exploring new organizational structures that would fragment the workforce.

Recent innovations in the organizational structure of employment operate on three margins. First, and most important, employers have increasingly distributed production activities and employment statuses across *organizational boundaries*, creating what David Weil (2014) calls ‘the fissured workplace’. Subcontracting is the most obvious instance and has intensified both in manufacturing and in services. Businesses like McDonald’s also use franchising to insert a boundary between themselves and their workers. But businesses are also subcontracting labor itself, whether hiring through temporary agencies (Fu, 2015) or simply hiring workers as independent contractors (Osnowitz, 2010). A second margin operates even within organizational boundaries: *temporal* fragmentation of workers via proliferation of irregular schedules (Tilly, 1996) and contingent work arrangements such as fixed-duration contracts or on-call or casual employment (Kalleberg, Reskin, and Hudson, 2000). Yet a third margin of organizational segmentation is geographic dispersion of the company’s operations. One increasingly common example is call centers, which, whether in-house or subcontracted, are overwhelmingly sited remotely from other company operations (Holman, Batt, and Holtgrewe, 2007). All of these structures make it easier for businesses to establish widely varying standards for treatment of labor (compensating and treating core workers well but marginalizing others) and in many cases to evade outright any responsibility for workers’ labor conditions.

At the level of the state, the rise of *neoliberalism* has removed supports for

workers and improved the terrain for employers (Harvey, 2007). It is important to recall that as of the 1970s capital in the global North has been experiencing a ‘profit squeeze’ due to labor claiming a larger share of the surplus (Bowles, Gordon, and Weisskopf, 1983), and that leading European, US, and Japanese political theorists (Crozier, Huntington, and Watanuki, 1975) described democracy as ‘in crisis’ because of overload by social movement demands – even decrying an ‘excess of democracy’ (p. 113). It is not surprising, then, that a policy backlash ensued – encompassing the North, the South, and even the formerly socialist world (Evans and Sewell, 2013).

The typical neoliberal policy package included some elements that bore directly on labor: loosening of or reduced enforcement of labor standards regulations, less policy support for trade unions, reductions in the social wage that constitutes the baseline alternative to bad jobs, and liberalized trade and foreign exchange regimes that have battered manufacturing employment in many countries. Often with equal impact on workers’ standard of living, governments liberalized other markets as well. Though in many countries governments have replaced more nakedly neoliberal regimes with ‘softer’ approaches, such approaches often preserve the core precepts of neoliberalism, as Leiva (2008) has argued in the case of Latin America. Cumulatively, labor-unfriendly public policy, firm restructuring, and technological change have driven down union density across a wide range of countries, weakening another institutional bulwark for worker interests (see Hewison in this volume).

Underinvestment in Human Capabilities

The jobs that define the current dystopian conjuncture in the service sector are the jobs that most service sector workers hold. A subset of these jobs can be defined as part of the ‘capability-enhancing service sector’. The dynamics of this subsector set in relief most

sharply both the dystopian distortions imposed by capital and the unrealized potential inherent in the current conjuncture. At issue is the gap between unmet social needs and the supply of capability-expanding services.

Unfortunately, just as ‘free steam engines’ will not happen as long as capital remains politically dominant, the provision of capability-expanding services will not match unmet needs as long as capital remains politically dominant. Capability-expanding services have a large ‘public goods’ element: social returns are much higher than private returns. The more broadly they are delivered, the larger the public goods element becomes, and the bigger the difference between social and private returns. Getting close to optimal levels of investment in capability-expanding services requires funding them like other collective goods – through public investment.

The unwillingness of capital to invest in capability expansion as long as larger rates of private return are available elsewhere would not be a problem if the public sector were allowed to put the immense returns generated by the information economy to productive use, but this would require diverting a larger share of private surpluses to the public sector. As long as capital retains its political power, this won’t happen. Consequently, the supply of capability-expanding services will remain suboptimal, as will the supply of capability-expanding jobs.

The North-South Dimension of Dystopian Trends

Workers in the global South have been harder hit by these dystopian trends, as they have been by earlier transformations. First of all, the technologically assisted destruction of jobs hits the global South at a more devastating point in its demographic evolution. The vast majority of the new workers shut out of the workforce are in global South. At the same time, the monopoly control of income-producing ideas is even more thoroughly concentrated in the North than the physical

capital involved in the production of tangible commodities.

Because the South contains the majority of potential human capabilities, the potential gains from the opportunity to use the socially generated stock of productive ideas are greatest in the South, and the losses are correspondingly greatest as well. In part because of the dictates imposed by Northern-dominated global governance institutions and Northern donors, the politically imposed inability to shift the resources necessary to increase the provision of capability-expanding services to the public sector is also most severe in the global South. Public sector employment in health and education as a proportion of total employment is smaller than in the countries of the North, even though needs are greater. For example, the Nigerian public sector currently employs just over 225,000 workers in health, approximately one health worker for 600 people, compared to one for 70 people in southern Europe (Evans and Frase, 2014).

The Dominant Outcomes: Polarization and Worse Jobs

These processes have yielded two striking outcomes: growing within-country inequality and a worsening of jobs – ‘polarization and precariousness’, in Kalleberg’s (2011) phrase. Regarding polarization, World Bank economists Francisco Ferreira and Branko Milanovic (2009) anticipated the findings made famous by Piketty (2014). They found that overall within-country inequality rose between about 1820 and 1910, fell between 1910 and 1950, then leveled off, and since 1970 has risen. Lakner and Milanovic (2013) likewise reported that within-region inequality had increased for the mature economies, as well as for China and India (each taken as a region unto itself), other Asia, and sub-Saharan Africa, from 1988 to 2008.

Deciding whether jobs have gotten worse on a global scale is trickier, given the numerous dimensions of job quality (see Kalleberg

in this volume). Nonetheless, consider two candidates for operationalizing our concept of bad jobs: precarious work and informal work. *Precarious work* 'refer[s] to the uncertainty, instability, and insecurity of work in which employees bear the risks of work (as opposed to businesses or the government) and receive limited social benefits and statutory entitlements' (Kalleberg and Hewison, 2013, p. 271) – where these benefits and entitlements are implicitly defined relative to some benchmark of standard or formerly standard work. Hewison (in this volume) reviews the global literature and finds evidence for increasing precarity in most of the larger countries of Asia, in Europe, and in North America. Sectoral case studies by Webster, Lambert, and Bezuidenhout (2008) make the case for heightened precarity in Australia, Korea, and South Africa. Over 90 percent of global member unions surveyed by the International Metalworkers Federation in 2007 (before the recent global recession took hold) reported increasing precariousness in metalworking over the previous five years (Holdcroft, 2013). Vosko (2002) and others point to the same factors we have highlighted – technology, changing business organization, and neoliberalism – as drivers of this process. As Hewison (this volume) points out, the literature also reveals that women and migrants are overrepresented in precarious work.

Precarious work is particularly useful as a concept in the global North and in the relatively wealthier countries of the South, where 'standard' work makes up (or at least made up until recently) the bulk of employment. The concept of *informal work*, in contrast, is particularly useful in examining the global South but is increasingly apt in the North as well (Marcelli, Williams, and Joassart, 2010). Following standard practice, we define *informal work* as work in which standard laws and social benefits either do not apply or are not implemented. Overall, informal employment is highest in the global South, with regional levels ranging from a high of 82 percent in South Asia to 45 percent in the Middle

East and North Africa (Women in Informal Employment, Globalizing and Organizing [WIEGO] 2015). Informality is more poorly measured in the North, but WIEGO's (2015) estimate of an informality rate of 10 percent in eastern Europe and central Asia along with other labor statistics suggests a considerably lower rate of informality. Statistics on change over time are even scarcer than current estimates, but a variety of country and sectoral studies indicate such growth over the last few decades (e.g., Bernhardt et al., 2008; Tilly et al., 2013). As with precarious work, the literature shows that women and migrants are overrepresented in the ranks of informal work worldwide.

In short, work outcomes are polarizing, and growing numbers of workers are relatively unprotected, whether in the 'insecure' sense of *precarity* or the 'lacking legal protections' sense of *informality*. (In what follows, we use the words *precarious* and *informal* somewhat interchangeably to signal a broader sense of unprotected work.)

It is worth underlining once again that politics has been primary in creating the current dystopian conjuncture. Crudely put, it is the political power of capital that supports the use of technology to destroy jobs, facilitates firm restructuring that weakens workers' position, scales back labor standards enforcement and in some cases actively undermines workers' right to organize, cuts off access to the intangible means of production that would enable workers to explore new forms of socially productive work, and suppresses the possibility of generating jobs with high social productivity in capability-expanding services.

Despite obvious arguments that the current conjuncture is politically self-reinforcing, it is hard to believe that the contradiction between the society that is technologically and organizationally feasible and the punishing reality of the current dystopian conjuncture can persist without stimulating a countermovement. The positive possibilities are obvious. The labor no longer needed for deadening jobs in the routine production of

tangible commodities could be shifted to the delivery of capability-enhancing services, resulting in more and better jobs combined with vast improvements in human flourishing and social well-being. Unblocking access to the ‘free steam engines’ embodied in productive ideas would create an effervescence of productive new possibilities for workers. Potential paths for realizing these possibilities deserve a thoroughgoing analysis.

STRATEGIES FOR REVERSING THE DYSTOPIAN TRAJECTORY

We will not claim that a brave new political economy is around the corner, but we will argue that ‘green shoots’ of more promising structures of work keep reappearing even in what would seem to be the hostile soil of twenty-first-century neoliberal capitalism. To begin with, the extent to which states, principally in the global South, have moved to counter the advance of precarity, expand the scope of social protection, and extend the scope of the ‘social wage’ is impressive. We will start by reviewing this variety of green shoots. We will not, however, argue that states are likely to be the primary source of positive transformations in the structure of work.

Most green shoots grow from the bottom up. We will move from looking at states’ efforts to looking at the myriad forms that worker organization and mobilization are beginning to take even in what was once assumed to be barren ground for organizing – precarious work. Even more unexpected green shoots are those embodying old ‘Owenite’ visions of collectively self-organized production. Finally, we emphasize that while technological change has been used to choke off the growth of good jobs, degrade work, and disempower workers, the current trajectory of technological change also has implications that threaten the stability of the current capitalist order.

Defending Decent Work: The Resilience of Public Action

Undercutting the rights hard won by workers in the first half of the twentieth century was the late twentieth-century order of the day in the ‘advanced’ countries of the North, but the countries of the global South have become less convinced that they should allow these ‘advanced’ countries to show them the image of their own future. Harris and Scully (in press) argue that in ‘the same period in which neoliberal ideology has seemingly reached its apex of power, states across the global South have extended de-commodifying welfare provisions to their citizens on a scale that is unprecedented in the history of the capitalist world economy’. Brazil and India illustrate the Harris-Scully thesis.

In Brazil, the first decades of the twenty-first century have been ‘reformatizing’ the labor market. Between 2003 and 2013 the share of ‘informal’ workers in private sector jobs shrank by almost 40 percent (Brazilian Ministry of Planning, 2014).¹ At the same time that it incorporated more workers into the formal sector, the Workers’ Party regime devoted considerable political capital to efforts to raise the statutory minimum wage, reversing a four-decade decline in the level of the real minimum wage. These changes in the structure of employment reverberated in improvements in economic well-being. Despite relatively modest overall economic growth, median household income rose by 30 percent between 2003 and 2013. Inequality, as measured by the Gini index, dropped from 0.55 to 0.50 between 2001 and 2012 (Brazilian Ministry of Planning, 2014, p. 11). According to one estimate, 64 percent of the reduction in inequality in Brazil from 1995 to 2005 can be attributed to the increase in the minimum wage (Saboia, 2007, cited in Berg, 2010, p. 14). In short, the ‘Workers’ Party Period’ in Brazil demonstrates the possibility of reversing the dystopian trajectory of work.

Work in India is even more pervasively dominated by precarity than work in Brazil. Yet India also offers a prime example of the

Harris-Scully thesis. The National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA) guarantees poor Indian workers the ‘right to work’ by providing public funding for unskilled, low-wage jobs. Zepeda et al. (2013, p. 1) estimate that in 2011 members of 50 million households worked a total of 2.5 billion days. The jobs provided were not ‘good jobs’. Nor did they provide capability-expanding services. Yet NREGA has had profound effects on the wages and well-being of tens of millions of poor workers.

Maiorano (2014, p. 95) sums up the impact of NREGA as follows: ‘According to virtually every analysis, the scheme, although marked by some important ambiguities, has had a profound impact on rural India, significantly ameliorating the living conditions of the rural poor’. The consequences of the program go beyond the wages that rural workers receive from the program itself (Maiorano, 2014; Veeraraghavan, 2015). Zepeda et al. (2013, p. 2) find that ‘simulations using an economy-wide model indicate that the act has a positive macroeconomic impact, leading to increases in GDP and trade’.

Harris and Scully’s general optimism and these cases notwithstanding, efforts to blunt dystopian trends through changes in state policy cannot be considered secure victories. In both Brazil and India positive changes have been built on years of arduous political mobilization combined with carefully crafted campaigns by civil society actors and sympathizers within the state to shift the parameters of state policy. Both are subject to being reversed if political momentum is lost.

While the global South is the most important arena of contestation over the future of work, it is not the only site of challenges to the dominance of the dystopian trajectory. Like policy experiments in the global South, the policy diversity of the ‘advanced’ countries belies the idea of neoliberalism’s pervasive hegemony. The experience of the Nordic countries is an important counter to claims that the dystopian trajectory is pervasive in the North.

In 2009, the Nordic countries were spending 10.1 percent of GDP on education, health

care, and active labor market policy, compared to 6.8 percent in other postindustrial democracies. Studies by Stephens and co-authors (e.g., Nelson and Stephens, 2011) show that these elevated social spending levels are related to higher levels of employment, women’s employment, and employment in knowledge-intensive services. These results explain why employment (measured as the percentage employed of the population aged 15–64) is higher in the Nordic countries than in any other welfare state regime. Changing the structure of employment helps support improvements in the quality of work. The Nordic countries excel in producing ‘discretionary learning employment’ (defined by the European Survey on Working Conditions as jobs involving high levels of problem solving and learning on the job, and high levels of freedom for the worker to organize his or her work activity), with over half of jobs having that character (Lundvall and Lorenz, 2011).

There are no technical or economic reasons why the exceptions to the dystopian trajectory, both in the global South and in the global North, could not be replicated in other countries. Diffusion depends on the balance of political forces in other national contexts, and this, in turn, depends on the extent to which workers have found ways to organize and magnify their political voice.

Innovative Strategies for Strengthening Worker Voice

Bottom-up pressure driven by worker collective action is an essential component of any strategy to improve work. Innovations in worker organizing are challenging precarity, both in the North and in the South. Here we highlight four: community unionism, minority unionism, informal worker organizing, and new international coalitions. We close by assessing these strategies’ promise for a more utopian future, concluding that broad success will depend on far more extensive mobilization of the state.

Community unionism is an elastic term denoting a set of forms and strategies that extend unionism's terrain beyond a particular workplace or multi-workplace employer to organize workers on a territorial basis as well – though most commonly in a single economic sector (McBride and Greenwood, 2009). In some incarnations, this is a version of past activist craft unionism. For example, the well-known Justice for Janitors strategy of the US Service Employees International Union successfully unionized building cleaning contractors citywide in city after city by mobilizing broad labor-community-religious coalitions to pressure corporate building owners (Waldinger et al., 1998). Unions in Japan's Community Unions National Network and Community Union Federation organize workers *by city* in Japan, often targeting particular marginalized groups: 'irregular' workers such as temps, immigrants, even the unemployed (Urano and Stewart, 2009). Across Japan, new network-based labor associations represent workers according to gender and/or employment status (Gottfried, 2013). Other varieties of community unionism go beyond employer-employee relationships to take on community issues (McBride and Greenwood, 2009).

Minority unionism and *dual unionism* are built-in features of labor relations in countries where there is no exclusive right to represent workers at a particular enterprise, such as France and Australia. Unions and other organizations are increasingly experimenting with these approaches in countries such as China or the United States where the law sanctions bargaining only by one designated union. *Minority unionism* takes place when a minority of workers organize and press demands in the absence of recognition of any union. In the United States, the OUR Wal-Mart movement of Wal-Mart workers, the Fast Food Forward campaign, and Warehouse Workers for Justice are mobilizing minorities of employees in low-wage sectors, along with community and labor allies, to petition, protest, and even engage in one-day strikes.

Workers build *dual unions* in situations where 'official unions' are not adequately serving them but are difficult to displace. In cases where institutional space for parallel unions is limited – China and Vietnam for instance – this may take the decentralized form of wildcat strikes mounted by localized groups of workers (Friedman, 2013). But in many instances, parallel labor organizations relate to multiple workplaces. In Mexico, the Border Region Committee of Working Women (CFO) and the Worker Support Coalition (CAT) organize *maquiladora* workers in opposition to the business-identified official unions, at times contending for union recognition in a particular workplace and at other times simply supporting worker struggles (Bensusán and Tilly, 2010; Frambach, 2011).

Informal worker organizing, also growing in incidence and scale, goes beyond the formal employment that is the comfort zone of traditional unions. Though in many countries unions historically drove the process of turning informal jobs into formally protected ones, it has proved difficult to use the formal union organizations that emerged from this success for organizing today's precariat (Tilly et al., 2013). The most dramatic instances of informal worker organizing hail from India, where over 80 percent of the nonagricultural workforce is informal (Agarwala, 2013). The Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA), over 40 years old and with 2.5 million members, is recognized as India's largest union federation – though most of its workers are grouped in associations and cooperatives remote from the experience of the typical trade union (SEWA, 2015). Informal workers are organizing in numerous other countries as well (see, e.g., Carré, Tilly, and Bonner, 2014) and are increasingly forming international networks (Bonner and Carré, 2014).

New international coalitions address increasingly globalized flows of capital, labor, goods, and services. Parallel to burgeoning networks of informal worker organizations are the global unions linking together national unions in a particular sector in such global

meta-federations as the International Union of Food and Tobacco Workers and UNI, the global service federation. Almost free global communication via the Internet has made possible myriad new transnational labor organizations, from the Rio Tinto Global Union Network to the Latin American Network for Multinational Company Research (RedLat) (Evans, 2010). And one positive consequence of increasingly virulent attacks on organized workers in the North has been increased openness to building alliances with workers in the South (Evans, 2014). New international coalitions have yet to produce victories that might be considered a sign of reversing the global anti-labor tide, but they have indeed won some victories, for example in shipping and auto production (Anner et al., 2006).

Several features prominent in all of these new forms of worker organizing are distinct from the dominant models of trade unionism over the previous half century (see Chun and Agarwala in this volume for further discussion of many of these points). First, the new wave of organizing mobilizes new subjects—especially migrants (rural-to-urban, cross-border) and women, but also youth and nonstandard workers—and invokes intersectional identities crossing class with gender, race and ethnicity, citizenship status, and so on. Second, this new labor activism has adopted far more varied organizational forms (including cooperatives, community organizations, and nongovernmental organizations), often creating associational hybrids that combine multiple forms. Third, though new organizations continue to contest the sphere of production, they also more readily extend their scope to reproductive issues (the social safety net, care needs of workers' families, community facilities) and to issues of identity (such as recognition of informal or nonstandard workers as performing socially valuable work). Fourth, much of these movements' vitality comes from a new set of geographies: at a macro level, from the global South; at a micro level, from organizations based in a community or a broad collection of small workplaces (in some cases as small

as a home). These four features are related to each other and result in part from some of the broad shifts in work we have already outlined: changes in services, including many historically feminized services; a shift to smaller workplaces; and a shift to less formal work settings.

Can community, minority, dual unionism, informal worker organizing, and international solidarity pave the way to widespread improvements in work? That depends on whether these approaches exert significant leverage and have the capacity to reach scale. Though a few groups of workers, such as dockworkers or auto assembly workers, have the *structural power* to bring production to a halt, for most of these groups the important dimensions of power are the *associational power* of workers joining together to win allies and influence elites and the *symbolic power* of publicly demonstrating the worthiness and justice of their cause (Chun, 2009). There are four paths to achieving scale. A first is *very large-scale spending* by deep-pocketed worker organizations (or by supportive organizations such as foundations or churches). Though some of the successes we cite build on large expenditures by unions, it seems unlikely that such spending will scale up by orders of magnitude, given the limited resources of labor organizations and social justice-driven donors and the competing demands they face. New dues or social enterprise models are needed to take organizing in which many workers are low wage and membership is diffusely defined and to produce substantial revenue streams (Fine, 2006). A second path is *contagion effects*, in which imitation or organizational competition leads to the rapid spread of an organizational form, strategy, or tactic. A third pathway is *threat effects*, in which a limited number of actions by organized workers lead employers well beyond the site of action to make concessions to pre-empt those outcomes.

Big expenditures by organized labor and other pro-worker institutions, contagion effects, and threat effects can all help improve work. But we argue, in tune with analysts

such as Ross (2006) and Seidman (2007), that to be most effective, associational and symbolic power must take a fourth path and translate into the ability to shape state policies and practices.

Of course, focusing labor's energies on the state has its pitfalls as well as promises. Labor's ability to shape state policies in the North produced the mid-twentieth-century social democratic gains, but relying on former political allies to deliver continued social protection has proved a chimera in countries like the United States in the neoliberal era. In Brazil, the ability of labor and other social movements to exercise leverage from within the state has been central to the nation's early twenty-first-century progressive moment. At the same time, what appeared to be equally promising possibilities for a labor-state alliance in South Africa have turned to disillusionment as the politics of maintaining state power have eclipsed the progressive moment.

Yet even when the state is an ambiguous ally, the possibilities for using bottom-up strategies to enhance the progressive possibilities inherent in the state's regulatory apparatus should not be ignored. Regulatory approaches that incorporate worker organizations as 'eyes on the street' and force multipliers for inherently limited state-employed inspectorates are a good example (Fine and Gordon, 2010). A complementary regulatory tool is tying public contracts, subsidies, or even simple business license renewal to a history of fair labor practices, which can level the playing field and help worker organizations extend their scope and strength (Sonn and Luce, 2008). Indeed, worker organizers often employ a process of 'triangulation' between workers, employers, and the state, using legal claims and lobbying for legislation to change the organizing terrain.

The panorama of new organizing efforts is encouraging, but it also reveals a discouraging weakness in labor's ability to reverse the dystopian trajectory. Labor mobilization at its historically most successful combined hardnosed practical efforts to improve working conditions with a belief that radical

transformation of the capitalism market was not just possible but inevitable. Currently, a basically market-friendly movement whose most radical goal is to recapture the rules and practices of the post-World-War-II 'golden age of capitalism' is hard pressed to convince workers (and society at large) that it offers the possibility of a better world in addition to the possibility of better wages and working conditions. Radical visions of alternative ways of organizing work now find other homes – for example, among advocates of the solidarity economy.

