



WES

**Connectedness, activism and dignity at work
in a precarious era**

Work, Employment and Society Conference

Virtual Conference

Wednesday 25 - Friday 27 August 2021

WELCOME TO THE WORK, EMPLOYMENT AND SOCIETY CONFERENCE 2021

WELCOME FROM THE ORGANISING TEAM

This is the first Work, Employment and Society conference to be held online. The 2020 conference that was planned to take place in Cardiff was postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Ongoing uncertainty about the spread of the virus and when restrictions would end led us to decide to hold the 2021 conference online.

The original conference theme of 'Connectedness, Activism and Dignity at work in a Precarious Era' took on new meanings as the global pandemic unfolded, radically altering how and where people work, placing disproportionate burdens on essential and key workers, and resulting in job loss and reduced hours and earnings for millions. It is therefore no surprise that this year's conference programme reflects these profound effects on work. In addition to a full stream on 'COVID-19 effects on work, employment and power', many papers across the conference programme address the varied impacts of the pandemic on the world of work and on people's lives.

We are delighted that this year's conference includes a globally far-reaching range of delegates and papers, which perhaps reflects the increased accessibility afforded by the online conference format. With delegates from over 28 countries, we have overall 64 sessions and 4 Special Events that offer rich insights on the themes of the WES conference.

The programme includes a Doctoral Stream that features five sessions and runs throughout the conference, providing a forum for PhD students to develop their research ideas in a supportive environment.

An innovation for the 2021 conference is the introduction of a new format of 'On the Front Line' presentations, following the idea of the section in the *Work, Employment and Society* journal of this name. The aim is to hear the 'voice of the worker' as co-authors or co-presenters, broadening the range of participants in the conference. We would welcome feedback on how this paper format works in practice.

We are very pleased to welcome two excellent keynote speakers who will bring highly pertinent insights into recent developments and trends in work. Professor Emmanuel Ogbonna, Cardiff University, UK, will speak on the impact of COVID-19 on BME Communities, giving a view from Wales, and Professor Paula McDonald, Queensland University of Technology, Australia, will give an overview of 'Automated management in work and employment'.

We wish to offer enormous thanks to Sandria Charalambous and colleagues from the BSA Events Team for their support, patience and excellent organisational skills. We would also like to thank Dr Clare Butler for her ideas and invaluable contribution to the planning for the conference in Cardiff.

While we will miss the opportunity to meet and chat to delegates in person at social events or over dinner, we hope that the online format provides participants with the opportunity to engage with new research findings and ideas and to make new contacts to develop research and professional collaborations.

We wish everyone a very enjoyable WES 2021 Conference!

The WES 2021 Organising Committee

Shoba Arun, Denise Currie, Knut Laaser, Yao-Tai Li, Wendy Olsen, Katharina Sarter, Tessa Wright

DELEGATE INFORMATION

The conference will start at 9:30am BST with a welcome from the WES 2021 Conference Committee followed by the first paper session at 10:00am. During the conference, there will be eight (8) breakout rooms in total for some sessions. You will be able to choose the breakout room you wish to join once the breakout rooms have opened by the conference organiser. Please refer to the programme grid and select the correct breakout room for your presentation or participation. For more information for presenting please refer to your final delegate information email.

TIME ZONES

All times mentioned are in BST time.

RECORDING

The keynote speeches will be recorded and we kindly ask that all delegates switch off their camera during this time.

USING ZOOM DURING THE CONFERENCE

The conference will run on Zoom and delegates will be able to select and join their preferred breakout room. If you are a presenter, please ensure that you choose the correct Breakout Room for your session once the Breakout Rooms open. All breakout rooms will close at the scheduled time and participants will be brought back in to the main Zoom room. A message that there are 60seconds remaining will be displayed before the breakout room closes.

LIVE CAPTIONING

Google Chrome has recently introduced Live Captions for live videos and you can enable this functionality following the steps below. The use of Google Chrome is recommended for better delegate experience.

How to get Live Captions of any video on Google Chrome

1. Open Google Chrome on your desktop or PC.
2. Click on the three dot icon on the right side of the screen.
3. Open Settings.
4. Click on Advanced section on the left side.
5. From this section, open Accessibility section
6. Turn on Live Caption.