Building Alternative Workplaces in the Solidarity Economy

As Albert Hirschman (1970) reminded us, one alternative to voice is exit. A particularly interesting version of this alternative is collective exit via creation of collectively controlled enterprises renouncing capitalist business criteria – the solidarity economy (Satgar, 2014). We define the solidarity economy as collective economic activity beyond the scale of the family that combines three elements of what could be called *solidarity logic*: (1) objectives of shifting economic resources and power down the income scale; (2) higher levels of worker voice and participation than are typical; and (3) control by collectivities of workers or community members rather than by the state or by a small number of proprietors (or by 'absentee' proprietors). Important antecedents include Robert Owen's vision of an economy run by the associated producers through cooperatives, as well as the factory councils that briefly arose in the Russian revolution of 1917 (Brinton, 1970), and any number of traditional systems for governing shared resources (Ostrom, 1990). Can the solidarity economy build on these historical legacies to significantly improve work in the world?

The solidarity economy concept originated in Brazil in the 1990s (Mance, 2014), and its growing scale and degree of institutionalization in that country are noteworthy.

As of 2007, an incomplete survey covering half the country recorded 22,000 solidarity economy initiatives involving 1.7 million workers (Mance, 2014). The Brazilian Solidarity Economy Forum convenes this set of organizations and has its government counterpart in the National Secretariat of the Solidarity Economy within the Ministry of Labor; both were formed in 2003 when the Workers' Party (Partido dos Trabalhadores; PT) came to power (Esteves, 2014).

Solidarity economy experiments today are becoming more common far beyond Brazil. In some cases these experiments build on the pooling of individual resources, as when workers start a cooperative, or are born when a community organization launches a business. Spain's Mondragón network of worker cooperatives is the best-known example. But in other cases organized grassroots groups seize assets without compensation or with below-market compensation, a kind of redistribution from below (Kennedy, Leiva, and Tilly, 2009).

For the solidarity economy to pose a serious alternative to capitalist relations, it would be necessary for solidarity logic to control entire supply chains and ultimately large, relatively independent circuits of commerce. There have been some impressive strides in this direction. In one Argentine case, a cooperative of small cotton farmers sells cotton to a cooperatively run 'recuperated' textile factory – reopened as a worker cooperative – that produces and cuts fabric to be sold to a cooperative recuperated garment factory, which stitches and decorates T-shirts for sale outside Argentina through an Italian fair trade network (Coscione, 2008).

Despite the ambitious claims made by some solidarity economy enthusiasts, this diverse set of initiatives is at present an archipelago of solidarity logic islands in a global capitalist sea rather than an imminent threat or alternative to capitalism. Expanding these beachheads to a continental scale seems improbable at present. So far, solidarity economy organizations have not elicited a massive infusion of resources by civil society

actors. In the vast majority of national contexts, national-level institutions are ill-suited or hostile to bottom-up, collectively controlled productive units, making diffusion difficult. The solidarity economy's threat effect actually takes the form of increasing bargaining leverage for the majority of workers still toiling under capitalist relations. Again, however, 200 Argentine recuperated enterprises or 3.4 million Brazilian workers (doubling the 1.7 million found in half the country) out of 91 million seem unlikely to decisively alter bargaining power in other enterprises. Ironically, the greatest opportunity for solidarity economy expansion may lie with state support, which so many solidarity economy advocates repudiate. Legislation creating or facilitating financing streams for collectively run enterprises, as in Brazil, is a good example.

Technology: A Problem for Capitalism and an Opportunity for Globalizing Owen

Another very different way of thinking about a 'socialist' future of work comes from those who start with the new 'means of production' afforded by information technology. For example, Jeremy Rifkin (2014, p. 16) is convinced that technological trends already well established at the turn of the millennium foreshadow 'the shrinking of capitalism in the next half century and the rise of a Collaborative Commons as the dominant model for organizing economic life'.

Rifkin is excessively ebullient, but the effects of technology are clearly more double-edged than dismaying projections of disappearing jobs might make them seem. The increasing returns to scale inherent in 'the information economy' may have been a boon to capitalist accumulation and a vehicle for marginalizing workers, but technology also creates problems for capitalism and opportunities for those who would reorganize work in a more egalitarian mode.

A turn-of-the-millennium essay by DeLong and Summers (2001) captures the gist of

capitalism's technology problem. To the delight of Rifkin (2014, pp. 7–9), DeLong and Summers admit first of all (2001, p. 35) that 'if information goods are to be distributed at their marginal cost of production – zero – they cannot be created and produced by entrepreneurial firms'. This undermines the possibility of using markets and competition as a spur to producing innovation and the production of new knowledge. They also announce (2001, p. 36) that the idea that intellectual property rights will contribute to improved economic performance 'is simply wrong'. They end up concluding that the traditional paradigm of competitive capitalism doesn't work for 'the new economy' and admit that they 'do not yet know what the right replacement paradigm will be'.

DeLong and Summers's analysis is not iconoclastic. It is simply an unusually frank exposition of the problems that the 'new economy' creates for capitalism as a paradigm. Seen in the reflection of DeLong and Summers's analysis, monopoly rents on intangible assets appear to be not so much opportunistic exploitation as a necessity from the point of view of capitalist firms. Either they maintain exploitative rents that hobble innovation and create dead-weight economic losses in the aggregate, or they face the theoretically correct but practically impossible option of charging prices based on marginal costs. Rather than being a system that delivers dramatic increases in productivity and output to compensate for its negative effects, capitalism becomes a system that hampers technical progress and economic efficiency and must be politically propped up even according to its own sources of theoretical legitimization.

None of this prevents the present holders of capital from simply using their current returns to buy enforcement of their monopoly returns (along with fictitious theoretical endorsements for their contributions to the commonweal). It does, however, mean that mainstream economics has admitted that there may be another system lurking out there for organizing the information economy.

Some version of Rifkin's 'Collaborative Commons' is an obvious candidate.

The zero marginal cost of information poses a problem for the existing capitalist paradigm, but for proponents of alternative paradigms it presents an opportunity. From the perspective of the future of work, Yochai Benkler's vision of 'peer production' offers one of the most analytically lucid versions of this alternative. In Benkler's view (2013, p. 215), information technology creates a new foundation for instantiating the possibility 'that we will provide for ourselves a substantial range of the capabilities we require as human beings through peer production, or mutualistic voluntary association'. He argues further that this 'practical anarchy' is not just a utopian vision, saying (2013, p. 214), 'Over the course of the first decade of the twenty-first century, commons-based peer production has moved from being ignored, through being mocked, feared, and regarded as an exception or intellectual quirk, to finally becoming a normal and indispensable part of life'.

The increasing importance of peer production is indisputable. Benkler, Shaw and Hill (2015, p. 2) point out that Linux Free and Open Source Software (FOSS) web servers hold two-thirds of the webserver market. Wikipedia, which has 'become the basic knowledge utility of networked life with more than half a billion unique viewers each month' (Benkler, Shaw and Hill, 2015, p.2), barely needs mentioning. Perhaps even more significantly, the governance of the twenty-first century's single most important piece of global infrastructure – the Internet – depends largely on bodies run via the 'practical anarchy' that characterizes peer production (Benkler, 2013; Matthew, 2014).

Putting peer production into practice turns out to be more institutionally complex than the 'practical anarchy' label would suggest. Matthew's (2014) careful ethnographic analysis of Internet governance confirms the centrality of a complex set of cooperative practices among 'peer production' networks but points out that these are embedded in

larger structures of ‘distributed governance’ that include participation by capitalist firms and states. Shaw (2012) finds that peer production communities inevitably involve some degree of hierarchical differentiation among members and sets of carefully maintained norms. Plus, of course, zero-cost communications make it possible to organize production among large numbers of geographically dispersed workers in ways that are the antithesis of the Owenite community, such as Amazon’s Mechanical Turk (Shaw, 2012) or call centers (Braga, 2009).

The other obvious challenge to putting the collaborative commons and peer production at the center of the future of work is: How do those who work outside the privileged spaces of the information economy fit in? Analysts of peer production have little to say about the rest of the workforce. Rifkin assumes that ‘workers’ will be replaced by what he calls ‘prosumers’ – that is, people who ‘become both producer and consumer of their own product’ (2014, p. 90). We may be able to produce our own entertainment on YouTube and even various material gadgets via 3-D printers, but we still depend on a range of products – from breakfast cereal to shoes – for which the marginal cost is not zero. We also need houses or apartments to live in whose construction we are unlikely to self-produce. If people are to access incomes that they can exchange for the goods they need, they must still do work in return for which society is willing to offer them a livelihood.

A careful, critical analysis of the brave new world of production possibilities opened up by information technology is essential if modern-day Owenites are to avoid being tripped up and disillusioned by the practical realities of implementation in the same way that an earlier generation of socialists ended up creating oppressive hierarchical nightmares that were the antithesis of their dreams. Nonetheless, the potentialities for emancipatory transformation are undeniable, and the contrast between these potentialities and the current dystopian trajectory makes ignoring them irresponsible at best.

CONCLUSION

We have framed prospects for the future of work around the tension between the dominant dystopian trajectory and the progressive challenges to its hegemony. We concede that the dystopian trajectory is likely to prevail. We have emphasized three ways in which the political power of capital has succeeded in imposing a dystopian future on ordinary workers. First, a diminishing amount of human labor is required to satisfy the range of capabilities that we seek as human beings, but capitalist ideology has defined this development as creating a problem of too few jobs, rather than as reducing the amount of time individual workers need to devote themselves to contributing to society as opposed to pursuing other avenues of self-fulfillment. Second, choking off the flow of resources available for public investment that would target the massive set of unmet needs for what we have called ‘capability-expanding services’ is fundamental to the dystopian disfigurement of the structure of employment. Finally, the jobs that remain available for most ordinary workers are organized in ways that maximize the leverage of capital while degrading both the experience of work and the livelihoods it affords.

The result is a rise of precarity that threatens workers in both North and South but is particularly severe in the South. Precarity brings insecure livelihoods and lack of rights or power on the job. It is held in place by political institutions as well as the structure of production. The economically marginalized, who bear the brunt of the dystopian transformation of work, tend to be politically marginalized, even in democracies, undermining their ability to use their formal political rights as a means for transforming work.

What, then, are the prospects for escaping this bleak future? The obvious reaction is that nothing short of a revolutionary rupture can save us, but we follow instead Erik Wright’s assessment (2010, pp. 308–20) that ‘ruptural’ strategies for producing progressive change are implausible. Despite our use of oversimplified

political shorthand like ‘the power of capital’, we also follow Fred Block (2011, in press) in seeing the contemporary capitalist market economy as more institutionally variegated than its proponents would admit. Even in the heart of the corporate world, disruptive, potentially progressive countertendencies, which we have not been able to explore here, continue to emerge (Blasi, Freeman, and Kruse, 2013; Davis, 2013).

Arguing for the potential efficacy of partial challenges to the current capitalist dystopian order does not mean ignoring what are likely to be ferocious responses of elites with vested interests in the current structure of privilege. Nonetheless, the institutional fissures that characterize contemporary capitalism create multiple possibilities for change. In addition, Marx’s prediction that the progressive transformation of the ‘forces of production’ was likely to create problems for the preservation of an ossified set of ‘relations of production’ applies to our contemporary economy in ways that Marx could not have envisioned. Analysts as disparate as Rifkin on the one hand and DeLong and Summers on the other agree that the theoretical paradigm in which market competition ensures that capitalist enterprises will deliver economic efficiency and technological progress simply doesn’t work in the ‘new economy’.

Our exploration of countervailing possibilities focused on four distinct but synergistically interconnected terrains. The starting point was the persistence of efforts of ‘reform mongers’ (to use Hirschman’s [1963] classic term) within the state, stimulated by and working with progressive actors in civil society, to put in place policies that improve livelihoods, the quality of work, and even its availability. Examples, ranging from the expansion of public employment in India and the ‘reformatizing’ of the labor market in Brazil to public investment supporting high-quality jobs in the Nordic countries, show that public action on behalf of workers has not been wiped out in the neoliberal era.

While the state continues to be a key locus for the institutionalization of countervailing

trends, its agency is contingent on the synergistic interaction of public institutions with worker mobilization, which is also the site of unexpected green shoots. Predictions that precarious workers would be unorganizable have proved unfounded. Indeed, some of the most creative and vibrant examples of turn-of-the-millennium organizing have focused on precarious workers. At the same time, globalization, usually seen as a threat to labor organizing, turns out to have positive spillovers. Overall, the trajectory of efforts to build transnational alliances among workers has been more positive than that of national-level efforts.

Equally surprising is the stubborn persistence of ‘Owenite’ responses to the dystopian trajectory: organizational initiatives based on the solidarity, cooperative self-organization of workers to create alternatives to working for capitalists. Experiments in the ‘solidarity economy’ continue to sprout up around the world, again most significantly in the global South.

Perhaps most surprising in our assessment of escape routes from dystopia is the symbiosis between the evolution of the ‘new information economy’ and the classic Owenite vision of producer cooperatives. Information and communications technology may destroy jobs, but it also creates possibilities for cooperative production on a scope and scale unimaginable in Owen’s era.

Each of these escape routes is incomplete and requires complementary components from the others. Creating the necessary symbiosis among them is a formidable challenge. The libertarian politics of advocates of technology-based peer production has room for peer producers and ‘prosumers’, but doesn’t provide a role for organized, mobilized workers who need livelihoods producing quotidian goods. Connections between the solidarity economy and the formal union movement are amorphous at best, even where they are both strong, as in Brazil. Worker mobilization and Owenite cooperative strategies are most likely to grow if nurtured by supportive public policies. Yet even the states

most supportive of improving the structure of work are still mesmerized by the importance of instituting ‘market-friendly’ policies that will keep local and global capitalists happy, and are terrified of the ‘revenge of the markets’ that will befall them if they don’t conform.

These problems might seem insurmountable, except for one thing. The obstacles that capitalism confronts in sustaining its hegemony are equally daunting. Domination based on the ability to deploy the state’s monopoly of violence remains an option, but the luxury of hegemony based on consent – in the form of shared popular convictions that capitalist markets are the best available alternative for delivering increased well-being – is becoming increasingly hard to sustain.

The contest to define the future of work remains unequal, and the dystopian trajectory remains the likely outcome, however destructive it may be to human civilization. Constructing the alliances necessary to change the balance is anything but easy, but the resilience of ideas and organizations dedicated to this project remains profoundly impressive. Writing off alternative futures would be abetting descent into an appalling self-fulfilling prophecy. Trying to figure out how to turn them into ‘real utopias’ is a challenging but potentially very rewarding project.

NOTE

- 1 According to Berg (2010, p. 7), ‘Formal job growth outpace[ed] informal job growth by a three-to-one ratio’.

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Author Index

- Aalokke, S., 511
Abel, E.K., 453
Abercrombie, N., 61, 134, 135, 144
Abernathy, W.J., 173
Aboim, S., 452
Abrahamson, E., 175, 178
Acemoglu, D., 113, 256
Acker, J., 41, 45, 65, 76, 85, 100–1
Ackroyd, S., 5, 27, 160, 187, 190, 191, 192, 193, 195, 205, 212, 290, 302
Adams, T.L., 494
Adams, Z., 401
Addison, M., 77, 80
Adkins, L., 80, 351
Adler, P.S., 245, 251, 257, 290, 294
Adorno, T., 9, 131–2, 622
Agamben, G., 143
Agarwala, R., 10, 354, 356, 439
Agassi, J.B., 136
Aglietta, M., 284–5, 526
Aguiar, L.L.M., 354
Albert, S., 265
Alberti, G., 217
Albrow, M., 43
Alcock, P., 475, 485
Alderson, M., 340
Aldridge, H., 472
Allen, T., 175
Allen, V., 155
Allison, A., 367, 380, 429
Alonso, L.E., 162
Alperowitz, G., 250
Alston, R.S., 103
Altmann, N., 213, 219
Alvesson, M., 6, 263, 264, 266, 267, 268, 269, 270, 272, 274, 275, 277, 278
Amaral LAN, 255
Amin, A., 24, 43, 167, 284, 490, 491
Amman, R., 314
Analoui, F., 188
Anderson, B., 42, 76, 208
Anderson, M., 492
Anderson, R., 510
Andreoni, J., 488
Anheier, H.K., 485, 490, 491
Annavajhula, J.C.B., 315
Anner, M., 439
Antcliff, V., 163
Anthony, P.D., 168, 171, 174, 175, 179, 625
Antunes, R., 565, 570
Anxo, D., 503, 506, 510
Appelbaum, E., 120, 251, 355, 385, 387, 398
Arcand, J.L., 103
Arias, O., 410
Ariely, D., 255
Armstrong, P., 206, 302
Arnold, D., 429, 434, 437
Aronowitz, S., 43, 480
Arrowsmith, J., 211
Arthur, M.B., 257
Arum, R., 416
Arvidsson, A., 207
Ashcraft, K.L., 193, 274
Ashforth, B., 265
Ashkanasy, N.M., 263, 277
Ashton, D., 231, 232, 322
Aten, K., 266
Atkinson, W., 39
Attewell, P., 36, 232
Atzeni, M., 360
Augar, P., 562
Autor, D.H., 122, 232, 256
Badham, R., 190
Bahnisch, M., 45
Bain, P., 45, 161, 193, 231, 317
Baines, D., 196, 494
Baines, S., 490
Baker, S., 493
Balakrishnan, R., 419–20
Baldamus, W., 187, 217
Baldry, C., 320
Baldwin, C.Y., 253
Bamber, G.J., 156
Bannon, E., 189
Banyard, K., 89
Barbier, J-C., 480, 546
Barker, C., 66, 68
Barker, J., 309
Barker, J.R., 256
Barker, K., 121
Barker, L., 314
Barley, S.R., 270, 277, 278, 369, 375, 377
Barnard, C.I., 246
Barnet, R.J., 314
Barnett, C., 169
Barnham, L., 378
Baron, J.N., 101
Barrett, M., 444
Barrientos, S., 419
Barth, E., 389
Bass, B.M., 174

- Basu, A., 85
 Batalova, J.A., 450
 Bates, L., 88
 Batnitzky, A., 353
 Batt, R., 338, 355, 398
 Bauman, Z., 25, 44, 67, 563, 624
 Bauwens, M., 307, 321
 Baxter, J., 7–8, 444, 445, 448, 449, 450, 451, 461, 462, 474
 Bayón, M., 432
 Beale, F., 175
 Beatty, R.W., 256
 Bechky, B., 371, 379
 Beck, H., 169
 Beck, K., 178
 Beck, U., 7, 25, 43, 44, 63, 64, 66, 67, 367, 388, 472, 495, 563, 624
 Becker, B.E., 256
 Becker, G.S., 99, 235, 445
 Beck-Gernsheim, E., 43
 Beechey, V., 385, 396, 486
 Beer, M., 249, 255
 Beetham, D., 38
 Behrend, H., 187
 Bélanger, J., 190, 193, 194, 200
 Bell, D., 43, 56, 57, 227, 330, 331, 527, 624
 Bellaby, P., 536, 537
 Belt, V., 317
 Benders, J., 178
 Benjamin, L., 101
 Benjamin, O., 509
 Benkler, Y., 254, 664
 Bennis, W., 168
 Berardi, F., 619
 Berberoglu, B., 68
 Berg, J., 667n
 Berg, P., 251
 Berger, J., 571
 Berger, S., 397
 Bergman, A., 79
 Bergvall-Kåreborn, B., 320, 369, 371
 Berk, S., 446, 448
 Bernadi, F., 481
 Bernhardt, A., 310, 378, 379, 391, 399
 Bernstein, J.M., 132
 Berthoud, R., 477
 Bertrand, M., 105
 Bettio, F., 430, 453
 Bevan, G., 172
 Beynon, H., 6, 20, 21, 24, 29n, 73, 74, 133, 134, 188, 206, 285–6, 302n, 307, 308, 309, 311, 316, 526, 561, 573
 Bezuidenhout, A., 209, 429, 657
 Bhattacharyya, R., 209
 Bianchi, S.M., 453, 454, 461, 532
 Bidwell, M., 388
 Billing, Y.D., 263
 Billington, J., 186
 Bird, K., 452
 Bittman, M., 8, 445, 447, 532, 534
 Björkman, I., 277
 Blackburn, R., 195
 Blank, R., 121
 Blasi, J.R., 250
 Blau, F.D., 115
 Blau, G., 257
 Blau, P.M., 56
 Blauner, A., 73
 Blauner, R., 172, 618
 Block, F., 666
 Blood, R., 444
 Blue, L., 103
 Bluestone, B., 23, 43, 114, 120, 314, 529, 532
 Blyton, P., 160
 Boddy, C., 179
 Boje, D., 178, 272
 Bolden, R., 272
 Boles, T.L., 339
 Bolles, R., 376
 Boltanski, L., 5, 65, 66, 167, 168–9, 170, 171, 173, 175, 321
 Bolton, S.C., 36, 130, 137–8, 140, 142, 143, 144, 145, 196, 220, 340
 Bonefeld, W., 284
 Bongiovi, J., 429
 Bonilla-Silva, E., 104
 Booth, J., 339
 Borowsky, R., 263
 Bosch, G., 387, 511
 Bose, M., 420
 Bouchard, G., 453
 Bourdieu, P., 24, 39, 45, 46, 58, 60, 80, 135, 140, 141, 493, 496
 Bowles, S., 235
 Bowring, F., 472
 Boychuk, T., 118
 Boyd, C., 220
 Boyer, R., 284, 285
 Boyle, M., 199
 Bradley, H., 4, 76, 78, 82, 85, 86
 Bradley, K., 78
 Brand, K.-W., 492
 Brannan, M.J., 174
 Brannen, P., 20
 Braverman, H., 5, 11, 22, 35–6, 62, 66, 74, 113, 119, 132, 136, 159, 188, 205, 206, 207, 208, 210, 211, 212, 213, 214, 218, 219, 227, 228, 230, 239, 256, 307, 314, 319, 423, 524, 618
 Brech, E., 170
 Breman, J., 438
 Brenner, J., 63
 Brenner, R., 308, 322n
 Bridges, W.P., 101, 480
 Brief, A.P., 335
 Brines, J., 445, 446, 447, 449
 Brook, P., 205, 220
 Brooks, C., 64
 Brophy, E., 355

- Brotheridge, C.M., 334
 Brown, A., 276
 Brown, A.K., 334
 Brown, G., 186
 Brown, P., 231, 235, 322
 Brown, R.K., 19, 20, 21
 Bryk, A.S., 253
 Brynin, M., 98
 Brynjolfsson, E., 307, 319
 Bryson, J.R., 350
 Buchanan, D., 190
 Buchholz, S., 481
 Budd, J.W., 34, 153
 Budig, M., 83, 335, 340
 Buhlmann, F., 451
 Buhlungu, S., 209
 Bulan, H.F., 334
 Bulloch, S., 489
 Bumpass, L., 450
 Burawoy, M., 11, 22, 24, 36, 46–7, 74, 120, 136, 159,
 189, 213, 214–15, 217, 219, 276, 278, 573
 Burchardt, T., 476
 Burchell, B., 112, 195
 Burgess, J., 219
 Burnett, S.B., 512
 Burns, J.M., 179
 Burns, T., 246
 Burrell, G., 45, 192
 Burris, V., 61
 Burroni, L., 439
 Burrows, R., 284
 Bustillo, R.M., 112
 Butler, J., 40
 Byrkjeflot, H., 118
 Byrne, J.A., 171, 172, 173, 179, 180
- Cadwalladr, C., 312
 Calhoun, C.J., 68
 Callaghan, G., 193
 Callaghan, J., 65
 Callister, R.R., 339
 Cam, S., 307
 Campbell, B., 82, 86, 89
 Campbell, D., 83
 Campbell, K.E., 101
 Canato, A., 263, 268, 274, 275, 278
 Cappelli, P., 34, 122, 367
 Caracciolo di Torella, E., 505
 Cardador, T., 275
 Carli, L.L., 78
 Carlzon, J., 176, 179
 Carneiro, A., 437
 Carneiro, F.G., 103
 Carr, M., 419, 420
 Carré, F., 7, 389, 390, 391, 394, 412
 Carter, B., 161, 313, 322n
 Carter, R., 196
 Casas-Cortés, M., 430, 438
- Casey, B., 121
 Casey, C., 44, 192
 Castells, M., 43, 385, 388, 408
 Castillo, J.J., 44
 Castles, S., 598, 599, 600, 603
 Catney, G., 98
 Caulkin, S., 197
 Cavendish, R. *see* Glucksmann, M. (*/Cavendish, R.*)
 Centeno, M.A., 63
 Chambers, E.G., 248
 Champy, J., 177
 Chan, J., 208, 316, 572
 Chan, W., 437
 Chandler, A.D., 169, 170, 245, 248, 285, 287, 289, 293
 Chaney, D., 25
 Chang, D., 433, 434
 Chang, M.L., 451
 Charles, M., 78
 Chauvel, L., 481
 Chen, M., 7, 407, 415, 418, 420, 421, 424, 433
 Chen, V.T., 369, 370
 Chernow, R., 169
 Chiapello, E., 5, 65, 66, 167, 168–9, 170, 171, 173,
 175, 321
 Child, J., 206
 Chinoy, E., 20, 23, 73, 172
 Cho, S., 65
 Christensen, K., 121
 Christopherson, S., 371
 Chun, J., 10, 338
 Chwastiak, M., 171, 172
 Clark, 432
 Clark, A.E., 73, 115
 Clark, T., 82, 495
 Clarke, M., 565
 Clarke S., 284, 286, 322, 322n, 526
 Clasen, J., 124
 Clawson, D., 219
 Clegg, H.A., 153, 491, 493
 Cnaan, R., 486, 487
 Coase, R.H., 246
 Coates, D., 142
 Coates, K., 306
 Cobb, J., 66, 136
 Cobb, J.A., 298
 Cobble, D.S., 338, 355, 395
 Cockburn, C., 75, 189, 211, 213, 236, 493
 Cohen, 454, 459
 Cohen, J.N., 63
 Cohen, P., 450, 451
 Cole, G.A., 171, 172
 Cole, R.E., 214
 Coles, B., 474
 Colfer, L., 253
 Collett, J.L., 339
 Collier, R., 510
 Collins, D., 178
 Collins, J., 176, 178

- Collinson, D.L., 63, 191, 215, 278
 Coltrane, S., 444, 445, 446, 509
 Combs, J., 252
 Comer, L., 62
 Connell, C., 337
 Connell, R., 41, 85
 Connolly, H., 162
 Conti, R.F., 309
 Contu, A., 193, 194
 Cooke, L.P., 445, 450
 Cooke, M., 616
 Cooke, W., 434
 Cooper, M., 369, 370, 377
 Corley, K., 265
 Cotton, E., 163
 Cottrell, W.F., 23
 Couch, K., 98
 Coverdill, J., 375
 Cowie, J., 23, 26, 314
 Cox, D.S., 355, 356
 Craig, L., 453, 461, 532
 Craine, S., 474
 Crary, J., 161
 Crawford, M., 25
 Crenshaw, K., 41, 65, 76, 88
 Crittenden, A., 335
 Crompton, R., 52, 65, 74, 78, 461, 503, 506, 509
 Cross, J., 314, 322
 Crothers, L., 179
 Crowston, K., 494
 Crozier, M., 246
 Cullen, J.G., 176
 Cummins, E., 376, 377
 Cunnison, S., 187
 Curran, J.V., 130
 Cushen, J., 197, 198
 Cutler, A., 58
 Cutler, J., 43
- Daddis, G.A., 173
 Daems, H., 293
 Daguerre, A., 2, 43
 Dahrendorf, R., 56
 Dainty, A.R.J., 41
 Dale, G., 68
 Dalla Costa, M., 42
 Damarin, A., 371, 377
 Dampier, H., 39–40
 Dandridge, T.C., 272
 D'Anezeze, G., 197
 Daniels, A.K., 490, 492
 Dant, T., 139
 Darity, W., 103
 DasGupta, S., 588, 589
 Dasgupta, S.D., 588, 589
 Davidoff, L., 491
 Davies, A., 193, 194
 Davies, S., 322n
- Davies, W., 63
 Davis, F., 331
 Davis, G.F., 298
 Davis, K., 56
 De Neve, G., 219
 De Ruijter, E., 454
 De Vaus, D.A., 450
 Deakin, S., 401
 Deal, T.E., 277
 Deci, E.L., 255
 Deem, R., 27, 75
 Deery, S., 317
 Deetz, S., 192
 Dekker, P., 487
 Delbridge, R., 309
 DeLong, J.B., 663–4
 DeLong, T.J., 249
 Delphy, C., 40
 Demaiter, E.I., 494
 Deming, W.E., 171, 178
 Denney, R., 56, 57
 Dennis, N., 20, 21
 Desmarez, P., 18
 Deutsch, F.M., 40, 446, 461
 Devadason, R., 437
 DeVault, M., 349
 Devine, F., 65
 Dewey, J., 133, 142–3
 Deyo, F., 439
 Dharendorf, R., 154
 D'Hombres, B., 103
 Diamond, L., 177
 Dick, P., 194
 Dickson, L., 490
 Dickson, W.J., 171, 246
 Diefenbach, H., 452
 Diefendorff, J.M., 338
 Dietrich, H., 481
 DiFazio, W., 480
 DiMaggio, P., 256, 266, 271, 490, 491
 Dingeldy, I., 8–9
 DiPrete, T.A., 123, 125
 DiTomaso, N., 376
 Ditton, J., 188
 Djelic, M.-L., 285, 293, 294, 296
 Dobbin, F., 118
 Dodge, T., 197
 Doodoo, F.N.A., 98
 Doellgast, V., 338
 Doeringer, P.B., 100, 114
 Dohse, K., 284
 Donnellon, A., 252, 253
 Doray, B., 307
 Dore, R.P., 74, 214
 Douglas, A., 491
 Dreze, J., 361
 Drobnič, S., 445, 462
 Drucker, P.F., 172, 176, 178, 179, 245

- Du Gay, P., 80, 81, 177, 311, 376
 Dubin, R., 10, 144
 Dubois, P., 186
 Dudley, K., 29, 369, 372, 373
 Dudley, R.A., 249
 Duggan, L., 66
 Duke, V., 2, 61, 84, 144
 Dukerich, J., 265
 Duncan, O.D., 56
 Dundon, T., 162
 Dunkel, W., 349
 Dunlop, J.T., 150, 153
 Durand, J.P., 561
 Durkheim, E., 18, 35, 36–7, 39, 56, 73, 130, 131, 144, 149, 150, 629
 Dutton, J., 265
 Dworkin, D.L., 52
 Dwyer, R.E., 123, 338, 340, 341
 Dyer, S., 353
- Eagly, A.H., 78
 Eberle, M., 437
 Eckert, C.M., 492
 Edgell, S., 2, 36, 61, 84, 144, 302n, 385, 388, 391
 Edlund, J., 117, 118
 Edwards, P., 21, 34, 42, 160, 213
 Edwards, P.K., 114–15, 189, 213, 215
 Edwards, R., 22, 58, 74, 188, 189, 207, 208, 209, 289
 Ehrenreich, B., 42, 311, 337, 377
 Eichhorst, W., 219
 Eidlin, B., 4, 55
 Elbaum, B., 230, 231
 Elcheroth, G., 451
 Elder, G.H., 479
 Eldridge, J., 21, 37
 Elfenbein, H.A., 249
 Elger, T., 206, 213, 219, 220, 309
 Elias, P., 331
 Eliasoph, N., 486, 491
 Elliott, J.R., 101
 Ely, G., 97, 263
 Ely, R., 263
 Emerek, R., 79
 Emmenegger, P., 122
 Empson, L., 267, 268, 272
 Enchautegui, M.E., 512
 Engelen, E., 43
 Engels, F., 54, 151
 England, P., 83, 335, 340, 448, 449
 Enright, B., 209
 Epstein, C., 22, 23
 Epstein, C.F., 101
 Erickson, R.J., 334, 335, 339, 340
 Erikson, R., 59
 Esch, E.D., 211
 Esping-Andersen, G., 117, 299, 387, 451, 503, 505, 506, 543–4, 546
 Espinoza, K., 599
- Estrada, G., 349
 Evans, J., 434
 Evans, P., 10
 Eyraud, F., 429
- Fagan, C., 385, 506, 510, 511, 512, 513, 530, 534
 Fahlén, S., 503
 Fairlie, R.W., 98
 Fajnzylber, P., 410
 Fangel, A.B., 511
 Fantasia, R., 645
 Farber, H.S., 113, 256
 Favell, A., 87
 Feldman, D.C., 334
 Felstead, A., 5, 121, 207, 228, 230, 232, 233, 236, 238, 472
 Fenstermaker, S., 42
 Ferguson, A., 18
 Fernandez Gonzalez, C.J.F., 158
 Fernández-Macías, E., 123
 Fernandez-Mateo, I., 388
 Fernando, M., 175
 Ferraro, F., 254
 Ferree, M.M., 446
 Ferreira, F., 656
 Fertig, J., 257
 Fevre, R., 12, 625, 629
 Fielden, S.L., 102
 Figart, D.M., 335, 352, 506
 Findlay, P., 123
 Fine, G., 262, 263
 Finlay, W., 337, 375
 Finlayson, G., 491
 Finn, D., 480
 Finnegan, W., 342
 Fitzgerald, S., 219
 Fleming, P., 174, 185, 187, 193, 194, 199, 268, 270, 272
 Fletcher, R., 130
 Fligstein, N., 118
 Florida, R., 216, 309
 Folbre, N., 236, 335, 340
 Foley, D., 274
 Fontaine, M.H., 249
 Foreman-Peck, J., 300
 Form, W., 29n
 Foster, D., 313
 Foster, J.B., 256
 Foucault, M., 45
 Foulton, M., 248
 Fox, A., 21, 228, 230
 Franzway, S., 493
 Frase, P., 654
 Fraser, J.A., 122
 Frayne, D., 9
 Freedman, A., 121
 Freeman, C., 353
 Freeman, R.B., 250, 389, 397
 Freidson, E., 169

- Frenette, A., 493
 Freund, D., 94
 Frey, C.B., 319, 653
 Fricker, C., 130
 Friedan, B., 75
 Friedman, A., 36, 159, 188, 189
 Friedman, A.F., 209
 Friedman, E., 219
 Friedman, M., 479
 Friedmann, A., 22
 Frith, H., 352
 Froebel F., 314
 Fromm, E., 133
 Frost, P.J., 264, 272, 273, 277
 Frost, R., 185
 Fryer, D., 476
 Fuchs, C., 315
 Fucini, J.J., 256
 Fudge, J., 209
 Fulbright, K., 101
 Fullerton, A.S., 368
 Furusten, S., 175, 176, 178
 Fuwa, M., 445, 450, 451, 452, 454, 459

 Gabriel, Y., 193, 194
 Gaddis, M., 105
 Gaebler, T., 174
 Gagliardi, P., 277
 Galarneau, D., 393
 Galbraith, J.R., 247, 249, 254
 Gall, G., 160, 162
 Gallie, D., 22, 36, 116, 117, 118, 119, 121, 124, 213, 230, 232, 233, 238, 240, 472
 Gambles, R., 503
 Game, A., 63
 Ganßmann, H., 471
 Gandini, A., 493
 Gantman, E.R., 178, 179, 180
 Garcia, M., 98
 Gardell, B., 274
 Gardiner, J., 42
 Garip, F., 256
 Garrahan, P., 24
 Garrett-Peters, R., 373, 374, 375, 377
 Garrido, L., 481
 Garvey, B., 9
 Garzarelli, G., 254
 Gattrell, C.J., 504
 Gautié, J., 124, 387
 Gavron, H., 73
 Geertz, C., 264, 266
 Geist, C., 450, 451, 452, 454, 459
 Gendron, Y., 263, 267
 Gentsch, K., 437
 George, M., 342
 Gereffi, G., 299, 397, 398
 Geroy, G., 175
 Gerschenkron, A., 285, 293
 Gershuny, J., 42, 43, 83, 453, 503, 515
 Gerson, K., 461, 532–3
 Gerstel, N., 490
 Gerth, H., 137, 143
 Getz, S., 250
 Ghai, D., 112
 Gibb, E., 434
 Gibson, D.E., 339
 Giddens, A., 43, 44, 64, 136, 143, 150, 563
 Gilbert, N., 284
 Gillespie, R., 19
 Gillespie, S.G., 236
 Gimlin, D., 79
 Gintis, H., 235
 Ginzberg, E., 113, 120
 Gioia, D., 265
 Gittell, J.H., 248, 249
 Gittleman, M.B., 124
 Glazer, N., 21, 56, 57, 489
 Glenn, E.N., 4, 76
 Glick, M., 322n
 Glomb, T.M., 334
 Glucksmann, M. (Cavendish, R.), 23, 28, 45, 74, 75, 89, 189, 213, 489, 490, 495
 Glyn, A., 296, 308
 Glyptis, S., 476
 Godard, J., 119
 Godbey, G., 528, 529
 Godfrey, R., 177
 Godrey, S., 565
 Godwin, M., 42, 43
 Goffman, E., 36, 37, 45, 399
 Gold, R., 331
 Goldin, C., 120
 Golding, T., 174
 Goldoftas, B., 251
 Goldsmith, A., 103
 Goldthorpe, J.H., 20, 56, 59–60, 64, 68n, 73, 74, 134, 135, 141, 144
 Gomez, L.M., 253
 Gomez, R., 153
 Goodwin, J., 21, 41
 Goos, M., 122, 123, 310
 Gordon, D.M., 58, 100, 120, 209, 481
 Gordon, J., 369
 Gordon, M., 177
 Gornick, J.C., 503, 506, 533, 534
 Gorz, A., 9, 25, 43, 44, 58, 481, 625, 626, 627, 628
 Gospel, H. F., 219, 290, 291, 292, 298, 300, 302
 Gottfried, H., 2, 23, 40, 42, 64, 77, 84, 85, 115, 122, 193, 214, 299, 367, 380, 395, 396, 399, 429, 436, 440, 510, 512, 561, 577
 Gottschall, K., 8–9, 452
 Gough, J., 562
 Gouldner, A.W., 23, 43, 61
 Gradin, C., 98
 Grafton-Small, R., 273
 Graham, L., 24, 309, 561

- Graham, R., 250
 Grampp, W., 1
 Gramsci, A., 41, 46, 132, 284, 307
 Grandey, A.A., 334, 338
 Grant, D., 265, 266, 340
 Grant, R.M., 255
 Granter, E., 2, 44, 131, 162, 199, 629
 Grass, J., 369
 Green, F., 112, 114, 118, 119, 120, 121, 124, 225, 230, 232, 233, 238
 Greenberg, G., 198
 Greenhouse, S., 342
 Greenstein, T.N., 445, 447, 448, 449, 451
 Gregory, A., 8, 161, 504, 506, 507, 508, 532
 Gregory, K.L., 273
 Grey, C., 167, 168, 178, 179, 267
 Griffin, I.J., 332
 Griffin, T., 230
 Grimshaw, D., 155, 311, 507, 512–13, 561
 Grönlund, A., 117, 118
 Gronn, P., 179
 Gropas, R., 601
 Gross, J.J., 338
 Groth, M., 338
 Grove, W.J.C., 340
 Grover, V., 254
 Groysberg, B., 249
 Grugulis, I., 211, 219, 220, 228, 493
 Grunow, A., 253
 Guerrier, Y., 625
 Guillen, M., 169, 171
 Gulati, R., 252
 Gullickson, A., 103
 Günther, I., 432
 Gupta, S., 445, 447, 449
 Guveli, A., 98
- Habermas, J., 162
 Hacker, J., 368
 Hackman, J.R., 113, 274
 Hagigi, F., 248
 Håkansson, K., 257
 Hakim, C., 77, 503
 Haley-Lock, A., 390
 Halford, S., 44, 46, 81, 490
 Hall, A., 252
 Hall, C., 491
 Hall, E.J., 352
 Hall, P., 156
 Hallett, T., 262, 263, 266
 Halman, H., 487
 Halpin, B., 380
 Hamermesh, D.S., 113
 Hamilton, D., 103
 Hammer, M., 177
 Hammer, T., 471
 Hammond, 477
 Hamper, B., 308
 Handel, M.J., 119, 232
- Handfield-Jones, H., 248
 Handy, F., 486, 487
 Hanna, T.A., 250
 Hannah, L., 291, 300
 Hanneman, R., 250
 Hanser, A., 337, 341
 Hantrais, L., 379, 506
 Haraszti, M., 74
 Hardill, I., 490
 Harding, N., 40
 Harding, S., 40
 Hardt, M., 430, 625
 Hardy, C., 193
 Hardy, J., 561
 Harquail, C., 265
 Harris, F., 509
 Harrison, B., 23, 43, 120, 195, 250, 314, 491
 Harrison, J., 370
 Harsløf, I., 471
 Hart, K., 408
 Hartley, B., 208
 Hartmann, H., 40, 75
 Harvey, D., 24, 66, 208, 433, 563
 Harvey, E.B., 56
 Harvey, M., 311
 Haslam, A., 265
 Haslam, C., 284, 286–7
 Haslam, H., 322
 Hassard, J., 171, 173, 174, 175, 176, 177, 180
 Hatch, M.J., 265
 Hatley, M., 317
 Hatton, E., 63
 Hauptmeier, M., 216
 Havitz, M.E., 476
 Hayden, A., 630
 Hayes, J., 124
 Hayes, L., 80
 Hayes, N., 491
 Hayes, R.H., 173
 Haynes, M.A., 449
 Head, S., 312, 322
 Hearn, J., 81, 348
 Heath, A., 82, 495
 Heathcott, J., 26
 Hebson, G., 39, 80, 152
 Hechter, M., 64, 66
 Heckscher, C., 5, 6, 247, 249, 254, 256
 Hedges, N., 29n
 Heery, E., 163, 493
 Hegel, G.W.F., 10, 132
 Heinrichs, J., 314
 Heintz, J., 389, 394, 412
 Heisig, J.P., 454
 Helleiner, E., 295, 296
 Helters, S., 273
 Helper, S., 254
 Hendry, J., 168
 Heniques, F., 20, 21
 Henly, J., 390

- Hennig, M., 502
 Hennig-Thurau, T., 338
 Henninger, A., 502, 507
 Herod, A., 29, 208, 354
 Herouvim, J., 322n
 Herrigel, G., 293, 294, 299
 Herring, K., 103
 Hesmondhalgh, D., 493, 494
 Hewison, K., 7, 124, 429, 432, 435, 437, 439, 657
 Hewitt, B., 448, 449, 462
 Heyes, J., 2, 124, 211
 High, S., 26
 Hill, B.M., 664
 Hill, S., 121, 134, 135, 429
 Hilton, M.L., 232
 Hinds, P.J., 253
 Hirdmann, Y., 41
 Hirschman, A., 662, 666
 Ho, K., 29, 371, 372
 Hobsbawm, E., 1, 57, 522
 Hobson, B., 503
 Hochschild, A., 6, 11, 26, 36, 37, 42, 75, 79, 87, 137, 139, 140, 144, 220, 231, 316, 330, 331, 332, 333, 335, 337, 338, 340, 341, 490, 502, 532, 584, 598, 603, 618–19
 Hodgkiss, P., 4, 130, 131
 Hodgson, G.M., 208
 Hodson, R., 26, 34, 137, 138, 140, 142, 144, 379
 Hoecker-Drysdale, S., 39
 Hoffman, L., 73
 Hofstede, G., 275
 Hoggett, P., 313
 Holgate, J., 152, 163
 Holliday, I., 437
 Hollifield, J., 600
 Hollister, M., 256
 Holloway, J., 284
 Hollowell, P.G., 20
 Holman, D., 115, 116, 117–18, 317
 Holter, O.G., 507, 509
 Holzer, H., 368
 Homburg, H., 293, 294
 Hondagneu-Sotelo, P., 337
 Honneth, A., 135, 136, 141
 Hood, C., 172
 Hook, J.L., 445, 450, 451
 Hooker, C., 19
 Hoos, I.R., 173
 Hope, K., 59
 Horkheimer, M., 9, 620–1, 622
 Horn, Z.E., 407
 Horowitz, S., 378
 Hotch, J., 416, 418
 Houghton, J.R., 245
 Hounshell, D.A., 283, 284, 286, 287
 Houseman, S., 392, 394, 396
 Hout, M., 64
 Howard-Grenville, J., 266
 Howcroft, D., 320, 348, 369, 371
 Howe, L.K., 62
 Howell, C., 300
 Howell, D.R., 124
 Hsiao, M., 436
 Hsiung, P.C., 207
 Hsu, T., 381n
 Hudson, K., 429, 431, 655
 Hudson, R., 313
 Hughes, E., 44
 Humphrey, J., 433
 Huselid, M.A., 256
 Hustinx, L., 486, 487, 489, 495
 Hutchinson, S., 317
 Huws, U., 319, 560, 563, 567
 Huxley, C., 309
 Huynh, T., 340
 Huys, R., 310
 Hyde, J.S., 450
 Hyman, J., 508
 Hyman, R., 21, 152, 155, 156, 158, 189
 Hynes, K., 509
 Inanc, H., 230
 Ingham, G., 36
 Inglehart, R., 57
 Ipeiritis, P.G., 320
 Irwin, S., 476
 Isidorsson T, 257
 Ison, S.G., 41
 Iverson, R., 317
 Iverson, T., 450
 Jabr, F., 320
 Jackall, R., 172, 185, 247, 263
 Jackson, B., 168, 180
 Jackson, T., 630
 Jacobs, E., 368
 Jacobs, J.A., 532–3
 Jacoby, D., 211, 217, 219
 Jacoby, S.M., 172, 219, 289, 387
 Jahoda, M., 470, 473, 475
 James, S., 42
 Jameson, F., 85
 Jay, M., 131
 Jeffers, S.J., 176
 Jenkins, C., 480
 Jenkins, J.C., 492
 Jensen, M.C., 248
 Jermier, J.M., 160
 Jessop, B., 35, 295, 299, 315, 525
 Jewson, N., 207
 Jhabvala, R., 426n
 Jimenez, L., 26
 Johnson, A., 313
 Johnson, S., 176
 Johnson, T.J., 37
 Jolly, S., 437
 Jones, B.F., 256
 Jones, D.T., 175, 216, 309