HELP AND SUPPORT

The BSA Events Team will be available to help where possible during the conference and you can contact them via email events@britsoc.org.uk

We would like to thank SAGE Publications for their contribution for the WES 2021 Conference.



CONFERENCE PROGRAMME AT A GLANCE

Wednesday 25 August 2021

09:30 - 10:00	Welcome to the conference
10:00 - 11:30	Paper Session 1 - See programme grid for breakout rooms
11:30 - 13:00	Paper Session 2 - See programme grid for breakout rooms
13:00 - 14:00	Lunch
14:00 - 15:30	Paper Session 3 - See programme grid for breakout rooms
15:30 - 16:00	Break
16:00 - 17:30	Paper Session 4 - See programme grid for breakout rooms

Thursday 26 August 2021

09:30 - 10:30	Keynote: Emmanuel Ogbonna <i>COVID-19 AND BME COMMUNITIES: A VIEW FROM WALES</i>
10:30 - 11:00	Break
11:00 - 12:30	Paper Session 5 - See programme grid for breakout rooms
12:30 - 13:30	Lunch
13:30 - 15:00	Paper Session 6 - See programme grid for breakout rooms
15:00 - 15:30	Break
15:30 - 17:00	Paper Session 7 - See programme grid for breakout rooms

Friday 27 August 2021

09:00 - 10:30 **Paper Session 8 - See programme grid for breakout rooms**

10:30 - 11:30 **Keynote: Paula McDonald**

AUTOMATED MANAGEMENT IN WORK AND EMPLOYMENT

11:30 - 12:00 **Break**

12:00 - 13:30 **Paper Session 9 - See programme grid for breakout rooms**

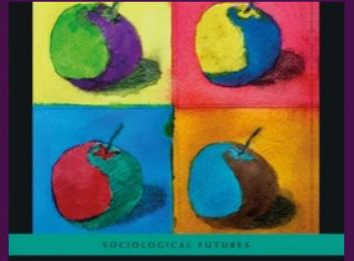
13:30 - 14:30 **Lunch**

14:30 - 16:00 **Paper Session 10 - See programme grid for breakout rooms**



SOCIOLOGICAL FUTURES

CALL FOR PROPOSALS



The Sociological Futures book series is a flagship for new and innovative theories and approaches to ‘the social’ in the 21st century. We are interested in focused proposals for monographs and edited collections featuring contemporary work that is theoretically and methodologically innovative, has local and/or global reach, and engages or reengages with classic debates in sociology bringing new perspectives to important and relevant topics. We are looking for more titles and invite proposals to be a part of the series, including proposals covering topics such as:

- race and ethnicity
- climate change
- work and employment
- pandemics and health crisis
- digital sociology
- cities/urban sociology

The series offers a means to reach a wider audience and acts as an established publishing outlet for sociologists at all career and publishing stages, from the well-established to emerging sociologists from all parts of the world. The series appeals to students, offering a selection of key texts on a focussed topic in one place as well as being attractive to scholars looking for longer form research on classic and emerging sociological themes.

The Series Editors welcome suggestions for topics and book proposals at any time. We accept proposals for monographs and edited collections of approximately 70,000-80,000 words with a focused theme. Volumes are peer reviewed at both proposal and manuscript stage and have the support of the Series Editors, the BSA and Routledge.

For queries, a proposal form or to submit a proposal, contact **Alison Danforth, BSA Publications Manager**, alison.danforth@britsoc.org.uk

Series Editors

Eileen Green Professor Emerita of Sociology, Teesside University

John Horne Professor, Sport and Social Theory, Waseda University, Japan

Caroline Oliver Associate Professor of Sociology, UCL Institute of Education

Louise Ryan Professor of Sociology, London Metropolitan University

All titles are available through the [Routledge website](#) and from booksellers.

KEYNOTE SPEAKER

EMMANUEL OGBONNA

Thursday, 26 August 2021, 09:30 - 10:30

COVID-19 AND BME COMMUNITIES: A VIEW FROM WALES

The impacts of the coronavirus pandemic have been devastating for all communities but the consequences have been especially profound for Black and minority ethnic (BME) communities. ONS statistics reveal that people from BME backgrounds are up to four times more likely to die from COVID-19 than their white counterparts. Various inquiries into this have presented a number of explanatory factors including the likelihood that those from BME backgrounds are over-exposed to the virus through their work in industries and sectors that are most affected by COVID-19, that they are more likely to be afflicted by particular comorbidities that increase their susceptibility to the disease, and that they are more likely to be economically deprived with poorer health outcomes which, again, make them more likely to contract the disease. However, health analysts acknowledge that these explanations are insufficient to account for the level of disparity in outcomes, leading many to point to an increased probability of unexplained factors that may be implicated in this process.

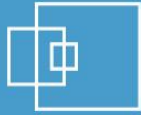
Our investigations in Wales identified pre-existing institutional racism as a key contributory factor to the disproportionality in outcomes. My talk will focus on this and will argue that people from BME backgrounds are dying from COVID-19 not because of something genetically inherent in being BME, but because being BME expose them to pernicious racism. This, along with other disadvantages, increase their stress and anxiety levels in ways that reduce their immune responses and make them susceptible to the worst excesses of the virus.

The talk will also highlight the novel and proactive approach of the Welsh Government in dealing with institutional racism through a current initiative to develop a comprehensive Race Equality Action Plan that will make Wales the first antiracist nation in the world.

Emmanuel Ogbonna is Professor of Management and Organization at Cardiff Business School, Cardiff University. He gained his PhD from University of Wales Cardiff in 1990. His doctoral thesis explored the organizational cultural implications of the strategic directions of leading companies in the UK food retail sector in the late 1980s. He joined Cardiff Business School as a lecturer in 1990 and progressed through the ranks and was appointed to his present professorial position in 2002. His research interests cut across the fields of organization studies, strategy, marketing and human resource management. His recent research interests have been in the areas of organizational culture, equality, diversity and inclusion, and his work has explored the position of people from Black and minority ethnic backgrounds in the labour market. He was part of a team that completed a recent British Academy and Chartered Management Institute sponsored research project on diversity in the management pipelines of FTSE 100 organizations. He is currently extending his work in this area to include the impacts of a range of intra-organizational interventions (such as leadership, organizational culture and management control) on equality, diversity and inclusion. He has published over 100 scholarly papers, monographs and edited collections, many of which are leading-edge contributions in high-ranking international outlets. His work has received several national and international citations of excellence including Best paper in services research (USA), top 50 most read management articles, most downloaded articles and several articles that have been ranked as editors' choices. Emmanuel is a current or past member of the Editorial Boards of many of the leading management journals and he has served in advisory and consulting capacities to a range of national and international organizations and agencies. He was recently invited to join the Advisory Board of the new Covid Recovery Commission under the leadership of John Allan (Chairman of Tesco Plc) and he is currently advising the five UK Sport Councils on their review of race equality in sports. He has also held a number of Ministerial appointments including: member of Deputy Minister of Wales and Chief Whip's Women in STEM education subgroup, member of First Minister of Wales BAME COVID-19 Advisory Group, Chair of First Minister of Wales Black, Asian and minority ethnic COVID-19 Socio-economic subgroup, and Co-chair of the Steering Group leading the development of the first All Wales Race Equality Action Plan. Emmanuel is currently a Trustee and vice-chair of Race Council Cymru. He lives in Cardiff and is married with two daughters and has recently become a grandfather.



Chair: Tessa Wright, Queen Mary University London



Sociology in Action Articles

We are delighted to announce the launch of a new article type for Sociological Research Online, titled 'Sociology in Action'. Sociology in Action papers are an opportunity for researchers to publish shorter, peer-reviewed pieces which present emerging evidence in embryonic or experimental research – research which is too early in its process for a full research article, but which nevertheless presents interesting data and discussion.

This publishing area will be a space wherein emergent research approaches can be presented, new themes identified, and embryonic data can be discussed. We are particularly keen to diversify our international submissions. This area is intended to facilitate *introducing* rather than *concluding* research. We also welcome contributions from Early Career Researchers.

Submissions for this area will:

- Undergo a double blind peer review process and authors will have the opportunity to engage in further dialogue post-publication
- Be suitable for CVs, satisfy funding requirements, and support promotion prospects
- Stimulate sociological debate and dialogue

Submission and Format

- Sociology in Action pieces should be between 2000 - 4000 words
- Submissions should be submitted as a Word document and include a title, abstract, main text and bibliography. The piece should present a clear argument.
- Figures and tables may be included, either as separate files or as part of the Word document.