- Jones, G., 74
 Jones, S., 42, 43
 Jürgens, U., 284

 Kabur, R., 411–12
 Kaganer, E., 320
 Kahn, L.M., 115
 Kalleberg, A.L., 4, 63, 65, 112, 114, 115, 116, 119, 120, 121, 122–3, 124, 209, 331, 367, 368, 391, 394, 429, 431, 432, 494, 655, 656
 Kamata, S., 74, 256
 Kan, M.Y., 83, 448, 450, 453, 454
 Kandal, T., 39
 Kang, M., 336, 337, 360
 Kang, N., 157
 Kanigel, R., 19
 Kant, I., 142, 143
 Kanter, R.M., 62, 63, 77, 101, 172, 176, 177, 247, 255
 Kantor, J., 312
 Kapedia, 98
 Kaplan, R.S., 172, 178
 Karasek, R.A., 274, 536
 Karlsson, J.C., 194
 Kärreman, D., 263, 268
 Kasperkevic, J., 369
 Katz, C., 354
 Katz, H., 338
 Katz, L.F., 120, 122
 Katzenbach, J.R., 256
 Katz-Wise, S.L., 450
 Kaufman, B.E., 153
 Kautsky, K., 61
 Kaye, J., 81
 Kearney, M.S., 122
 Keefe, J., 338
 Keep, E., 211, 220, 239
 Keiser, A., 175, 178
 Keith, V., 103
 Kellerman, B., 179
 Kelly, J., 152, 208, 493
 Kelty, C.M., 494
 Kendall, J., 485, 486
 Kennedy, A.A., 277
 Kenney, M., 216, 309
 Kernberg, O., 276
 Kerr, C., 56, 119, 120, 152, 563
 Kessler-Harris, A., 491, 492
 Kets de Vries, M., 276
 Keune, M., 439
 Keynes, J.M., 620, 626, 631, 653
 Khaleeli, H., 86
 Khurana, R., 174
 Kidder, T., 565
 Kiernan, K., 450
 Kim, N.-K., 438
 King, M., 371
 Kinnie, N., 317
 Kirton, G., 493
 Kitchen, S., 489

 Kittur, A., 321
 Kitzinger, C., 352
 Klandermans, B., 68
 Klein, N., 161
 Klein, V., 73
 Klikauer, T., 168, 169, 180
 Kluegel, J.R., 65
 Kluwer, E.S., 448
 Knights, D., 63, 206
 Knights, D.E., 160, 213, 215, 219
 Knudsen, K., 450
 Koch, G., 220
 Kochan, T.A., 2, 252, 256
 Kocka, J., 293, 294
 Koestner, R., 255
 Kofman, E., 9
 Kohler, C., 213, 219
 Kohn, M.L., 113, 274
 Korczynski, M., 34, 36, 340
 Kornhauser, W., 56
 Korpi, W., 64, 117, 545
 Kosmala, K., 197, 199
 Kotter, J.P., 172, 174
 Kramer, R.M., 491
 Kretsos, L., 472
 Kreye, O., 314
 Krinsky, J., 494
 Krugman, P.R., 479
 Kruse, D., 250
 Kuhn, A., 23
 Kukulan, A., 39
 Kumar, K., 167
 Kunda, G., 264, 277, 369, 375, 377
 Kvande, E., 507

 Lachance-Grzela, M., 453
 Laclau, E., 58
 Ladipo, D., 195
 Lair, C.D., 350
 Lakner, C., 656
 Lambert, R., 429, 657
 Lambert, S., 390
 Lammertyn, F., 486, 495
 Lamont, M., 26, 137, 144
 Lan, P.-C., 584
 Lane, C., 25, 29, 368, 369, 372, 374, 377, 381n
 Lane, R., 625
 Langlois, R.N., 254
 Lansbury, R.D., 156, 256
 Lareau, A., 83
 Lash, S., 43, 153, 167, 171, 300, 302
 Laslett, B., 63
 Lauder, H., 322
 Lauder, P., 231
 Launov, A., 432
 Lawler, E.E., 113
 Lawrence, P.R., 171, 176
 Lawrenson, D., 290, 302
 Lazonick, W., 173, 174, 230, 231

- Lazonick, W.H., 289, 291
 Leavitt, H.J., 168, 180
 Lee, C.K., 87, 219
 Lee, D., 480
 Lee, L., 437
 Lee, R.T., 334
 Lee, S., 429
 Lee L.-E., 249
 Lehmbuch, G., 154
 Leidner, R., 6, 289, 332, 333
 Lemke, C., 65
 Lemmergaard, J., 179
 Lengermann, P.M., 39
 Leonard, P., 490, 495
 Lerner, J., 494
 Lesnard, L., 534
 Lessig, L., 175
 Lever-Tracy, C., 309
 Levine, D.I., 251
 Levison, A., 62
 Levit, N., 65
 Levy, F., 116, 122, 256
 Lewchuk, W., 291, 309
 Lewenhak, S., 492
 Lewis, J., 41, 504, 505, 506, 507, 533
 Lewis, W., 431
 Lichtenstein, N., 311
 Liddington, J., 492
 Lincoln, J.R., 152
 Linder, S.B., 529
 Lingo, E., 371
 Linhart, R., 74, 308, 573
 Linstead, S., 273
 Lipietz, A., 284, 308, 314, 315, 322n, 526
 Lipnack, J., 253
 Lipset, S.M., 56
 Littler, C.R., 36, 213, 214, 215, 219, 288, 291
 Liu, Y., 252
 Lively, K.J., 335, 339
 Lizardo, O., 339
 Lloyd, C., 219, 228
 Locke, R.M., 158
 Locke, R.R., 168, 173, 179
 Lockwood, D., 20, 56, 59, 73, 134, 135, 141, 144
 Longhi, S., 474
 Lopata, H.Z., 73
 Lopez, S., 329, 332, 335, 340
 Lorsch, J.W., 171, 176
 Loureiro, P.R.A., 103
 Lovell, P.A., 103
 Lowe, G.S., 121, 122
 Löwith, K., 131
 Lu, H.-H., 450
 Ludwig-Mayerhofer, W., 480, 546
 Lui, J., 453, 454
 Luijckx, R., 480
 Lukes, S., 37
 Lundberg, S., 446, 448
 Lupton, T., 187, 188
 Luthans, F., 186
 Lüthje, B., 219
 Luxton, M., 63
 Lyon, D., 490
 Lyonette, C., 461, 510, 512
 Lyons, M., 488
 Lyotard, J.F., 43
 Maccoby, M., 256
 Macdonald, C.L., 332, 335, 336, 337, 351
 MacDonald, R., 471, 474
 MacDuffie, J.P., 254, 256
 Machung, A., 490
 MacInnes, J., 502, 503, 504
 MacInnes, T., 472
 MacIntyre, A., 143
 MacKenzie, G., 136
 MacKenzie, R., 158, 161, 475
 Maddison, A., 295, 296, 300
 Mah, A., 26
 Mahon, R., 505
 Main, J., 196
 Maiorano, D., 659
 Malkasian, C., 177
 Malloy, R.L., 249
 Maloney, W.F., 408, 410
 Malsch, B., 263, 267
 Malsch, T., 284
 Mandel, H., 506
 Mandl, I., 320
 Mann, M., 65, 134, 135, 144, 217
 Mann, S., 339
 Manning, A., 122, 123, 310
 Manza, J., 64
 Marantz, A., 318
 Marchington, M., 389, 561
 Marcuse, H., 9, 44, 56, 131, 140, 621–2, 631
 Marglin, S.A., 228
 Marglin, S.S., 308
 Margolis, J., 253
 Marino, S., 162
 Mark, K., 18
 Marks, A., 320
 Marks, G., 65
 Mars, G., 188
 Marsden, D., 475, 476
 Marsden, P.V., 115, 116
 Marsh, J., 474
 Marshall, B., 39
 Martin, G.P., 179, 263
 Martin, J., 267, 272, 273
 Martin, S.E., 335
 Martínez Lucio, M., 4–5, 158, 162, 561
 Marvit, M.Z., 320
 Marx, K., 18, 19, 22, 35, 36, 37, 39, 54, 55, 56, 60, 61, 68, 73, 113, 130, 131, 132, 135, 141, 142, 144, 149, 150, 159, 206, 207, 208, 209–10, 212, 214, 217, 219, 227, 285, 321, 423, 618, 619, 620, 624, 626, 629, 653, 666

- Maslow, A., 113
 Massey, D.B., 104, 208, 314, 437, 598, 599
 Matthew, A., 664
 Mätzke, M., 506
 Maurin, E., 123
 May, T., 192
 Mayers, J., 29n
 Mayers, M.K., 533
 Mayhew, K., 239
 Mayo, E., 19, 227
 McAdam, D., 492
 McAfee, A., 307, 319
 McBride, A., 152
 McCall, L., 65, 88
 McCammon, H.J., 332
 McCann, L., 5, 169, 173, 174, 175, 176, 177, 180, 197, 199
 McCarthy, J., 492
 McChesney, R., 320
 McCraw, T., 169, 171
 McCullough, A., 489
 McDonald, K., 37
 McDonald, P., 197, 199
 McDowell, L., 81, 84, 349, 351, 352, 353, 598, 602
 McGee, M., 377
 McGovern, P., 121, 196, 429
 McGrath-Champ, S., 208
 McGuinness, S., 238
 McHugh, D., 215
 McKenzie, 476
 McKinlay, A., 175, 206, 220, 308
 McLellan, D., 132
 Mears, A., 337
 Megan, R., 314
 Mehrens, K., 439
 Meijs, L., 486, 487
 Meiksins, P., 213
 Meil, P., 213, 219
 Meltz, N.M., 153
 Menger, P.M., 493, 494
 Menzies, I., 276
 Merrill, D., 336
 Merrill, J., 318
 Merrill, M., 338, 355
 Merton, R.K., 246, 257
 Messenger, J.C., 522, 523
 Messerschmidt, J.W., 41
 Meszaros, I., 149
 Metcalf, H., 98
 Meyer, J., 266
 Meyer, S., 19
 Meyers, M.K., 503, 506
 Meyerson, D., 263
 Meyerson, D., 263, 272
 Michel, A.A., 263
 Mikolajczak, M., 339
 Milanovic, B., 656
 Miles, G., 254
 Miles, R.E., 254
 Miliband, R., 58
 Milkman, R., 26, 43, 63, 74, 309, 370, 399, 492, 561
 Mill, J.S., 142
 Miller, D., 29n, 276
 Mills, C.W., 6, 21, 46, 56, 133, 137, 139, 143, 144, 172, 173, 330, 331, 618
 Milner, S., 504, 505, 507, 508
 Minford, P., 470
 Mintzberg, H., 172, 247
 Mirchandani, K., 6, 336–7, 351
 Mitchell, T., 315
 Mitter, S., 352–3
 Moghadam, V.M., 577
 Mohan, J., 489
 Momsen, J., 86
 Monbiot, G., 314
 Monk, A.H.B., 174
 Monk, E., 103
 Montgomery, D., 219, 395
 Moody, K., 66, 68
 Moore, G., 492
 Moore, S., 199
 Moore, W.E., 56
 Morales, A., 340
 Morgan, G., 264, 269
 Morris, J., 173, 174, 175, 176, 177, 180
 Morris, J.A., 334
 Morris, L., 476
 Morris, R.J., 491
 Morris, T., 195
 Mortensen, M., 253
 Moser, C.N., 408
 Mouffe, C., 58
 Mueller, R.E., 314
 Muffels, R., 480
 Muhr, S., 179
 Mulholland, K., 565
 Mullainathan, S., 105, 113
 Müller, J., 297
 Müller, W., 416
 Mumby, D., 272, 273
 Mumby, D.K., 193, 194
 Munck, R., 319
 Murgatroyd, L., 62
 Murnane, R.J., 122, 256
 Murphy, J., 195
 Murray, C., 476
 Murray, G., 395, 396
 Murray, H., 251
 Murray, R., 313, 322n
 Musick, M., 486, 487, 488, 489
 Mutari, E., 506
 Myrdal, A., 73
 Nadin, S., 209
 Nagata, A., 253
 Nanda, A., 249
 Nardone, T., 434
 Nash, J., 88

- Nayyar, G., 349
 Neate, R., 403n
 Neff, G., 369, 371, 372, 377
 Negri, A., 430, 625
 Negroponte, N., 654
 Neindorf, B., 178
 Nelson, M., 659
 Neumark, D., 368
 Neuwirth, E.B., 375
 Newman, K., 368, 374
 Newsome, K., 159, 160, 188
 Newton, T., 193
 Ngai, P., 206, 217, 219
 Nguyen, T., 440
 Nichols, T., 21, 24, 74, 206, 219, 285–6, 302n,
 307, 322n
 Nickson, D., 45, 46, 220, 231, 337
 Nicolson, P., 83
 Niebrugge, G., 39
 Nijhof, A.H.J., 255
 Nisbet, R.A., 56
 Nishikawa, M., 80
 Noble, D.F., 230
 Nolan, H., 312
 Nonaka, I., 253, 255
 Noon, M., 160
 Nord, W.R., 160
 Nordström, K., 174
 Norris, J., 492
 Norris, M., 459
 Norton, D.P., 172, 178
 Nugroho, H., 434
 Nye, F., 73

 Oakley, A., 23, 40, 42, 75, 444
 O'Brien, M., 505, 511, 513, 514
 O'Brien-Smith, F., 504, 508
 O'Connor, H., 21
 Odendahl, T., 490, 492
 O'Doherty, D., 215
 Offe, C., 3, 35, 43, 44, 209, 623, 624, 629
 O'Hara, J., 139
 O'Hern, M.S., 254
 Olie, R., 263
 Ollman, B., 618
 Olsen, K.M., 116, 119, 120
 O'Mahoney, S., 371, 379
 O'Mahony, S., 254
 Omi, M., 94, 100, 101
 Omoto, A.M., 486
 O'Neill, O., 272, 273
 Ong, Y., 437
 Ordonez, L.D., 172
 O'Reilly, J., 385, 506
 Ortner, S., 263
 Osawa, M., 394, 429, 436
 Osborne, A., 319, 653
 Osborne, D., 174
 Osnowitz, D., 369, 372, 377, 379, 655

 Osterman, P., 120, 289, 302, 368–9
 Ostner, I., 506
 Ostrander, S.A., 491
 Ostrower, F., 492
 O'Sullivan, M., 173, 174
 Otis, M.E., 336
 Ouchi, W., 263
 Owen, D., 491

 Paap, K., 63
 Packard, T., 440
 Padavic, I., 372
 Page, K., 247
 Pahl, R.E., 22, 24, 489
 Pai, H., 354
 Pakulski, J., 64, 67
 Palloix, C., 284
 Palm, G., 308
 Palm, M., 350
 Palme, J., 64, 545
 Panitch, L., 155, 156
 Papouschek, U., 502, 507
 Parashar, S., 534
 Pareto, V., 42, 43
 Parfit, D., 143
 Parker, G., 311
 Parker, H., 470, 474
 Parker, M., 19, 21, 28, 29n, 66, 168, 176, 177, 180, 256,
 270, 309
 Parkin, F., 38, 39, 134, 135
 Parkin, W., 81
 Parreñas, R.S., 337, 360, 462, 464, 598, 603
 Parry, J., 490, 495
 Parry, K., 168, 180
 Partridge, H., 308
 Passeron, J.-C., 135
 Patel, R., 355
 Patomaki, H., 479
 Paules, G.F., 332, 333
 Paulsen, R., 197
 Payne, R., 476
 Peattie, L., 531
 Peck, J., 208, 209, 284, 285, 296–7, 526, 562
 Peiperl, M.A., 255
 Peitersen, N., 207
 Penn, R., 232, 236
 Penner, A.M., 102
 Percival, N., 493, 494
 Perkins, T., 385
 Perlin, R., 493
 Perrons, D., 85, 87, 515
 Perrow, C., 178, 491
 Perry, G., 410
 Perry, M., 140
 Peters, T., 173, 176, 177, 178, 179, 262
 Peterson, M.F., 263, 277
 Peterson, S., 584
 Pettinger, L., 28, 34, 45–6
 Pfau-Effinger, B., 41, 506

- Pfeffer, Baron, 121
 Pfeffer, J., 249, 263
 Pfeffer, R., 308
 Phillips, A., 152, 237
 Phillips, N., 263, 268, 274, 275, 278
 Phizacklea, A., 76
 Pickett, K., 256
 Pierce, J., 104, 335, 340
 Pierret, C., 535
 Pierson, P., 546
 Piketty, T., 1, 23, 43, 88, 296, 656
 Pinchbeck, I., 73
 Pink, D.H., 247
 Piore, M.J., 100, 114, 216, 284, 306, 385, 481, 598
 Plantenga, J., 453
 Podmore, D., 74
 Podolny, J., 247
 Podolny, J.M., 101
 Polanyi, K., 35, 209, 319, 541
 Polivka, A., 434
 Pollak, R.A., 446, 448
 Pollert, A., 23, 24, 40, 74, 75, 76, 189, 213, 284, 573
 Polzer, J.T., 249
 Poole, M., 153, 154
 Portes, A., 408, 598, 600
 Portocarero, L., 59
 Postel-Vinay, F., 123
 Poster, W., 9, 348, 355, 578, 583
 Poulantzas, N.A., 58, 163
 Powell, B., 339
 Powell, W., 247, 266, 271
 Power, M., 175
 Prais, S.J., 297
 Pratap, S., 315
 Pratt, G., 350
 Prechel, H., 186, 195
 Prener, C., 376
 Presser, H., 533, 534
 Priess, H.A., 450
 Pringle, R., 63, 74–5, 192
 Przeworski, A., 61, 65
 Pugh, A., 370, 372, 373, 377
 Pugliesi, K., 334
 Punch, M., 185
 Purcell, J., 317
 Purser, G., 141, 369, 373, 376
 Putnam, R.D., 44, 486, 534
 Puwar, N., 45
- Quilley, S., 311
 Quinlan, M., 66, 68
- Rabaka, R., 42
 Rabier, J.-R., 57
 Raelin, J.A., 207
 Rafaeli, A., 277, 339
 Rainnie, A., 208, 219
 Raju, S., 420
 Ramas, M., 63
- Rani, U., 416, 420, 432
 Ransome, P., 504
 Ravasi, D., 263, 268, 274, 275, 278
 Raworth, K., 565
 Ray, L., 80
 Ray, R., 510
 Raymond, E., 494
 Rayton, B., 197
 Red-Tsochas, F., 255
 Reed, G., 179
 Reed, P., 489
 Reeves, H., 437
 Reich, M., 58, 99, 209
 Reich, R., 310
 Rein, M., 531
 Reskin, B.F., 115, 429, 431, 655
 Resnick, B.G., 178
 Reuel, D., 21
 Reyes, O., 438
 Rhodes, C., 178
 Rhodes, J., 23
 Richards, A.J., 66
 Richards, J., 197, 199
 Richardson, H., 348
 Richardson, R., 317
 Ridderstråle, J., 174
 Riesman, D., 21, 56, 57
 Rifkin, J., 25, 43, 44, 67, 663, 664, 665
 Rigby, M., 504, 508
 Rindfleisch, A., 254
 Rinehart, J., 309
 Risman, B.J., 40, 448
 Ritter, C., 334, 339
 Ritzer, G., 37, 38, 140, 311, 350
 Rivera, K.D., 507, 509
 Roberts, D., 309, 319
 Roberts, I., 20
 Roberts, K., 8, 474, 511, 624
 Roberts, M., 322n
 Roberts, W., 179
 Robertson, D., 309
 Robertson, M., 266
 Robertson, R., 85
 Robinson, J.P., 528, 529
 Roche de Coppens, P., 130
 Rochester, C., 486, 487
 Rockman, S., 209
 Rodgers, G., 430, 431, 440
 Rodgers, J., 430
 Roediger, D., 95, 100, 211
 Roethlisberger, F.J., 171, 246
 Roever, S., 423, 424
 Rogers, K., 265
 Rohrbach-Schmidt, D., 238
 Rokis, R., 78
 Romano, M., 103
 Roos, D., 175, 216, 309
 Roos, P.A., 115
 Rose, G., 131