Pieces may address:

- New sociological agendas, questions and projects
- A commentary on existing work
- Emergent and possibly speculative data and findings
- Identify new sociological themes and debates

Above all, we would like submissions that provoke conversation. This will address one of the aims of the Journal which is to foster sociological communities and engagement, and stimulate debate.

KEYNOTE SPEAKER

PAULA McDONALD

Friday 27 August 2021, 10:30 - 11:30

AUTOMATED MANAGEMENT IN WORK AND EMPLOYMENT

Technology has long been a tool to support management. However, automated systems represent a fundamental shift in the scale and capability of complex management practices that once required human decision making. In this key note lecture, Paula McDonald will discuss the trends, technological capacities and impacts of automation and artificial intelligence that are established or emergent in four dimensions of work and employment. These are: recruitment and selection; the allocation of tasks; tracking and evaluating productivity; and the effects on jobs and labour markets. Automated management is conceptualised as systems of control enabled by a broad range of interrelated technologies and methods that shape the conditions of work and workplaces. The key note concludes with strategies suggested by scholars, regulators and labour representatives about how to ensure accountability and the protection of workers.

Paula McDonald is Professor of Work and Organisation and Associate Dean, Research in the QUT Business School. Paula's research addresses the profound social implications arising from a globalised, 'collaborative' economy. Her work spans topics including education to work transitions; public/private boundaries; and technology and work. She currently leads an ARC Discovery project *Working the gig economy* and recently conducted the first Australian prevalence study on digital platform work. Paula has published over 100 scholarly outputs and her work has actively shaped public debate through media engagement and invited research seminars to end-users. She is a registered psychologist and a senior fellow of the UK Higher Education Academy.



Chair: Knut Laaser, University of Stirling

The British Sociological Association

Annual Conference 2022

Wednesday 20 – Friday 22 April 2022
Virtual Conference

Call for Papers

The British Sociological Association invites submissions to its Annual Conference. Participants can present on any sociological research topic.

Annual Conference 2022 Theme:

Building Equality and Justice Now

A year in which the pandemic tightened its grip in so many parts of the world, the extent of extreme global inequality in its impact on Covid-19 mortality and vaccine inequity was thrown into sharp relief in 2021. Domestically as well as globally the long-term social, economic and political effects of the Covid-19 pandemic are becoming increasingly apparent - through worsening health outcomes for marginalised populations, deepening poverty and economic precarity, or the entrenchment of political and state corruption for financial gain.

Alongside the burgeoning climate crisis, increasing food insecurity, and ongoing global violence, conflict and state suppression, we ask a seminal question: how do we work towards building global equality and justice – practically and productively - in the here and now?

Sociology is, and should be, a global and historically-informed discipline rooted in a desire to understand, to explore, and to (self-)critique. Despite our myriad sub-disciplinary foci, we as sociologists are all fundamentally interested in routes to genuine, sustainable social progress, not only for wider society but at 'home'.

Within our higher education institutions, social justice has been at the forefront of scholar-activism in multiple challenges. Our members have been working on exposing the colonial legacies of our discipline, lobbying against the ongoing injustices meted out to colleagues in an increasingly neo-liberalised sector, and speaking out against the maligning of academics who speak to the systemic nature of racial oppression. They have also been questioning other dynamics of marginalisation linked to class, gender, trans, sexuality and disability that interconnect with these legacies and work together to secure privilege. It is here where the very future of our discipline is at stake, and the commitment and solidarity of our academic community to equality and justice most apparent.

Building justice and equality is a multilevel project, and entails employing the sociological imagination to link local struggles to wider issues of domestic and global inequality, and to further orient our focus to dialogue with communities and wider publics. It thus requires us to think about what 'public sociology' means in the present time, particularly in a predominantly online space.

Our objective for this conference is to collectively think along the themes of 'equality' and 'justice', theoretically, practically, inter/transdisciplinarily, and critically, within our substantive areas of interest and action. Papers, as last year, need not address Covid-19 directly.