- Rose, M., 19, 232
 Rose, N., 43
 Rose, S., 529, 532
 Rosen, M., 133, 145
 Rosenbluth, F., 450
 Rosenfeld, R., 101
 Rosenthal, N.H., 114
 Rosenthal, M.B., 249
 Ross, A., 493
 Ross, G., 158
 Ross, R., 320
 Ross, R.J.S., 662
 Rothschild, J., 250
 Rousseau, D.M., 257
 Rowan, B., 266
 Rowbotham, S., 73
 Rowlinson, M., 206
 Roy, D., 20, 23, 187, 214
 Rozenblatt, P., 396
 Rubery, J., 118, 155, 161, 211, 213–14, 232, 507, 513, 530, 561
 Rubinstein, S.A., 2, 252, 256
 Ruhs, M., 606
 Rupp, D., 275
 Ruppanner, L., 461
 Russell, B., 348, 349
 Russell, R., 250
 Ryan, B., 433
 Ryan, J., 136
 Ryan, R.M., 255
- Saad, L., 250
 Saavedra, J., 410
 Sabater, A., 98
 Sabel, C.F., 134, 136, 141, 142, 216, 250, 284, 287, 306
 Saboia, A.L., 98
 Saboia, J., 98
 Sachsida, A., 103
 Sainsbury, D., 506
 Saint Paul, G., 100
 Salaman, G., 21, 22, 36, 376
 Salamon, L., 485, 486, 488
 Sallaz, J.J., 336, 340
 Salzinger, L., 87, 102, 351
 Sampson, H., 322n
 Sanderson, K., 78
 Sang, K.J.C., 41
 Sanyal, K., 209, 578, 579
 Saperstein, A., 102
 Saramago, J., 12n
 Sargent, L.D., 193
 Sarkar, S., 315
 Sassen, S., 208, 352, 584, 601–2
 Saundry, R., 163
 Savage, M., 21, 43, 66, 81
 Sayeed, A., 420
 Sayer, A., 80, 138, 322n, 532
 Sayer, L., 450, 453
 Sayles, L., 186
- Schaaf, D., 331, 332
 Schacht, R., 130, 143
 Schein, E.H., 263, 269, 275, 277
 Scheper-Hughes, N., 589
 Schmitt, J., 119, 124, 387
 Schmitter, P.C., 154
 Schmitz, H., 433
 Scholz, T., 312
 Schoneboom, A., 197
 Schooler, C., 113
 Schopenhauer, A., 143
 Schor, J., 528, 529, 630
 Schroder, M., 481
 Schuller, T., 475
 Schulman, B., 120
 Schultz, M., 265
 Schutz, A., 140–1
 Schwendinger, H., 39
 Schwendinger, J., 39
 Scott, J., 43, 44, 46
 Scott, R., 266
 Sculley, J., 267
 Scullion, H., 189
 Sebastopulo, D., 315
 Seccombe, W., 444
 Seibert, S.E., 339
 Seidman, G.W., 662
 Selbee, K., 489
 Selznick, P., 179
 Sen, A., 361
 Sengupta, S., 114–15
 Sennett, R., 25, 44, 66, 132, 133, 136, 137, 139, 160, 173, 174, 177, 178, 372, 373, 377, 535, 624
 Sethuraman, S.V., 408
 Sewell, G., 192, 256
 Seymour, R., 438–9
 Shafir, E., 113
 Sharone, O., 368, 373, 374, 375, 376, 377, 380, 381n
 Shaw, A., 664, 665
 Sherman, B., 480
 Sherman, J., 370
 Shiels, P., 459
 Shierholz, H., 381n
 Shildrick, T., 80, 84–5, 476
 Shilling, C., 45
 Shor, J.B., 308
 Shulman, B., 369
 Siegal, 152
 Siehl, C., 278
 Silva, J., 368, 370, 372, 373
 Silver, B., 638
 Simmel, G., 131, 144
 Simms, M., 163
 Simon, H.A., 284
 Simonet, M., 494
 Sinfield, A., 475, 478
 Singley, S., 509
 Sirianni, C., 332, 335, 351
 Skeggs, B., 66, 80

- Slaughter, C., 20, 21
 Slaughter, J., 66, 256, 309
 Slichter, S.H., 154
 Sloan, M.M., 339
 Smeaton, D., 121, 429
 Smigel, E., 20
 Smircich, L., 263, 264, 266
 Smith, A., 18
 Smith, C., 5, 35–6, 186, 189, 205, 206, 208, 209, 213, 215, 217, 218, 219, 220, 309, 619
 Smith, D., 40
 Smith, D.H., 487
 Smith, D.K., 256
 Smith, G., 485
 Smith, N., 66
 Smith, P.R., 453
 Smith, R.A., 101
 Smith, V., 7, 367, 373, 374, 375, 377, 380, 560
 Smithson, J., 507
 Smunt, T.L., 178
 Snow, C.C., 254
 Snyder, M., 486
 Sokolowski, W., 488
 Soni-Sinha, U., 354
 Soper, K., 630, 631
 Sørensen, A.B., 114
 Soskice, D., 117, 156, 240
 Sotirin, P., 193
 South, J., 490
 Southerton, D., 502
 Sowell, T., 99
 Spanger, M., 350
 Spencer, A., 74
 Spender, J.-C., 168, 169, 170, 179
 Spenner, K.I., 231
 Spicer, A., 185, 187, 193, 194, 199, 264, 269
 Spiller, M., 378, 379
 Sprague, J., 65
 Spreier, S.W., 249
 Srinivasan, N., 486
 Srivastava, R., 354
 Stacey, C.L., 340
 Stacey, S., 340
 Stalker, G.M., 246
 Stamps, J., 253
 Standing, G., 7, 25, 67, 84, 85, 141, 257, 319, 367, 388, 396, 429, 438, 439, 472, 476, 481, 535, 598
 Stanley, L., 39–40
 Starkey, K., 175, 276, 308
 Stein, M., 179
 Steinberg, R.J., 335, 352
 Steitfeld, D., 312
 Stephens, J.D., 659
 Stewart, G.L., 252
 Stewart, P., 9, 24, 161, 162, 309, 565
 Stewart, R., 172
 Stiglitz, J., 479, 562
 Stone, K., 436
 Storey, J., 207
 Stoyanova, D., 493
 Strange, S., 307
 Strangleman, T., 3, 23, 25, 29, 44, 46, 81, 137
 Strapcova, K., 452
 Strauss, K., 209
 Streeck, W., 2, 563, 567
 Stuart, M., 163
 Sturdy, A., 268, 272
 Styhre, A., 173
 Sullivan, O., 40, 42, 83, 445, 448, 453, 509
 Sum, N.L., 315
 Summers, J., 508
 Summers, L., 663–4
 Sundstrom, W.A., 98
 Sunesson, S., 276
 Sutcliffe, B., 308
 Sutton, R.I., 339
 Sveningsson, S., 263, 274, 278
 Sweezy, P.M., 256
 Swingewood, A., 150
 Sydie, R.A., 39
 Tai, T.-o., 7–8
 Takyi, B.K., 98
 Tamura, Y., 175
 Tanaka, K., 80
 Taylor, B., 152, 237
 Taylor, F.W., 18, 38, 169–70, 172, 179, 186, 191, 246, 288, 294, 307
 Taylor, M., 474
 Taylor, P., 45, 139, 161, 193, 195, 196, 199, 231, 317, 565
 Taylor, R., 8, 486, 490
 Taylor, S., 317
 Teasdale, S., 485
 Tebbutt, M., 492
 Teixera, M.T., 102
 Telles, E., 98, 103
 Temin, P., 116
 Tengblad, S., 177
 Tepper, S., 371
 Terranova, T., 493, 494
 Tettamanti, M., 451
 Tews, M.J., 334
 Thayer, H.S., 142
 Thelen, K., 158
 Theodore, N., 285, 378, 379
 Theodosius, C., 340
 Theorell, T., 536
 Therborn, G., 559, 560
 Thomas, J.E., 39
 Thomas, R., 193, 194
 Thompson, E.P., 521
 Thompson, L., 461
 Thompson, M., 340
 Thompson, P., 5, 35–6, 159, 160, 163, 187, 188, 189, 190, 191, 192, 193, 195, 196, 197, 199, 205, 206, 208, 209, 210, 213, 215, 216, 220
 Thomson, A., 170

- Thuderoz, C., 190, 193, 194, 200
 Tickell, A., 284, 296–7, 526
 Tiemann, M., 238
 Tilly, C., 10, 114, 152, 390, 396, 489
 Tippin, N.T., 232
 Tirole, J., 494
 Tischer, T., 2
 Titmus, R., 486
 Tittenbrun, J., 154
 Tjandraningsih, I., 434
 Tobsch, V., 219
 Tocqueville, A. de, 486
 Tokman, V., 408
 Tolich, M.B., 332
 Tolliday, S., 284, 287, 297, 298
 Tomlinson, M., 502
 Topalov, C., 29n
 Topham, T., 306
 Touraine, A., 57
 Toyama, R., 253
 Tracy, S.J., 507, 509
 Trainor, B., 177
 Travis, A., 495
 Treas, J., 445, 448, 451, 453, 454, 462
 Tremblay, M., 263, 267
 Triandafyllidou, A., 601
 Trist, E.L., 251
 Trivedi, A., 315
 Tronti, M., 430
 Tronto, J.C., 510
 Tros, F., 124
 Trotsky, L., 285
 Tsai, C.-J., 114–15
 Tularak, W., 439
 Tunstall, J., 20
 Turner, B.S., 134, 135, 188, 191
 Tweedie, D., 367
 Twigg, J., 352

 Unni, J., 416, 420, 432
 Urry, J., 43, 61, 153, 167, 171, 300, 302, 322
 Ursell, G., 494
 Urwick, L.F., 172, 176, 179
 Useem, M., 173, 175
 Uzzi, B., 255, 256

 Vaidyanathan, R., 318
 Vaisey, S., 114
 Valenzuela, A., 378
 Vallas, S. P., 284, 376, 377
 Van den Broek, D., 348–9
 van der Heijden, B., 255
 Van der Lippe, T., 451
 Van Dijk, P.A., 334
 Van Maanen, J., 268, 270, 278
 van Maurik, J., 168
 van Veen, K., 178
 Vanek, J., 393, 394, 407, 412, 425n
 Vanselow, A., 397

 Vardi, Y., 190
 Veblen, T., 42–3, 133, 144, 285, 491
 Ventrusca, M., 266
 Verba, S., 486
 Viannello, M., 492
 Vidal, M., 6, 216, 284, 289, 290, 293, 296, 298, 309,
 310, 311, 322n
 Viebrock, E., 124
 Vijayaraghavan, V., 249
 Villa, P., 430
 Villemez, W.J., 101
 Vilnai-Yavetz, I., 277
 Vincent, M., 29n
 Vincent, S., 220
 Vinzant, J.C., 179
 Virdee, S., 23
 Virno, P., 625
 Visser, J., 63, 65
 Voicu, B., 452
 Voicu, M., 452
 Vos, K.J., 118
 Vosko, L., 395, 399, 429, 432, 598, 601, 657

 Wacjman, J., 81
 Wacquant, L.J.D., 67, 589
 Wade, J.T., 103
 Wærness, K., 450
 Wailes, N., 156
 Wainwright, H., 438
 Wajcman, J., 42
 Walby, S., 40, 62, 77, 82, 84, 503, 505
 Wales, T.J., 448
 Walker, C., 317
 Walker, I., 236
 Walker, R., 322n
 Walkerdine, V., 26
 Wallace, M., 368
 Walley, C., 26
 Wallraff, G., 308
 Walsh, J., 317
 Walter, T., 476
 Wang, G., 339
 Wang, K., 338
 Ward, K., 29
 Warhurst, C., 45, 46, 123, 139, 211, 215, 220, 231,
 504, 509
 Warhurt, D., 337
 Waring, J., 179
 Waring, M., 349
 Waring, S.P., 1, 170, 171, 172
 Warner, M., 309
 Warr, P., 475
 Warren, T., 3–4, 5, 42, 81
 Waterman, P., 163, 178, 262
 Waterman, R., 173
 Waters, M., 64
 Watson, B., 188
 Watson, T., 27, 28, 356
 Watts, D.J., 255

- Watts, J.H., 507
 Webb, B., 153
 Webb, S., 153
 Weber, M., 18, 20, 35, 37–9, 55, 56, 60, 73, 131, 144, 150, 169, 214, 245, 528, 629
 Webster, E., 429, 657
 Webster, J., 317
 Weeks, K., 40, 42, 515, 626, 629
 Wehrich, M., 349
 Weil, D., 25, 367, 397, 398, 655
 Weinberg, D.B., 248
 Weiss, H.M., 335
 Wenger, E., 253
 West, C., 40, 42, 446
 Westergaard, J., 475
 Western, B., 63, 65
 Western, M., 462
 Weston, J.K., 177
 Weston, S., 162
 Westwood, S., 23, 74, 75, 77, 189
 Wharton, A.S., 6, 332, 334, 335
 Whetten, D., 265
 Whitehead, S., 81
 Whitley, R., 157
 Whyte, W., 21, 57, 172, 250, 331
 Wibberley, G., 138
 Widmer, E., 451
 Wiener, Y., 190
 Wilderom, C.P.M., 263, 277
 Wilkinson, B., 192
 Wilkinson, F., 195, 230, 231
 Wilkinson, R., 256
 Williams, C., 490
 Williams, C.C., 209, 471
 Williams, C.L., 336, 337
 Williams, J., 284, 286–7, 322
 Williams, J.C., 510
 Williams, K., 43, 284, 286–7, 322
 Williams, R., 17
 Williams, S., 85, 87
 Williamson, O.E., 248
 Willis, P.E., 63
 Willmott, H., 63, 192, 206, 213, 215, 219, 269
 Wills, J., 602
 Wilmott, P., 20
 Wilson, J., 486, 487, 488, 489
 Wilson, J.F., 169, 170
 Wilson, W.J., 476
 Wilthagen, T., 124
 Win, T.S., 377
 Winant, H., 94, 100, 101
 Windebank, J., 471, 506
 Wingfield, A.H., 101, 103, 107, 339
 Winroth, K., 276
 Winterbotham, M., 237, 238
 Wissinger, E., 371, 372, 377
 Wittel, A., 220
 Witz, A., 39, 77, 78, 80, 81, 337, 353
 Wolfe, D., 444
 Wolf, A., 329, 331
 Wolkowitz, C., 6, 29, 45, 79, 206, 211, 220, 337, 352, 584
 Wolpe, A.M., 23
 Womack, J.P., 175, 177, 216, 309
 Wood, E.M., 58
 Wood, M., 104, 105
 Wood, S., 136, 213, 309
 Woodcock, G., 152
 Woodward, J., 171
 Wright, D.W., 508
 Wright, E.O., 58–9, 60, 64, 123, 208, 250, 322, 665
 Wright, H.A., 246
 Wright, S., 430
 Wuchty, S., 256
 Wuthnow, R., 487
 Wysong, E., 508
 Yasalavich, D.K., 369
 Yates, C.A.B., 354
 Yeates, N., 352, 353
 Yinger, J., 104
 Yolmo, N., 9, 586
 Young, E., 270, 278
 Young, M., 20, 475
 Yuill, C., 172
 Yuval-Davis, N., 42
 Zald, N., 492
 Zaleznik, A., 168, 173, 177, 179
 Zamir, S., 42
 Zapf, D., Holz, M., 334
 Zeitlin, J., 230, 231, 284, 287, 297, 298
 Zeitz, G., 257
 Zeldin, D., 491
 Zemke, R., 331, 332
 Zepeda, E., 659
 Zhang, L., 315
 Zhou, Y., 230, 434
 Zhu, Y., 236, 238
 Zimbalist, A.S., 219
 Zimmerman, D.H., 40, 446
 Žižek, S., 429
 Zukin, S., 371, 372, 377
 Zysman, J., 349, 352

Subject Index

Page references to Figures or Tables will be in *italics*, while references to Notes will contain the letter 'n' following the number.

- Aberdare Strike (1857–58), 151
- Abramson, J., 82, 83
- absenteeism, 191, 196
- Abu Ghraib, 177
- Academy of Management Perspectives*, 178
- Accent Neutralization, 317
- accommodation, 148, 149, 163
- accumulation, capital, 206, 207, 216, 284, 430
- aesthetic labour, 337, 353
- Affluent Worker studies, 20, 59, 73
- Afghanistan, 177
- African Americans, 76, 98, 339, 590
- Afro-Brazilians, 98
- agency theory, 248
- airline pilots, 274
- AJ (production programme), 308
- alienation, 116, 136, 172, 332
 - Marx on, 3, 36, 130, 132, 149
- alternative hedonism, 630
- Amazon, 312–13
 - Mechanical Turk operation, 319, 320, 321, 665
- Americanism, 132
- Anderson, B., 76
- Andon Lights, and lean production, 309
- androcentric society, 39
- anomie (normlessness), 37, 130, 131, 150
- anthropology
 - and organizational culture, 271, 273
 - and workplace misbehaviour, 188, 189
- Apple, 315, 320
- archives, 37
- Argentina, 6
- ASCI Red computer, 319
- Asda, UK, 84, 311
 - see also* Walmart
- Asian Immigrant Women Advocates (AIWA), 645
- assembly lines, 134, 189, 306, 316, 317, 525
 - see also* Fordism
- Aston School, 21
- AT&T, 585
- Atlantic Fordism, 6, 284, 285, 301
 - Golden Age, 295–6, 300
- Australia, 196, 309, 657
 - domestic work, 453, 457, 460
 - and labour migration, 605, 607
- Austria, 457, 513
- automation, 521–2
- automobile industry *see* car industry
- autonomy, workplace, 159–60

- backwardness, notion of, 285
- Bahrain, 609
- Balanced Score Card, 172, 178
- banks
 - banking crises, 2
 - City of London, 300
 - in Germany, 293, 300
 - restructuring of system, 323n
 - specific banks
 - Citibank, 249, 300
 - Cooperative Bank, 250
 - First USA Bank, 249
 - World Bank, 349, 410–11, 412, 440, 562
- Barbados, 6, 353
- Bear Sterns, 249
- Bedaux, C.E., 291
- Belgium, 393
- Beveridge, W., 478, 542
- bifurcation (skill polarisation), 213
- 'Big Split' (Mills), 144
- Blacks, 4, 88, 94, 96, 97, 98
 - tokenization, 101
 - women, 101–2, 103
- Blair, T., 116
- Blanchard, T., 286, 288
- blocked Fordism, 284, 291, 296, 301
- 'blue-collar' workers (manual workers), 172
 - and social class, 54, 57, 62, 67
- body work, 79, 588–9
 - see also* reproductive labour
- bohemian industrialists, 493
- Boots, 291
- bourgeoisie, 54
- brands, 174
- Brazil, 9, 43, 307, 572, 573
 - 'economic miracle' (1964–73), 568
 - industrial work and organizations, 565, 568–70
 - neo-developmentalism/neo-corporatism question, 569–70
 - race and ethnicity, 98–9, 103
 - solidarity concept, 662–3
 - Solidarity Economy Forum, 663
 - trade unions confederation (CUT), 567, 568, 572
 - Workers' Party, 565

- Bremen Agreement, 1956 (Germany), 294, 299
- Bretton Woods monetary system, 6, 284, 295, 301, 306
collapse (1973), 296
- BRIC countries, 564
- bricoleur, 622
- British Skills and Employment Survey (SES), 230, 234, 238
- Brunel, M.I., 286
- Bulgaria, 457
- bullying at work, 162
- Bureau for Labor Statistics, US, 37, 527
- bureaucracy, 245–61, 293
alternatives, 247–54
collaborative networks, 251–4, 256–7
cooperative mutualism/cooperatives, 250
freeing the individual, 247–50
and assessment, 255
bureaucratic-loyalist complex, 247
careers, 256
and compensation, 255
and contingencies, 256–7
critique, 245–7
and cultural management, 266–7
and dualism, 256
and management/leadership, 168, 169, 173, 176, 177
network model challenges, 254–6
post-bureaucratic systems, 253–4
and training, 255
Weber on, 56, 150, 214, 245
work teams, stable, 251–2
- business process outsourcing (BPO), 583
- Cabinet Office, UK, 314
- Cadbury-Fry, 291
- call centres, 316, 323n, 350, 352
and emotional labour, 316–17
in India, 161, 336, 355, 356, 585, 589
and outsourcing, 585–6
see also service work
- Calvinism, 150
- Canada, 196, 309, 393, 494
Auto Workers' Union, 561–2
Law Commission of Ontario, 437
- capabilities, underinvestment in, 655–6
- capital
accumulation of, 206, 207, 216, 284, 430
centralization, 285
circuits of, 584
financial, 579
home-based industrial outwork, 419–21
self-employment, 415–16
social class, and work, 58
see also capital and labour relations; capitalism
- capital and labour relations, 4–5, 148–66
accommodation, 148, 149, 163
collective bargaining, 148, 153–4
conflict, 151–2, 160
corporatism, 154, 155
dialogue, 153, 154, 156
'dichotomy,' 194
emergence of industrial relations paradigm, 149, 153–4
employment relations, historical context, 149–51
industrial relations as a political system, 154–6
and Labour Process Theory, 211
Marxist tradition, 151, 152, 155, 156, 163
national business systems, 157–8
negotiation, 153, 154, 157
pessimistic tradition within study, 152
regulation, 148, 154
regulatory reach and change, question of, 160–3
trade unions, 152, 154, 155, 157, 158, 162
variation in institutionalization, 156–8
workplace question and participation, 159–60
- capitalism, 2, 3, 8, 131
first 'spirit,' 169–70
second 'spirit,' 169, 170–3
third 'spirit,' 5, 169, 173–8
American, regulation theory, 284–5
capital accumulation, 206, 207
and changes in work/employment, 307–10
and conflict, 210–11
contemporary, 79
crisis of, 307–10
disorganized, 43, 167
financial, 355
'Gilded Age'/'Robber-baron Phase,' 168, 169–70
global, 350, 353, 354, 559
Golden Age, 308, 433
industrial, 75, 132, 149, 150, 159, 170, 207
investor, 168, 173, 174, 175, 176
and job quality, 119
and Labour Process Theory, 206–9
managerial, 168, 171, 173, 174
Marx on, 35, 54, 132–3, 206
monopoly, 22, 207
'New Capitalism,' 25
organized, 149, 153, 167, 171
and patriarchy, 40–1
post-industrial, 43
preariat, 25, 319
shareholder, 216
skill debate, 230
spatial dimensions, 150–1
vagabond nature, 354–5
variegated, 285
varieties of capitalism approach, 116–17, 156, 216, 544
see also capital and labour relations; Labour Process Theory (LPT); Marx, K.; Marxism/Marxist tradition; neo-liberalism; social class, and work
- car industry, 139, 308–9, 310, 315, 315–16
see also Ford Motor Company, US; Fordism; General Motors (GM)
- care work, 80, 337, 513–14
care and commodification, service work, 340–1

- career of sociology of work
 - classical, 17–18
 - disciplinary, 17–33
 - etymology of ‘career,’ 17
- Caring Across Generations and National Domestic Workers Alliance, 609
- Carlzon, J., 176
- cartelization, 293
- Casino Capitalism, 307
- categorical approaches, social class and work, 53–4
- Central America, 603
- Central and Eastern Europe, 549, 550
 - see also* Eastern Europe
- centralization/centralization capital, 253, 285
- Chainworkers, 438
- Chandler, A., 245
- Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development, 197
- childcare, 80, 82, 83, 461, 513–14, 532
- Chile, 6, 457
- China, 87, 160, 161, 206, 307, 315, 336, 412
 - immigrants from, 97
 - labour organizing, 642, 643, 644, 645
 - precarious work, 435, 437
- Chinese Staff and Workers’ Association (CSWA), 645
- Chrysler, 309
- Cisco, 249
- Citibank, 249, 300
- citizenship, 142
- City of London, 300
- civil rights movements (1950s and 1960s), 97
- class *see* social class
- classical Fordist production model, US, 284, 288–90, 301
 - core organizational models, 288
 - precursors to, 286–7
- clerical work, 74
- Clinton, B., 116
- Clinton, H., 82
- closure, 38–9, 78, 214
- collaborative networks, 251–4
 - critical views, 256–7
- collective bargaining, 172, 211, 356, 401
 - capital and labour relations, 148, 153–4
 - and Fordism, 284, 299
- colonialism, 95, 96, 209
- colour-blind racism, 103–4
- Combined Insurance, 333
- command and control, 171
- commodification, 546, 550
- Common Market, 295, 296, 298, 301
- Communism, 54, 478, 524, 579
- Community Social Action Programme, EU, 505
- community unionism, 660
- Community Unions National Network, Japan, 660
- Comte, A., 37, 130
- conflict
 - in capital and labour relations, 151–2, 160
 - and capitalism, 210–11
 - Labour Process Theory, 208
 - see also* industrial actions; strikes
- Conservative Party ‘Big Society’ agenda, UK, 494
- consumer campaigns, 592
- consumer services, 351, 352
- contact centres, 316
 - see also* call centres
- contextualised comparisons, 158
- contingency theory, 171, 216
 - bureaucracy, 256–7
- continuous improvement (kaizen), 309
- contract workers, 372, 375
- contracting out *see* subcontracting
- control
 - command and control, 171
 - control-resistance paradigm, 188–9, 194
 - Labour Process Theory, 207, 208, 214
 - managerial, 207, 212
 - ‘positive,’ and cultural management, 266–8
- Convention 177, on homework, 420
- convergence theory, 62, 118, 119
- Cooperative Bank, The, 250
- Cooperative Food, The, 250
- cooperative mutualism, 250
- cooperatives, 250
- coordinated market economies (CMEs), 117, 157
- corporate groups, 55
- corporate social responsibility (CSR), 591
- corporatism, 154, 155
- Costa Rica, 410
- cottage industry, 207, 520–1
- Council Resolution on the Balanced Participation of Women and Men in Family and Working Life (2000), 505
- counter-culture, 172, 173
- Covey, S., 178
- ‘Cow Sociology,’ 21, 227
- craftsmanship, 133, 134, 227
- Critical Labour Studies, 561, 562
- Critical Management Studies, 27
- critiques of work, 9, 616–33
 - Frankfurt School, 131, 172, 616, 620–3
 - future, 628–31
 - Marx, legacy, 617–20
 - work in crisis, 623–8
- crowd sourcing/crowd work, 319, 320, 321
- Cueservice, India, 356–9, 361
- culture
 - Barbarian, 133
 - cultural management forms, 266–8
 - cultural turn (1980s), 25, 27
 - culturation of work, 81
 - definitional issues, 263, 264
 - organizational *see* organizational culture and precarious economy, 376–7
 - vs social structure, 264
- Current Population Survey, U.S., 98
- customer service, 336, 337, 350
 - see also* call centres
- cybertariat, 319, 438
- Czech Republic, 234, 509, 549

- 'dead end' jobs, 113
- 'death of class' thesis, 63, 64, 65–6
- 'decent work,' 112, 142, 644
 - defending, 658–9
- decentralization, 248, 253, 254
- defined benefit (DB)/defined contribution (DC) schemes, 174
- deflation, 2, 580
- degradation of work, 22, 43, 144
 - degradation imperative, 210
 - Labour Process Theory, 210, 212, 213
- de-industrialization, 43, 97, 527, 566, 566–7
- Delhi Group, 409
- Dell, 315
- Denmark, 79, 124, 230, 392, 457, 513
- Department of Social Science, University of Liverpool, 21
- deskilling thesis, 5, 22, 227, 228, 231
- destandardization, 7, 385–406
 - along several dimensions, 390–1
 - ambiguities, 386, 387–8
 - contractual dimensions, 389, 392–3
 - definitions, 385–6
 - demand-driven
 - long-standing practices, 395–7
 - recent patterns, 397–9
 - differentiation patterns, 396
 - of employment relationship, 386–8
 - enabling conditions to drive changes in employment, 399–400
 - forces driving, 395–402
 - forms measured in developed countries, 392–5
 - forms measured in developing countries, 395
 - home-based work, 388, 394, 404n
 - see also* home-based industrial outworkers
 - limits of cross-national quantitative measures on contractual arrangements, 393
 - neither enabling nor fully countering, 400–1
 - non-standard employment, 386–91
 - process, 402
 - quantitative dimensions, 391–5
 - self-employment, 388, 389, 391, 393, 401
 - spatial dimensions, 394–5
 - with temporal/other consequences, 389–90
 - standard employment, defining, 386
 - supply-driven, 401–2
 - temporal dimensions, 390, 393–4
 - unions and state, 400–1
 - see also* employment relationship
- developed countries, 161, 414
 - destandardization, 392–5
- developing countries, 160, 395, 503
 - informal employment, 413–14
- dialogue, capital and labour relations, 153, 154, 156
- Dickens, C., 7
- Dickson, W.J., 19
- Diderot, D., 132
- digitalization, 318–21
- dignity, human, 4, 129–47
 - concept, 130, 132, 133, 138
 - emerging focus on, in work, 134–7
 - explicit focus on, in work, 137–40
 - future research designs, 140–4
 - instrumental behaviour, 144–5
 - International Bill of Rights*, 140
 - and leisure, 144
 - operationalization, 138, 143, 145
 - rationalization, 130, 137
 - and service work, 136–7
 - social and historical background, 129–34
 - in sociology of work and employment, 129–47
 - value of, 143
 - 'in' and 'at' work model, 141, 145
- direct rule, 64
- discourse, and organizational culture, 266
- discrimination
 - gender, 81
 - race, 94, 97, 99, 104
- disengagement, active work
 - passive and active forms, 198–9
 - rise of, 197–8
- Disneyland, 268
- disorganized capitalism, 43, 167
- divergence theory, 119
- division of labour, 35, 36–7, 150
 - in household, 445, 446, 447–8, 450, 451, 452, 454, 457
 - international, 319
 - Labour Process Theory, 208, 213
 - sexual, 76–80
 - skill debate, 227, 228, 231
- 'Doing Gender' (West and Zimmerman), 446
- domestic work, 7–8, 39
 - autonomy vs display debate, 448–9
 - cross-national research, 450–3
 - division of labour, 445, 446, 447–8, 450, 451, 452, 454, 457
 - gender, 42, 76, 83, 455, 456, 457, 459–60
 - housework performance, 453–60
 - longitudinal research, 448, 450, 460
 - quantitative studies, 461
 - theoretical approaches, 445–53
 - life-course, changes over, 449–50
 - macro-level theories, 450–3
 - micro-level theories, 445–9
 - unpaid, 444–65, 487
 - see also* gender; women
- dot.com bubble, bursting of, 2
- double indeterminacy framework, 217
- Drupal (open-source content management framework), 321
- Du Bois, W.E.B., 42
- dual labour market theory, 100
- dual unionism, 660
- dual-earning households, 75
- dualist employment regimes, 117

- Dualist school, 408
 Dunlap, A. ('Chainsaw'), 179
 DuPont, P., 246, 248
 Durkheim, E., 3, 11, 18, 35, 37, 73, 149
 on anomie, 37, 131, 150
 on division of labour, 36–7, 131, 150
 on social class, 55, 56
 on suicide, 37, 131
 see also founding theorists; Marx, K.; Weber, M.
- dystopian trajectory and future of work, 652
 current dystopian trajectory, 653–8
 North-South dimension of dystopian trends, 656
 'Owenite' responses to, 666
 strategies for reversing dystopian trajectory, 658–65
 decent work, defending, 658–9
 see also future of work
- Eastern Europe, 230, 414, 451, 549
 Eastern and Southern European immigrants, 95, 96
 see also specific countries
- ECA (Economic Cooperation Administration), 294
 Economic Cooperation Administration (ECA), US, 294
 economies of scale, 170
 economy, and religion, 37–8
 effort-reward imbalance theory, 536
 Egypt, 410
 El Salvador, 410
 elderly, care of, 80, 461, 513–14
 electrical engineering, Germany, 294
 Electronic Point of Sale (EPOS), 311
 elite groups, 42, 43
 see also social class, and work
- embodied and aesthetic labour, 45–6
 embourgeoisement, 20
 Emilia-Romagna region, Italy, 250
 emotion management *see* emotional labour
 emotional labour, 36, 79, 196, 231, 330, 332, 335, 341
 and call centres, 316–17
 consequences, 333–4
 'deep acting,' 331, 334, 339
 emotion in service workplace, 338–40
 and gender, 352
 in service industry, 332
 'surface acting,' 332, 334
 see also service work
- emotional proletariat, 336
 emotive dissonance, 332, 334
 Employer Skills Survey (UKCES), 237
 Employment in Britain (EIB), 232
 employment regime (power resource) theory, 116–17
 employment relationship
 contractual distinctions, 388–9
 destandardization of, 386–8
 historical context of employment relations, 149–51
 and Labour Process Theory, 211
 workplace misbehaviour, 188, 190–1, 194
 see also capital and labour relations
- 'empty shell' theory, 508
 'end of work,' 25, 44
 engineering industry, 231
 Enlightenment, 17–18, 129, 130
 Enron, 249
 enterprise discourse, 376–7
Ephemera, 629
 equality, climate of, 76
 Equality and Human Rights Commission, UK, 354
 Erie Forge Steel Company, 524
 Establishment Survey on Working Time (2004–5), 507
 Estonia, 549
 ethanol sector, Brazil, 9
 Ethical Trading Initiative, UK, 420
 ethics
 of care, 340
 global production chains, 590–1
 ethnographic research, 20, 74
 service work, 353, 360
 workplace misbehaviour, 185, 186, 196, 197
- EuroMayDay, 430
 European Coal and Steel Community, 296
 European Commission, 112, 160
 European Economic Community (EEC), 295, 301
 European Payments Union, 296
 European Quality of Life Survey, 510
 European Social Survey (ESS), 228, 230
 European Working Conditions Survey (EWCS), 118, 509
 Eurostat databases, 436
 Eurozone states, 470, 479
 exchange bargaining theories, 445–6
 exclusionary closure, 38
 export processing zones (EPZs), 581, 603
 Exxon Mobil, 329
- Factory Acts, UK, 522
 factory work, 74, 75, 76, 77, 227, 349
 Fair Labor Standards Act, US, 609
 FAME (Black Asian and Minority Ethnic) women, 102
 farming, 86–7
 fast food industry, 311, 333, 342
 see also *McDonaldization* thesis (Ritzer);
 McDonald's; restaurant industry
- Fawcett Society, UK, 84
 Fayol, H., 170, 171
 Federal Armory, Springfield (US), 286
 feminist theory, 3, 40, 41, 352, 542
 and Marxism, 75
 post-feminism, 82
 second-wave feminism, 82, 486–7
 social class, and work, 62–3
 see also gender; women
- feminization of work, 78, 79, 81, 351
 feudalism, 54, 206, 209
 field audits, 104
 financial capitalism, 355
 financial crises, global, 2, 160, 431, 470, 529, 548
 financial/business services, 351

- Finland, 230, 392, 513
- firm, as social system, 21
- First USA Bank, 249
- fissuring of work, 25, 397, 655
- fixed-term contracts, 84, 219, 392
see also temporary work/temporary agency work (TAW)
- flexibility, 24
- flexibilization, 580–1, 589
- flexible Fordist production model (Germany), 284, 292–4, 301
- flexible specialisation, 306
- flexicurity policies, 480
- flow approach, labour power, 217–18
- flow production, 283, 284, 287
- Ford, H., 19, 172, 283, 301, 307, 316, 524, 525
see also Fordism
- Ford Europe, 308
- Ford Highland Park, 286, 287
- Ford Motor Company, US, 308, 329
- Fordism, 132, 207, 283–305
 Atlantic, 6, 284, 285, 295–6, 301
 blocked, 284, 291, 296, 301
 Bretton Woods monetary system, 6, 284, 295, 296, 301, 306
 challenges, 10–11
 classical Fordist production model and precursors to (USA), 284, 286–90, 301
 comparison of national regimes, 292, 296–300
 concept, 284
 consolidation of national growth regimes, 296–300
 crisis of, 314
 criticism of concept, 284
 decline of, 5, 6, 526–7
 development of, 6
 extended, 307, 311
 five-dollar day (1914), 283
 flexible Fordism and precursors to (Germany), 284, 292–4, 301
 flow production, 283, 284, 287
 Fordist era (mid-1930s to mid-1970s), 1
 as form of material mass compromise, 284
 global, 314–18
 international growth regime, 284–6
 and Keynesian economics, 284, 295, 299, 301, 526
 labour markets, 288, 289, 290, 291, 292, 299, 302
 liberal, 284, 296, 301
 mass market, embrace of, 283
 mass consumption, 298, 525–6
 mass production, 283, 284, 298, 524–5
 Model T system, 283, 284, 287, 288, 294, 525
 modifications to, 286, 289
 national growth regime, 284, 296–300
 neo-Fordism, 120, 121, 302n, 307, 321
 nonliberal, 284, 297, 301
 post-Fordism, 6, 43, 119, 289, 302n, 306, 310, 527–8, 544–7
 reluctant Fordist production regime and precursors to (UK), 284, 290–2, 301
 single-purpose machinery, 286, 287, 288, 292
 and Taylorism, 288–9, 291, 294, 301, 302n, 307
 technological advances following, 318–21
 longer-term view, 321–2
 vertical integration, 310
see also Ford, H.; scientific management; Taylorism
- Ford's Broadmeadows plant, Australia, 309
- foreign direct investment (FDI), 580
- for-profit job search firms, 374
- Fortune Global 500, 329
- Fortune Top Ten, 314–15
- founding theorists, 35, 39, 42, 130
see also Durkheim, E.; Marx, K.; Weber, M.
- Fourier, C., 130, 616, 617
- Foxconn (Taiwanese company), 87, 315, 316
- Frame Breaking Act 1812, UK, 522
- France, 430, 453, 457, 508, 548
- Francoist dictatorship, Spain, 154
- Frankfurt School of Critical Theory, 131, 172, 616, 620–3, 630
- Free and Open Source Software (FOSS), 664
- freelancers, 401
- Free/Libre open source software (FLOSS), 494
- fulfilment centres, 312
- functional stupidity concept, 264, 269, 270
- functionalism, 269
- Fundamental Rights Agency, 81
- future of work, 651–71
 current dystopian trajectory, 653–8
 dominant outcomes, 656–8
 North-South dimension of dystopian trends, 656
 organizational restructuring and neo-liberal politics, 654–5
 parameters of work, defining, 652–3
 polarization, 656–8
 strategies for reversing dystopian trajectory, 658–65
 building alternative workplaces in solidarity economy, 662–5
 decent work, defending, 658–9
 public action, resilience, 658–9
 weaker voice, innovative strategies for strengthening, 659–62
 technological 'progress,' as tool for destroying jobs, 653–4
 underinvestment in human capabilities, 655–6
- Garrett, A., 1–2
- gender, 73–92
 childcare, 80, 82, 83
 continuity and change, 40–1
 'doing gender' thesis, 42
 domestic work, 42, 76, 83, 455, 456, 457, 459–60
 emotional labour, 352
 feminization of work, 78, 79, 81
 global dimensions, 85–8
 globalization, 85, 87, 581–2
 and identity, 81
 inequalities, 40–1
 interaction with age and class, 79–80

- and intersectionality, 41–2, 76, 88
- masculine and feminine attitudes, 81–2
- meta-studies, 101
- multiple social divisions, 41–2
- and neo-liberalism, 84, 89
- and patriarchy, 40–1
- precariat, 84, 85
- and professionalisation, 39
- and recession, 82–5
- regimes, 41
- segregation in work, 77, 78, 79
- self-employment, 393
- and service work (interactive), 334–5
- sex and identity at work, 80–2
- sexual divisions of labour, 76–80
- and social class, 40, 79–80
- token executives, 101
- women of colour, 101–2, 103
- and work, 39–42
 - interest in, 73–4
 - men's work, 77–8, 79
 - 'women's work,' 26, 74–6
- see also* domestic work; feminist theory; housework performance; 'pink-collar' workers (service workers); race and ethnicity; women
- Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM), 450
- gendered organizations, 100–1
- General Electric (GE), 329
- General Motors (GM), 286, 287, 289, 301, 309, 315, 349
- Germany, 117, 157, 173, 293, 430, 513, 548
 - Bremen Agreement, 1956, 294, 299
 - flexible Fordist production model and precursors, 284, 292–4, 301
 - nonliberal Fordism, 284, 297, 301
 - UK compared, 290, 292, 293
 - US compared, 293
 - West Germany, 457
- Ghana, 410
- Gilbreth, F. and L., 523–4
- Gilman, C.P., 39
- Gladwish, J., 318
- Glasgow Media Group, 158
- global care chains, 352
- global economic crisis *see* financial crises, global
- Global North, 2, 7, 9, 12, 551, 563
 - gender and work, 73, 77, 87, 88
 - informal employment, 408
 - labour organizing, 634, 646
 - and migration patterns, 603, 610
 - North-South dimension of dystopian trends, 656
- global production chains, ethics, 590–1
- Global South, 7, 9, 12, 551, 659
 - gender and work, 79, 85, 86, 87, 89
 - labour organizing, 634, 635, 646
 - and migration patterns, 603, 610
 - North-South dimension of dystopian trends, 656
- global value chains (GVCs), 9, 562, 566, 570, 571, 572
- globalization, 11, 24, 550, 576–96
 - corporate social responsibility, 591
 - flexibilization, 580–1
 - and gender, 85, 87, 581–2
 - global labour standards, 591
 - global production chains, ethics, 590–1
 - impacts for workers, 589–90
 - intimacies, 584
 - and labour migration, 597–619
 - markers, 579–82
 - and migration, 96
 - neo-liberalism and rise of financial regimes, 579–80
 - and race, 581–2
 - and service work, 336
 - and social class, 67, 68, 581–2
 - terminology, 576–82
 - transnational corporations, 580
 - transnational social change and labour activism, 590–2
 - see also* outsourcing
- Goldman Sachs, 249
- GoTeo (social crowdfunding network), 321
- gradational approaches, social class and work, 53
- Great Depression (1930s), 116, 170, 479, 535, 651
 - and Fordism, 289, 291, 295
 - see also* unemployment
- Great Transformation, 541
- Greece, 392, 393, 470, 513
- Gribeauval, J.B. de, 286
- grocery trade, 311
- gurus, business/management, 173, 175, 176
- GVCs *see* global value chains (GVCs)
- harassment
 - sexual and racialized, 101–2
 - at work, 162
- Harvard Business Review*, 197
- Harvard Medical School, 174
- Hausbank*, Germany, 300
- Hawthorne Works/Hawthorne experiments, 19, 186, 226
- hegemonic masculinity, 41
- heteronormativity, 81
- Hewlett Packard, 315
- High-Performance Work Systems, 251
- Hill (UK remunerations consulting firm), 267
- Hispanics, 97
- historical development of sociology of work, 3
 - classical career of sociology of work, 17–18
 - post-war industrial sociology, 19–21
 - scientific management *see* scientific management
- Home Depot, 249
- Home Work Convention (ILO), 644
- home-based industrial outworkers, 419–22
 - class identity and interests, 422
 - costs and benefits, 421–2
 - labour and capital, 419–21
 - location of work, 421
- HomeNet, 644
- homosociality, 77
- Hong Kong, 235, 605, 646

- Hooters (American restaurant chain), 80
- horizontal segregation, 77, 78
- housework performance, 453–60
 - men's housework hours, 453, 456
 - trends in time spent on domestic labour, 454, 457
 - women's housework hours, 453, 455
 - see also* domestic work
- Howa village, Sudan, 354
- HRM *see* Human Resource Management (HRM)
- Huffington, A., 82
- human capital theory, 99, 235
- human dignity *see* dignity, human
- Human Relations School, 19, 171, 214, 227, 256
- Human Resource Management (HRM), 27, 28
 - capital and labour relations, 149, 161
 - Labour Process Theory, 217, 218
 - vs Personnel Management, 174
- Hungary, 393, 549
- Iacocca, L., 176
- IBM, 249
- Iceland, 392, 393
- identity
 - and gender, 81
 - subjective social class, 54–5
 - at work, 44
 - home-based industrial outwork, 422
 - and organizational culture, 265–6
 - self-employment, 418–19
 - and sex, 80–2
- IG-Metal, Germany, 567
- ILO *see* International Labour Organization (ILO)
- ILPC *see* International Labour Process Conference (ILPC)
- IMF *see* International Monetary Fund (IMF)
- India, 6, 161, 315, 317, 356, 410, 640
 - call centres, 161, 336, 355, 356, 585, 589
 - Cueservice, 356–9, 361
 - informal employment, 425–6n
 - labour organizing, 643, 645
 - self-employment, 416
 - Tier 1 and Tier 3 cities, 318
 - Welfare Boards, 643
- individualism, 85, 150, 157, 272
- Indonesia, 600
- industrial actions, 151, 152, 188, 189, 230
- industrial capitalism, 75, 132, 159, 170, 207
 - capital and labour relations, 149, 150
- industrial efficiency, 19
- industrial pluralism, 56
- industrial relations
 - emergence of paradigm, 153–4
 - national forms, differences between, 156
 - as a political system, 154–6
 - see also* capital and labour relations
- Industrial Revolution, UK, 290
- industrial ruination, 26
- industrial societies, 56, 57, 130
- industrial sociology, 19–21, 36, 56
 - workplace misbehaviour, 187–8
- industrial work, 559–75
 - arguments, framing, 560–1
 - Brazil, 9, 565, 568–70, 572, 573
 - contemporary change, understanding, 562–6
 - context-shaping forces, 566–7
 - de-industrialisation, 43, 566–7
 - global value chains, 9, 570, 571, 572
 - and labour, 561–2
 - labour subordination, remaking, 567–8
 - neo-developmentalism/neo-corporatism, 569–70
 - neo-industrialisation, 566–7
- inequalities
 - gender, 40–1
 - race and ethnicity, 93, 94, 97, 98
 - service work, 336–8, 341
- informal employment, 7, 378, 407–27
 - challenges, 423–4
 - composition, 413–14
 - developed countries, 414
 - developing countries, 413–14
 - Dualist school, 408
 - expanded statistical definition, 409–10
 - historical debates, 408–9
 - holistic conceptual models, 410–12
 - home-based industrial outwork, 419–22
 - informalization of labour, 78–9
 - inside and outside informal sector, 413
 - labour organizing, 636–9
 - Legalist School, 408
 - power of informally-employed workers,
 - rebuilding, 639–46
 - from reality to theory, 422–4
 - recent data/estimates, 412–14
 - recent rethinking, 409–12
 - self-employment, 413–14, 415–19
 - and service work, 354
 - size, 413
 - Structuralist school, 408
 - Voluntarist school, 408
 - Women in Informal Employment: Globalizing and Organizing (WIEGO) network, 409, 410, 425n, 638, 657
 - World Bank Latin America Division, 410–11
 - World Bank model, 412
- information and communication technologies (ICTs), 398, 583, 589
- information technology outsourcing (ITP), 583
- institutions
 - and capitalism, 213–18
 - institutional theory, 266, 270
 - institutionalism, in academic research, 153
 - and organizational culture, 266
- insurance sales work, 333
- International Bill of Rights*, 140
- International Classification of Status in Employment (ICSE), 415
- International Conference of Labour Statisticians (ICLS), 409
- International Labour Conference, 409

- International Labour Office (ILO), 409, 471
 International Labour Organization (ILO), 37, 97, 112, 348, 420, 471
 Employment Protection Legislation Index, 549
 Home Work Convention, 644
 and outsourcing, 583–4
 and precarious work, 429, 430
 Workers with Family Responsibilities Convention (No 156), 504
 International Labour Process Conference (ILPC), 74, 206, 215
 International Management Institute, 170
 International Metalworkers Federation, 657
 International Monetary Fund (IMF), 160, 562, 568, 579
 International Social Survey Program (ISSP), 454, 460
 International Union of Food and Tobacco Workers, 661
 inter-role conflict, 509–11
 intersectionality, 11–12
 class as intersectional structure, 640–1
 and gender, 41–2, 76, 88
 and inequality in service workplace, 336–8
 interviews, 100
 intra-company transferees (ITCs), 604
 investor capitalism, 168, 173, 174, 175, 176
 iPhone, 654
 Iraq, 86, 177
 Ireland, 117, 457, 460, 607
 Italy, 250
 Japan, 2, 235, 263, 308, 603, 638, 642, 660
 destandardization, 392, 394
 domestic work, 457, 460
 Labour Process Theory, 213, 214, 216
 management and leadership, 173, 176
 precarious work, 434, 435
 Jefferson, T., 286
 ‘jihadi brides,’ 86
 job quality, 4, 12, 111–28
 and capitalism, 119
 coordinated market economies, 117
 country differences, 116–19
 ‘dead end’ jobs, 113
 ‘decent work,’ 112, 142
 definition of a skilled job, 231
 definitions of ‘job,’ 112
 dimensions, 112–14
 economic and non-economic aspects, 38, 113
 explaining, 116–19
 good and bad jobs, defining, 112–16
 high performance organizations, 119–20
 and human dignity, 136
 importance of focus on, 111–12
 indices of non-wage quality, 118
 individual differences, role, 115–16
 and insecurity, 124
 see also uncertainty and risk, in twenty-first century
 issues for research and policy, 123–4
 liberal market economies, 117
 overall, 114–15
 polarization in, 122–3
 power resource/employment regime approach, 116–17
 precarious work, 429
 primary labour market, 114
 summative view, 114
 trends, 119–23
 varieties of capitalism/production regime theory, 116–17
 see also rewards of jobs; skill debate
 job search organizations (JSOs), 374, 375
 job tenure/security, 535
 John Lewis Partnership, 250
 journeymen printers, 236
 J.P. Morgan & Company, US, 300
 just in time systems, 309
 Kanbur, Ravi, 411–12
 Kantianism, 143
 Key Performance Indicators, 172, 175, 195
 Keynes, J.M., 620
 Keynesian economics, 2, 318, 319, 433, 567, 620
 and Fordism, 284, 295, 299, 301, 526
 unemployment, 470, 478–9
 Kholsa, V., 569
 Korea *see* South Korea
 Korean Women Workers’ Association (KWWA), 638
 Koreatown Immigrant Workers Alliance, 645
 Kundsén, W., 287
 Kuwait, 609
Labor and Monopoly Capital (LMC) (Braverman), 5, 22, 62, 205, 211–18, 220, 227
 central features, 35–6
 citations, 211–12
 and human dignity, 132, 136
 institutions and capitalism, 213–18
 reactions to, 213
 sales, 212
 scholarly impact, 212–13
 labour
 aesthetic, 337, 353
 child labour, 7
 division of *see* division of labour
 embodied and aesthetic, 45–6
 home-based industrial outwork, 419–21
 and industrial work, 561–2
 paid and unpaid, configurations, 489–91
 racialized, past and present formations, 95–102
 self-employment, 415–16
 venture, 371, 372
 see also capital and labour relations; labour process; migration, labour
 labour activism, 590–2
 labour force statistics/Labour Force Surveys (UK), 79, 471, 472
 labour markets
 dual labour market theory, 100

- Fordism, 288, 289, 290, 291, 292, 299, 302
- intermediaries, role, 373–6
- internal, 288, 289, 290, 291, 292, 302
- precarious work, 433
- primary, 114
- segmentation, 96, 114, 213
- segregation, 96, 97, 98, 100
- see also* markets
- labour migration, 9, 87, 315–16, 337
 - EU enhancements, 96
 - and globalization, 96, 597–619
 - growth, 599–601
 - lower level work, 97
 - migrant groups, 96–7
 - precarious work, 437–8
 - professional workers, 97
 - and race, 96–7
 - refugees, 96, 97, 100
 - rights of migrant workers and international conventions, 608–10
 - rise of precarious labour, 601
 - sites and sectors, 601–5
 - social policy, and work, 550
 - states, role of, 8–9, 605–8
 - stratified migrant statuses, 605–8
 - see also* race and ethnicity
- labour mobility, 209–11, 217, 598
- labour organizing
 - alternative pathways to building solidarity cultures, 644–6
 - building a twenty-first century global labour movement, 646–7
 - expanded collective action/organizational repertoires, 641–2
 - globalization, 592
 - informal work, 636–9
 - new targets, 642–4
 - power of informally and precariously-employed workers, rebuilding, 639–46
 - precarious work, 439, 636–9
 - in twenty-first century, 634–50
- labour power, 35, 54, 132
 - embodiment, 210
 - as fictive commodity, 209
 - flexibility and plasticity, 209
 - flow approach, 217–18
 - and Labour Process Theory, 208
 - and mobility, 209–11
 - storing of, 218
 - value generation, 210
- Labour Process Theory (LPT), 5
 - capital and labour relations, 149
 - and capitalism, 206–9
 - concepts, 206–9
 - conferences, 22
 - control, 207, 208, 214
 - division of labour, 208, 213
 - institutions and capitalism, 213–18
 - Marx on, 19, 35–6, 207, 209–10, 212, 219
 - and materialism, 215
 - periodisations, 215–16
 - rediscovery, 205–24
 - renewal of writing, 219–20
 - rise of, 27
 - second-wave, 159, 188, 189, 216
 - skill debate, 230
 - social class, and work, 58, 61–2
 - third wave, 160
 - and workplace misbehaviour, 188, 192–3
 - see also* *Labour and Monopoly Capital (LMC)* (Braverman)
- labour relations *see* capital and labour relations
- labour standards, global, 591
- labour unions *see* trade unions
- laissez-faire policy, 1, 293
- large organizations, 195, 275
- Latin America, 413, 472, 488, 509, 609, 638
- Latinos/Latinas, 4, 96, 437
- Latvia, 457, 460, 549
- Law Commission of Ontario, 437
- law firms, labour segregation, 335
- lay-offs, 174
- leadership, 4
 - compared to management/discrediting of management in favour of, 167–8, 173, 175, 179
 - functions of leaders, 167–8
 - new leaders, 173–4
 - terminology, 167
 - in third 'spirit' of capitalism, 5, 169, 173–8
 - 'toxic,' 179
 - transformational, 178
 - 'visions,' 168, 174
 - see also* management
- lean production, 309, 310, 311, 313
- Lee, J.R., 19
- Legalist School, 408
- legitimation, Weber on, 214
- Lehman Brothers, 2
- leisure class, 42–3
- 'leisure society,' 528
- Lenin, V., 152, 307, 524
- liberal Fordism, 284, 296, 301
- liberal market economies (LMEs), 117, 157
- liberal paradox, 600
- liberalism, classical, 1
- life-course, changes over, 449–50
- Linux, 320, 664
- Lithuania, 549
- Litton Industries, 172
- Live-in Caregiver Program (LCP), 607
- LMIs (labour market intermediaries), 373–6
- location of work
 - home-based industrial outwork, 421
 - self-employment, 416–17
- London Citizens, 638
- long-hours culture, 83, 84
- longitudinal research, 448, 450, 460
- LPT *see* Labour Process Theory (LPT)

- Luddites, 522
 'lumpenproletariat,' 85, 438
- machinery, single-purpose (Fordism), 286, 287, 288, 292
- macro-economic management, 478
- Malaysia, 78, 160
- Malicious Damage Act 1812, UK, 522
- management, 4, 159
 and bureaucracy, 168, 169, 173, 176, 177
 classical principles, 171
 compared to leadership/discrediting in favour of
 leadership, 167–8, 173, 175, 179
 and control, 207, 212
 eras, 168
 functions of managers, 167
 genesis in first 'spirit' of capitalism, 169–70
 layoffs and mergers, 174, 177
 levels of, 171
 macro-economic, 478
 managerial ideology, 173, 176, 178, 179
 managerialism, 168, 175, 180
 middle managers, 172, 174, 177, 381n
 misbehaviour by, 185, 186
 new practices, 149
 professionalization, 171
 as scientific administration in second 'spirit' of
 capitalism, 169, 170–3
 and systems theory, 170, 171, 172, 173
 terminology, 167
see also leadership; Total Quality Management
 (TQM)
- managerial capitalism, 168, 171, 173, 174
- Manchester School of Economics, 1, 561
- manufacturing, 22, 26, 44, 58, 97, 159, 333, 397, 521
 American system of manufactures, 286, 288
 and Fordism, 286, 288, 297, 298
 pin manufacturing example, 227–8
see also 'blue-collar' workers (manual workers)
- maquiladoras, of Mexico, 87
- markets
 coordinated market economies, 117, 157
 and Labour Process Theory, 209
 liberal market economies, 117, 157
 and moral discipline, 195–6
 pure market image, bureaucracy, 247–8
 universities, 275
see also labour market; Labour Process Theory
 (LPT)
- Marshall Plan, 284, 294, 296, 566, 579
- Martineau, H., 39
- Marx, K., 3, 11, 18, 35, 73, 290, 629
 on alienation, 3, 36, 130, 132, 149
 on capitalism, 35, 54, 130, 132–3, 151, 206
 compared to Weber, 55
 and critiques, 618–19, 620, 624
 on dignity, 130, 132
 as founding father of work sociology, 18
 on labour power/mobility, 209–10
 on Labour Process Theory, 19, 35–6, 206, 207,
 209–10, 212, 219
 legacy, 617–20
 on modes of production, 54, 130, 206
 organizational restructuring and neo-liberal
 politics, 654–5
 publications by
Capital, 35, 62, 212, 617–18, 619
Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts,
 130, 618
 on social class, 54–5, 56, 58, 60
 on transformation problem, 159
see also capitalism; Durkheim, E.; founding
 theorists; Labour Process Theory (LPT);
 Marxism/Marxist tradition; social class,
 and work; Weber, M.
- Marxism/Marxist tradition, 2, 22, 418
 capital and labour relations, 151, 152, 155,
 156, 163
 domestic work, 444
 and gender, 74, 75
 Plain Marxist Argument, 623
 and workplace misbehaviour, 188
see also Marx, K.
- mass consumption, and Fordism, 298, 525–6
- mass production, 170, 206
 and Fordism, 283, 284, 298, 524–5
- 'massification,' 56
- materialism, 215
- Mayo, E., 19, 227
- MBA programs, 27
- McCormick (mechanical reapers), 288
- McDonald, R., 178
- 'McDonaldization,' 140
- McDonaldization* thesis (Ritzer), 38, 311
- McDonald's, 275, 310, 655
- McJobs scenario, 120
- McKinsey & Co, 248
- McMahon, A., 83
- McNamara, R.S., 172, 177
- means of production *see* modes of production
- Mechanical Turk operation, Amazon, 319, 320, 321, 665
- menial work, aversion to, 133
- meritocracy, 104
- Mexico, 96, 437, 454, 599, 603
 maquiladoras of, 87
- MG Rover, 315
- micro-corporatism, 162
- Microsoft, 320
- middle classes, 59
- migration, labour *see* labour migration
- Millennium Development Goal Acceleration Framework
 (2010), 505
- minority unionism, 660
- misbehaviour in workplace, 185–204, 187–92
 absenteeism, 191, 196
 access to products of work, 191
 compromising of understanding, 187, 192–5
 concepts, 189–92
 'cyberloafing,' 196

- deviancy, 188
- dimensions and forms, 190–1
- employee disengagement, rise of, 197–8
- ethnographic research, 185, 186, 196, 197
- Foucauldian viewpoint, 192, 193
- Labour Process Theory, 188, 192–3
- by managers, 185, 186
- market and moral discipline, 195–6
- new spaces for, 196–7
- online communities, 197
- overt forms, 197–8
- passive and active forms of disengagement, 198–9
- pilfering, 191
- post-war period, initial discovery in, 186, 187–92
- prevalence at all levels, 185
- re-configuration of corporate structures and workplace regimes, 195
- rediscovering, 195–9
- sabotage, 191
- sexual, 191
- significance, 187
- soldiering, 191
- subcultures, 188, 191, 197
- time spent working, 191, 196–7
- willingness to notice, 186
- work performance, 191
- see also* conflict; employment relationship; resistance
- mobility, labour, 209–11, 217
- Model T system, US, 283, 284, 287, 288, 294, 525
- modifications to, 286, 289
- modernity, 18, 43, 64
- modes of production, 54, 130, 206, 236
- Mondragon group, Spain, 250
- monopoly capitalism, 22, 207
- 'Moore's Law,' 318
- More, T., 616, 617
- Morris, W., 133, 616, 617
- Mother Tongue Influence (MTI), eradication, 317
- multinational corporations (MNCs), 565, 571, 589
- Multinational Time Use Study (MTUS), 453, 454
- Multiple Correspondence Analysis (MCA), 60
- mutual dependency, 217
- Muybridge, E., 523
- NAFTA, 599
- National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), US, 42
- national business systems, capital and labour relations, 157–8
- National Centre for Research, UK, 104
- National Childcare Trust, UK, 82
- National Day Labourers Organizing Network (NDLON), 637
- National Domestic Workers Alliance (NDWA), 637
- national growth regime, Fordism, 284, 296–300
- National Guest Workers Alliance (NGWA), 637
- National Health Service, UK, 299
- national identity management (NIM), 585–6
- National Industrial Recovery Act, 1933 (US), 289
- National Labor Relations Act (1935), US, 299
- National Labor Standards Act (NLRA), US, 637
- National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA), 659
- National Survey of Families and Households, US, 447, 449
- negotiation, capital and labour relations, 153, 154, 157
- neo-classical economics, 116, 211
- neo-Fordism, 120, 121, 307, 321
- vs post-Fordism, 302n
- neo-industrialisation, 566–7
- neo-institutional theories, 116
- neo-liberalism, 1, 2, 4, 10, 63, 157
- and gender, 84, 89
- organizational restructuring and neo-liberal politics, 654–5
- and rise of financial regimes, 579–80
- and service work, 353, 354
- unemployment, 479, 481
- see also* capitalism
- neo-Taylorism, 290
- Netherlands, 392, 453
- networks
- challenges of model, 254–6
- collaborative *see* collaborative networks
- global production, 433
- inter-firm, 389
- and labour migration, 609
- role of networking, 377
- 'New Capitalism,' 25
- New Deal, US, 479
- New Economics Foundation, 630
- New England arms factories, 288
- New International Division of Labour, 603
- New Public Management paradigm, 548
- New Zealand, 607
- NGOs (non-governmental organizations), 591–2, 642
- Nietzsche, F., 133
- night work, 317, 355
- NIKE, 428
- nonliberal Fordism, 284, 297, 301
- non-standard employment, 388–91
- defining, 386–7
- developed countries, 414
- and precarious work, 431
- working time, 533–4
- non-standard working hours, 511–12, 533–4
- Nordic countries, 117, 118, 230, 250, 513
- and future of work, 659, 666
- Nordic labour agreement (1954), 96
- social policy, and work, 545, 547
- see also* Denmark; Finland; Norway; Sweden
- North, S., 286
- North Africa, 413, 477
- North American Free Trade Agreement, 599
- Norway, 230, 453, 457
- NUMMI, 252
- nursing, 340, 353

- Occupation Information Network (O*NET), 232
occupational closure, 214
occupational groups, 55
OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) *see* Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)
Office, The (BBC comedy series), 168
Office for National Statistics, UK, 37
Offshore Insights, 317
oil price shock (1973), 430, 526, 568
oligopolies, 285, 297, 299
Oman, 609
OMGUS (American Military Government in Germany), 294
on-call employment, 390
open-source collaborative writing, 320
OpenStreetMaps, 321
operationalization
 of dignity, 138, 143, 145
 social class, and work, 60–1
operations research, 171
Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), 230, 235, 237, 334, 511
 fixed-term/temporary work in OECD countries, 392
 and Fordism, 296, 298
 Survey of Adult Skills (OECD), 226, 234
 top five economies, 295
organizational culture, 262–82
 concept, 264–5
 constraining side, 268–70
 cultural management forms, 266–8
 and discourse, 266
 functional stupidity concept, 264, 269, 270
 and identity, 265–6
 and institutions, 266
 micro, meso and macro levels, 270
 ‘pure’ symbolism/general values uncoupled from material practice, 271–3
 reasons to take seriously, 262–3
 social interaction shaping meaning, and work, 278
 unitary or differentiated organizations, 270–1
 and work, 6, 273–7
 see also organizations
organizations
 expanded collective action/organizational repertoires, 641–2
 gendered, 100–1
 high performance, 119–20
 large, 195, 275
 organizational restructuring and neo-liberal politics, 654–5
 unitary or differentiated, 270–1
 vertical integration, 310
 work-life balance, 506–7
 see also institutions; NGOs (non-governmental organizations); organizational culture
organized capitalism, 149, 153, 167, 171
orientations, 134
Osborne, G., 82–3
outsourcing, 9, 310, 576
 Avon ladies, 586
 body work (reproductive surrogacy), 588–9
 catering industry, 322n
 data processing and call centres, 585–6
 definitions, 582–3
 employment under, 584–9
 impacts for workers, 589–90
 international, 582
 motivating forces, 583–4
 sales work, 586–7
 service work, 350
 Walmart, 5, 587
 see also globalization
over-qualification, 238, 239
Owen, R., 661
P2PU (free peer to peer university), 321
Palermo Convention, 609
Panel Study of Income Dynamics, US, 446–7, 449
paradigm wars, 216
paralegals, 335
Parental Leave Directive, 505
Parsons, T., 245
participant observation, 100, 375
participation, capital and labour relations, 159–60
parties, 38
part-time work, 388, 403n, 512–13
patriarchy, 40–1, 75
pensions, 174
Pepsi Cola, 267
performance metrics, 172, 175, 195
performance reviews, 196
performance-based rewards, 249
Philippines, 454, 600, 609
piecework, 320
‘pink-collar’ workers (service workers), 54, 58, 62, 75
PISA *see* Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA)
pluralist tradition, employment, 153
Poland, 392, 393, 457, 549, 637
polarization, 656–8
Pope Manufacturing, US, 283, 288
portfolio careers, 174
Portugal, 392, 513
positional conflict theory, 235
positivism, 37
post-bureaucratic systems, 253–4
post-feminism, 82
post-Fordism, 6, 43, 119, 289, 306, 310, 430, 527–8
 vs neo-Fordism, 302n
 welfare state development, 544–7
post-industrialism, 4, 9, 57
post-modernism, 43
post-natal depression, 83–4
post-structuralism, 43, 82, 216
post-war period, 4
 industrial sociology, 19–21

- misbehaviour in workplace, 186, 187–92
 second ‘spirit’ of capitalism, 170–1
 social class, and work, 55–7
- power resource (PRA) approach, 116–17
- precariat, 25, 257, 319, 438–9
 capitalism, 25, 319
 and gender, 84, 85
- precarious work, 7, 378, 429–43
 activist and academic lineages, 429–31
 assessment of extent, 434–7
 conceptualizing, 431–3, 657
 global expansion, 428, 430
 global production, 432, 433–4
 labour organizing, 439, 636–9
 migrant workers, 437–8
 power of precariously-employed workers, 639–46
 and precariat, 438–9
 precarity, 430–1
 rise of, 601
 rules of precarious economy, learning, 373–7
 see also uncertainty and risk, in twenty-first century
- printing workers, 75, 230
 journeymen printers, 236
- Procter & Gamble, 249
- production regime (varieties of capitalism) theory, 116–17, 156
- productive femininity, 351
- professionalisation, 38, 39, 171, 291
- professions, racial minorities in, 101, 104
- profit motive, 35
- Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), 226, 235
- project (cross-functional) teams, 252–3
- project-based occupations, 371–2
- Protestant tradition, 451–2
- ‘psychic prisons,’ 264
- pure market image, 247–8
- putting-out system *see* cottage industry
- Qatar, 609, 610
- qualitative research, 100–1
- quality of jobs *see* job quality
- race and ethnicity, 4, 93–108
 civil rights movements (1950s and 1960s), 97
 colonialism, 95, 96
 discrimination, 94, 97, 99, 104
 ethnic differences in masculinity, 26
 ‘free’ and ‘unfree’ workers, 95, 96
 globalization, 581–2
 housing segregation, 99
 as independent variable, 94
 inequalities, 93, 94, 97, 98
 job advertisements, 104–5
 meta-studies, 101
 migrant groups, 96–7
 new and future directions, 102–5
 prejudice, 104
 professions, racial minorities in, 101, 104
 qualitative research, 100–1
 quantitative studies, 97
 racialization processes, 94–5, 102
 racialized labour, past and present formations, 95–102
 segregation of labour market, 96, 97, 98, 100
 social constructionism, 94, 95
 specialisation in certain fields of work, 93
 stratification along race lines, 93
 terminology, 94
 token executives, 101
 unemployment, 98, 99
 whiteness studies, 100
 women of colour, 101–2
 see also African Americans; Blacks; gender;
 labour migration
- ‘racial state,’ 100
- racism, colour-blind, 103–4
- rates of return analyses, 236, 237
- Rathenau, W., 170
- rationality, 38
- rationalization, 618
 and dignity, 130, 137
- Reagan, R., 116, 430, 544
- recalibration, 546
- recession, 2
 and gender, 82–5
- Reciprocal Care Agreements, 607
- recommodification, 546, 547
- refugees, 96, 97, 100
- regional distribution centres (RDCs), 311–12
- regulation
 capital and labour relations, 148, 154, 160
 French regulation school, 526
 self-regulation, 163
 of working day, 522–3
- religion
 and domestic work division, 451–2
 and economy, 37–8
 Protestant work ethic, 37, 150
- reluctant Fordist production regime (UK), 284, 291–2, 301
 precursors to, and Industrial Revolution, 290–1
- reproductive labour, 63, 89, 588–9
 see also body work
- Research Assessment Exercise (RAE)/Research Excellence Framework (REF), 27
- resistance, 12, 159, 191, 192, 193–4, 230
 control-resistance paradigm, 188–9, 194
 micro-resistance turn, 193
 ‘real’ acts of, 194
 to Taylorism, 524
 see also employee disengagement, rise of;
 misbehaviour in workplace
- Restaurant Opportunities Center (ROC), 637
- restaurant work, 333, 352
- rewards of jobs, 112, 115
 changes in, 174
 extrinsic and intrinsic, 38, 113, 114
 see also job quality

- risk
- and employment uncertainty, in twenty-first century, 367–84
 - social structural location and management, 369–70
 - willingness to take, 371
- risk society, 7, 43
- Rockefeller Foundation, 170
- Roethlisberger, F.J., 19
- Romanticism, 129, 130
- Rouge River plant (Ford), 316
- Rumsfeld, D., 177
- Russian Federation, 234
- Saudi Arabia, 609
- Scandinavian countries *see* Nordic countries
- Schiller, F., 130, 132
- school system, 135
- Schreiner, O., 39–40
- scientific management, 132, 169
 - historical developments, 18–19
 - Labour Process Theory, 218, 219
 - principles, 307
 - working time, 523
 - see also* Taylorism
- Scotland, Effective Skills Use campaign, 237
- Scottish Enlightenment, 17–18
- Sea (strategic management firm), 272
- Second World War, 170, 541, 559
 - and Fordism, 291, 294, 301
 - see also* post-war period
- second-wave feminism, 82
- secretarial work, 74–5
- security guards, 356
- segmentation of labour market, 96, 114, 213
- segregation in work
 - gender, 77, 78, 79
 - horizontal, 77, 78
 - race and ethnicity, 96, 97, 98, 100
- self-actualisation, 10, 132
- self-employment, 413–14
 - class identity and interests, 418–19
 - costs and benefits, 417–18
 - destandardization, 388, 389, 391, 393, 401
 - disadvantages, 416
 - labour and capital, 415–16
 - in open spaces, 417
 - own-account, 388, 389, 393, 394, 401, 403, 408, 409, 413, 414, 415–19, 423, 424, 425
 - in private homes, 416
 - in public places, 417
 - traditional, 416
 - types of workers, 415
 - and wages, 413
- self-help industry, 377
- self-service supermarkets, 311
- Service Employees International Union (SEIU), 637
 - Justice for Janitor's programme, 355–6, 641
- service work
 - advocacy, 355, 356, 360
 - capability-enhancing service sector, 655
 - care and commodification, 340–1
 - case study of workers (Cueservice, India), 356–9, 361
 - conceptual and theoretical foundations, 330–5
 - consumer services, 351, 352
 - current and emerging research areas, 335–41
 - current/required knowledge, 341–3
 - definitions, 348–9
 - and dignity, 136–7
 - emotion in service workplace, 338–40
 - emotional labour *see* emotional labour
 - expert, 342
 - financial services, 351
 - 'frontline' service jobs/service triangle, 332–3, 336
 - future research, 359–60
 - and gender, 334–5
 - global geographies, 349–50
 - goods-producing vs service-producing industries, 330
 - and informal employment, 354
 - interactive, 6, 329–47
 - intersectionality and inequality in service workplace, 336–8
 - irreducible vs automated services, 352
 - legislative and contractual arrangements, 353–6
 - in lower income countries, 349
 - organization, 348–64
 - power and inequality, 337–8, 341
 - rise of service economy, 583
 - 'second global shift,' 350
 - 'service proletariat,' 6, 351, 352
 - and social class, 351–2
 - social hierarchies, 350–3
 - and social policy, 545
 - stratification within sector, 350, 352
 - subcontracting, 351, 355–6
 - temporal dimensions, 355
 - theory and research, 331–2
 - transnational, 336, 337, 353
 - types of jobs, 331
 - unionization, 338, 355–6
 - see also* 'pink-collar' workers (service workers)
- service-level agreements, 197–8
- services rule, 310–14
- sex trafficking, 609–10
- sexual divisions of labour, 76–80
- sexual harassment, racialized, 101–2
- Shanghai Automotive Industry Corporation (SAIC), 315
- shareholder capitalism, 216
- shareholder value logic, 173, 174
- Shop Management* (Taylor), 169, 179
- shop steward movement, UK, 291
- shop-floor, 170, 189
 - bureaucracy, 246, 247, 256
 - and Labour Process Theory, 214–15
 - organizational culture, 276, 278
- short-term employment, 174, 219

- sickness absences, 196
- Silicon Valley, California, 315
- Singapore, 235, 605, 635
- Singer, 283, 288
- Six Sigma, 175
- size of organizations, 195
- skill debate, 225–42
 - definition of a skilled job, 231, 236
 - deskilling thesis, 5, 22, 227, 228, 231
 - division of labour, 227, 228, 231
 - examination of existing skills, 234–7
 - generic skill change (UK), 233
 - job requirements approach, 232
 - and Labour Process Theory, 230
 - level of influence over day-to-day organization and pace of work (Europe), 229
 - mismatches, 238
 - qualification required trends (UK), 233
 - rates of return analyses, 236, 237
 - ‘real over-qualification’ estimate, UK, 238
 - reductionist view of skill, 228
 - reporting of skills data, 240
 - required skills, 226–34
 - ‘self-declared’ method, skills mismatches measurement, 238, 239
 - whether skills of jobs and workers are in balance, 237–9
 - upskilling, 213
- slave trade, African, 42
- slavery, 96, 130, 209
- Sloan, A., 246, 248
- Slovakia, 460
- Slovenia, 457, 549
- Smith, A., 132, 227, 228
- Social Change and Economic Initiative (SCELI), 232
- social class, and work, 4, 52–72
 - analysis of class, 58–60
 - Bourdieu on, 58, 60
 - categorical approaches, 53–4
 - class as intersectional structure, 640–1
 - class ‘in itself’ and ‘for itself,’ 54, 55
 - classical approaches, 54–6
 - contradictory class locations, 61
 - in current period, 63–7
 - ‘death of class’ thesis, 63, 64, 65–6
 - drawing of class boundaries, 60–1
 - whether drifting apart or pulling together, 57–63
 - Durkheim on, 55
 - feminist theory, 62–3
 - futures of, 67–8
 - and gender, 40, 79–80
 - globalization, 581–2
 - gradational approaches, 53
 - home-based industrial outworkers, 422
 - Labour Process Theory, 58, 61–2
 - Marx on, 54–5, 56, 58, 60
 - operationalization problem, 60–1
 - post-war period, 55–7
 - and race, 99
 - rethinking class, 58
 - schema of class relations, seven-fold (Goldthorpe and Hope), 59–60
 - self-employment, 418–19
 - service work, 351–2
 - spatial schema (Bourdieu), 58
 - stratification theory, 56, 57, 59
 - subjective class identity, 54–5, 65
 - trade unions, 57–8
 - volunteering/unpaid work, 492
 - Weber on, 55, 56, 58, 60
 - social closure, 38–9, 78
 - social constructionism, 95
 - social divisions, multiple, 41–2
 - social media, 162, 196
 - social policy, and work, 452, 541–6
 - and globalization, 550
 - outlook, 550–1
 - transformation, 549–50
 - variation of activation policies and ambivalent outcomes, 547–9
 - welfare state development
 - ‘Golden Age’ (Fordism), 543–4
 - in post-Fordist era, 544–7
 - work migration, 550
- social structure
 - conditions employment risk and uncertainty perceived as opportunity by some, 370–2
 - vs culture, 264
 - social structural location and management, 369–70
- societal corporatism, 154
- sociology of work and employment
 - classical career, 17–18
 - disciplinary career, 17–33
 - challenges/response, 22–3
 - changing dynamics of work, 23–6
 - early management science and work sociology, 18–19
 - doing sociology, 27–8
 - emergence of sociology as an autonomous academic discipline, 3
 - gender *see* gender
 - historical development *see* historical development of sociology of work
 - human dignity *see* dignity, human
 - ‘new’ workplace, studying, 26
 - quality of jobs *see* job quality
 - race *see* race
 - structuralism, new, 23
- software industry, 493–4
- solidarity
 - mechanical to organic, 55
 - social, 56
 - solidarity economy, 10
- solidarity economy, building alternative workplaces in, 662–5
- SOPs (Standard Operating Procedures), 171, 177
- Soros, G., 569
- South Africa, 307, 410, 657

- South East Asian countries, 235
- South Korea, 86, 235, 603, 657
 destandardization, 392, 393
 labour organizing, 635, 638, 640, 642
 precarious work, 434, 435, 436, 437
- Southern Europe, 470, 606
see also specific countries
- Southwest Airlines, 249
- Soviet Union, former, 307, 314, 322n, 524
- Spain, 158, 250, 392, 393, 470
 domestic work, 453, 457
- spatial divisions of labour, 208
- specialisation, 35, 93, 227
 flexible, 306
- Speenhamland System, England, 470
- split consciousness theory, 65
- Spring Hill plant, Saturn, 252
- Sri Lanka, 600
- staffing agencies, 375, 376, 381n
- stagnation, economic, 2
- Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), 171, 177
- 'star' paradigm, 248–50
- states, role of, 8–9, 605–8
- status, 38, 231
- steel industry, 26, 231
- STEM subjects (science, technology, engineering and mathematics), 78
- stratification theory, 56, 57, 59
 stratified migrant statuses, 605–8
- StreetNet, 644
- strikes, 151, 152, 188, 189, 194
- structural adjustment programmes (SAPs), 579, 580
- structural unemployment, 480–1
- structuralism, 23, 100
see also post-structuralism
- Student and Scholars against Corporate Misbehaviour (SACOM), Hong Kong, 646
- subaltern class, 149
- subcontracting
 destandardization, 391
 service work, 351, 355–6
- suicide, 37, 75
- supermarkets, 311
- surrogacy, 588–9
- surveillance and discipline, 45
- Survey of Adult Skills (OECD), 226, 234
- survey research, 22
- Suzuki, 309
- Sweden, 41, 79, 157, 230, 299, 457, 488, 513
- Swing Riots (1830), 1
- symbolism, 266
 pure, 271–3
- Syria, 86
- system, society and dominance (SSD), 217
- systems theory, 21, 153, 158
 and management, 170, 171, 172, 173
- Taiwan, 235, 434, 457
 precarious work, 435, 436
- Talent War, 249
- Tavistock Institute of Human Relations, UK, 21
- Taylor, F.W., 18, 38, 288, 307, 523
 management theories, 169–70, 171, 172
- Taylorism, 38, 132, 159, 207, 230, 320, 523
 components, 322n
 'digital,' 618
 early management science and work sociology, 18–19
 and Fordism, 288–9, 291, 294, 301, 302n, 307
 and management, 169–70, 175
 resistance to, 524
see also Fordism; scientific management; Taylor, F.W.
- teams
 project (cross-functional), 252–3
 stable work teams, 251–2
- technological advances, 67
 Amazon Mechanical Turk operation, 319, 320, 321
 crowd sourcing/crowd work, 319, 320, 321
 cyberbariat, 319, 438
 following Fordism, 318–21
 Labour Process Theory, 208
 precariat, 319
 skill debate, 230
 as tool for destroying jobs, 653–4
see also information and communication technologies (ICTs)
- temporary work/temporary agency work (TAW), 376, 388, 392, 403n
- 10 hours movement, nineteenth century, 211
- Tesco, 311
- Thailand, 435–6
- Thatcher, M., 2, 116, 430, 544–5
- thick description, 20
- Third Wayism, 573n
- time and motion, 523–4
- time series studies, 97
- time theft, 311
- token executives, 101
- Tokyo Youth Union of Contingent Workers, 638
- Total Quality Management (TQM), 309, 315
- Total Social Organization of Labour (TSOL), 28, 489–90
- Toyota Production System, 175
- trade unions, 1, 157, 174, 189, 313, 496, 641
 capital and labour relations, 152, 154, 155, 158, 162
 community unionism, 660
 and destandardization, 400, 403
 dual unionism, 660
 'intimate,' 356
 membership, 65
 minority unionism, 660
 service work, 338, 355–6
 and social class, 57–8
 and work-life balance, 507–9
see also conflict; industrial actions
- Trades Union Congress (TUC), UK, 300, 474
- Trafficking Victims Protection Act, US, 609
- transformation problem, 159

- transnational corporations (TNCs), 580, 581, 591
- Treaty of Detroit (1950), US, 299
- triangulation of method, 140
- Turkey, 392, 393
- Turkoptican, 321
- UK Commission for Employment and Skills (UKCES), Employer Skills Survey, 237
- 'UK Data Archive,' 37
- UN Convention on the Rights of All Workers and their Families, 608, 609
- UN Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, 609
- uncertainty and risk, in twenty-first century, 7, 219, 367–84
- cross-national research, 380
 - culture, role, 376–7
 - dimensions of uncertainty, 368–9
 - labour market intermediaries, role, 373–6
 - networking, role, 377
 - perception as an opportunity, by some, 370–2
 - persons blamed by American workers, 372–3
 - rules of precarious economy, learning, 373–7
 - social structural location and management of work, employment and risk, 369–70
 - see also* fixed-term contracts; job quality; precarious work; short-term employment; zero-hour contracts
- unemployment, 8, 381n, 470–84, 541
- causes and solutions, 477–81
 - claimant counts, 470–1
 - cyclical, 478–80
 - effects, 473–7
 - estimates, 471–2
 - Eurozone states, 470, 479
 - frictional, 478
 - ILO definition, 471, 472
 - long-term, 475–7
 - macro-levels, 478
 - mismatches, 480
 - racial disparities, 98, 99
 - real level, 472–3
 - repeated, 474–5
 - structural, 480–1
 - support groups, 375
 - transitional, 473–4
 - youth, 2
- Unilever, 291
- Union Solidarity International, 428
- United Arab Emirates, 609, 635
- United Dairies, 291
- United Kingdom, 20, 98, 117
- blocked Fordism, 284, 291, 296, 301
 - capital and labour relations, 149, 151, 153, 158
 - citizenship survey, 489
 - City of London, 300
 - compared to Germany and United States, 290, 292, 293
 - cooperatives, 250
 - domestic work, research on, 457
 - labour force participation of women, 531
 - Labour Force Surveys, 471, 472
 - and labour migration, 96, 607
 - and Labour Process Theory, 215
 - London, analysis of, 602
 - mass production, 206
 - National Health Service, 299
 - reluctant Fordist production regime, 284, 291–2, 301
 - precursors to, and Industrial Revolution, 290–1 - riots (1981, 2011), 476
 - services rule, 313–14
 - shop steward movement, 291
 - skill debate
 - British Skills and Employment Survey, 230, 234, 238
 - educational expansion, 236
 - Employment in Britain (EIB), 232
 - qualification required trends/generic skill change, 233
 - 'real over-qualification' estimate, 238
 - Trades Union Congress (TUC), 300, 474
 - 'Whitehall studies,' 536
 - work-life balance, 508
- United States
- American capitalism, regulatory theory, 284–5
 - American system of manufactures, 286, 288
 - Army, 172
 - capital and labour relations, 149, 152, 153, 154
 - classical Fordist production model, 284, 288–90, 301
 - precursors to, 286–7 - core organizational models, 288
 - critique of sociology of work in, 22
 - development of, historical accounts, 188
 - domestic work, research on, 447, 448, 449, 457
 - ethnographic research, 20
 - excellent companies, 262
 - Germany compared, 293
 - hegemony of, 284
 - labour force participation of women, 531
 - and labour migration, 609
 - liberal Fordism, 284
 - as liberal market economy, 117, 157
 - management theories, 173
 - Marshall Plan, 284, 294, 296
 - Model T system, 283, 284, 287, 288, 294, 525
 - modifications to, 286, 289 - New York, analysis of, 602
 - part-time work, 388
 - race and ethnicity, 98, 103
 - social policy, and work, 547
 - UK compared, 290
 - Vietnam War, 5, 173
 - see also* Fordism
- Unites Professionals association, India, 356
- Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 141, 523
- universities, 275
- unpaid work *see* domestic work; volunteering/unpaid work

- urbanisation, 35
 Urwick, L., 170, 171, 176, 179
 use values, of workers, 210–11
 usurpation process, 38
 Uttar Pradesh, India, 315
- variable capital, 209
 variegated capitalism, 285
 varieties of capitalism (VoC) approach, 116–17, 156, 216, 544
 venture labour, 371, 372
verstehen (understanding action), 368
 Victoria State, Australia, 161
 Vietnam War, 5, 173
 VoC *see* varieties of capitalism (VoC) approach
 Volkswagen, 315
 volunteering/unpaid work, 8, 84, 485–501
 - changes in, 493–5
 - configurations of paid/unpaid labour, 489–91
 - contemporary forms, 492–3
 - context, 485
 - debates, 488
 - definitional dimensions, 487–8
 - demographics, 488–9
 - free will dimension, 487
 - old forms, 491–2
 - software industry, 493–4
- wages, and self-employment, 413
 Wall Street Crash (1929), 170
 Walmart, 5, 310, 311, 329, 587
 ‘War For Talent’ (McKinsey), 248, 249
 Weber, M., 3, 11, 18, 20, 35, 38, 73, 368
 - on bureaucracy, 56, 150, 214, 245
 - on closure, 38–9, 214
 - compared to Marx, 55
 - on religion and economy, 37–8
 - on social class, 55, 56, 58, 60
 - see also* Durkheim, E.; founding theorists; Marx, K.
- Weber, M.S., 39
 Welch, J., 175–6
 Welfare Boards, India, 643
 welfare state, 155, 284, 451
 - ‘Golden Age’ of development (Fordism), 543–4
 - post-Fordist era, 544–7
 - typologies, 543
- West Germany, 457
 Western Electric Company (Chicago), Hawthorne
 - experiments, 19, 186, 226
- Western Wheel Works, 283
 whistleblowing, 193
 ‘white-collar’ workers (office workers), 121, 172, 206, 231, 276
 - and social class, 54, 57
- whiteness studies, 100
 Whitney, E., 286
 ‘Whiz Kids,’ 171
 Wikipedia, 320
 Wolfenshen, J., 569
- women
 - absolute earnings, 445
 - African American, 76
 - of colour, 101–2, 103
 - excavation of women’s work, 74–6
 - as factory workers, 74, 75, 76
 - as housewives, 75, 455
 - key writings of sociologists, 39–40
 - labour force participation, 531–2
 - management roles, 82
 - ‘women’s work,’ 26, 74–6
 - working time, 530
 - see also* feminist theory; gender
- Women in Informal Employment: Globalizing and Organizing (WIEGO) network, 409, 410, 425n, 638, 657
 Women’s Union Tokyo (WUT), 638
 work and social theory, 34–51
 - concept of work, 34
 - critique of classical canons
 - elite groups, 42, 43
 - gender and work, 39–42
 - leisure class, 42–3
 - race, 42
 - embodied and aesthetic labour, 45–6
 - ‘end of work,’ 44
 - founding theorists, 3, 35
 - see also* Durkheim, E.; Marx, K.; Weber, M.
 - post-developments/key ideas, 43–6
 - surveillance and discipline, 45
- work ethic, Protestant, 37
 work migration, 550
 work teams, stable, 251–2
 working classes
 - decline/death of, 43, 58
 - definitions, 54
 - and human dignity, 135, 136, 141
 - see also* social class, and work
- working rich, rise of, 43
 working time, 8, 520–40
 - abstraction of, 211
 - cottage industry, 520–1
 - Establishment Survey on Working Time (2004–5), 507
 - and health, 535–6
 - individual costs, other, 536–7
 - job tenure/security, 535
 - and labour power, 211
 - ‘leisure society,’ 528
 - long-hours culture, 83, 84
 - lost opportunities for social coordination and non-standard hours, 534
 - manufacturing, 521
 - ‘modern industry’ and automation, 521–2
 - non-standard working hours, 511–12, 533–4
 - regulation of working day, 522–3
 - satisfaction with, 509–11
 - scientific management, development, 523
 - self-rated time pressure trends, 528–9

- social costs, 537
- Taylorism, resistance to, 524
- time and motion, 523–4
- trends in hours of leisure and paid work in last
 - decades of twentieth century, 529–33
 - when becoming important, 520
- Working Time Directive, 505
- work-life balance, 8, 142, 161, 502–19
 - childcare and care of elderly, 513–14
 - conceptual issues with work–family reconciliation, 503–4
 - definitional issues, 504
 - developing countries, 503
 - growth in interest, 502
 - individual and household factors, 509
 - inter-role conflict and satisfaction with working time, 509–11
 - meso and micro variables, 506–9
 - non-standard working hours, 511–12
 - organizations, 506–7
 - policy and theory
 - national level, 505–6
 - supra-national level, 504–5
 - practical aspects, 509–14
 - trade unions, 507–9
 - work-time flexibility and part-time work, 512–13
- workplace misbehaviour *see* misbehaviour in workplace
- Works Councils Act, 1952 (Germany), 294
- workshops, centralized, 521
- World Bank, 349, 440, 562, 579
 - Latin America Division, 410–11
- World Economic Forum, Competition Index, 433
- World Values Survey, 488
- Worldwide Diamonds (sub-contractor), 314
- Xerox, 252
- zero-hour contracts, 84, 211, 219