We encourage submissions which problematise the notions of 'equality' and 'justice', which think creatively and unboundedly on the social issues facing communities, societies and publics now, and platform / give voice to those for whom social justice and equality is far more than rhetoric. We hope that the virtual spaces for sessions will prove inclusive and generate authentic dialogue and connections between delegates situated across the UK and globally.

Click [HERE](#) to submit your abstract.

Important Dates

Friday 29 October 2021	Abstract submission deadline
Friday 11 February 2022	Presenter booking deadline

Contact the BSA Events Team

Email: events@britsoc.org.uk

Telephone: +44 (0)191 383 0839



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CONFERENCE PROGRAMME - PAPER SESSIONS

WEDNESDAY, 25 AUGUST 2021

Paper Session 1 10:00 - 11:30 (DAY 1)

Breakout Room 1	Breakout Room 2	Breakout Room 3	Breakout Room 4	Breakout Room 5	Breakout Room 6	Breakout Room 7	Breakout Room 8
Technology, AI, Big Data, algorithms and new forms of work	Professions, occupations, skills, careers and self-employment	COVID-19 effects on work, employment and power	Social movements, unions, voice and activism	Conference Doctoral Stream	Dignity at work, decent work and job quality	Bodies and work - emotions, aesthetics, health and bodily functions at work	Open Stream: Special event <i>Global Labor: Economic Transformations</i>
Chair: Gavin Maclean	DISCUSSION ROOM**	Chair: Griffin Ray	Chair: Carin Runciman	Chair: Wendy Olsen	Chair: Khan Maria Hameed	Chair: Eleonore Kofman	Chair: Heidi Gottfried
Cole Matthew		Currie Denise	Hudson Maria	Aslam Awish	Poletti Alberto	Kirk Kate	Gottfried Heidi
Brawley Newlin Alice		Shulzhenko Elena	Ugarte Sebastian	Burgess Jo	Laaser Knut	Hopkins Debbie	
Popan Cosmin		Skountridaki Lila	Ugarte Sebastian	Sharma Shweta	Hill Sam	White Lauren	
				Zapata Rodriguez Maria De Los Angeles			

Paper Session 2 continues to next page

Paper Session 2 11:30 - 13:00 (DAY 1)

Breakout Room 1	Breakout Room 2	Breakout Room 3	Breakout Room 4	Breakout Room 5	Breakout Room 6	Breakout Room 7	Breakout Room 8
Insecurity, precarity and peripheralisation	Dignity at work, decent work and job quality	COVID-19 effects on work, employment and power	Migrant work, employment and racialised identities	Conference Doctoral Stream	Technology, AI, Big Data, algorithms and new forms of work	Professions, occupations, skills, careers and self-employment	Open Stream: Special Event <i>Women, work and care during COVID</i>
Chair: Kristinn Hermannsson	Chair: Aminu Musa Audu	Chair: Narjes Mehdizadeh	Chair: Shoba Arun	Chair: Wendy Olsen	Chair: Skountridaki Lila	Chair: Debbie Hopkins	Chair: Tomlinson Jennifer
Knox Angela	Sambajee Pratima	Parry Jane	Newlands Gemma	Stephen Katherine	Roy Chandrima	Oborn Regin David	Tomlinson Jennifer
Irvine Annie	Topic Martina	Adamson Maria	Siebers Hans	Khan Maria Hameed	Le Ludec Clement	Roberts Maisie	Whittaker Xanthe
den Outer Birgit		Torre Margarita	Villares-Varela Maria	Nguyen Thu Thao		Wang Wen	Norman Helen
		O'sullivan Maeve	Wright Chris	Zeng Yiluyi		Luchinskaya Daria	Torres Luis
							Lyonette Clare

Paper Session 3 14:00 - 15:30 (DAY 1)

Breakout Room 1	Breakout Room 2	Breakout Room 3	Breakout Room 4	Breakout Room 5	Breakout Room 6	Breakout Room 7	Breakout Room 8
Technology, AI, Big Data, algorithms and new forms of work	Dignity at work, decent work and job quality	Open Stream	Social movements, unions, voice and activism	Methodology and methods	COVID-19 effects on work, employment and power	Insecurity, precarity and peripheralisation	DISCUSSION ROOM**
Chair:Knut Laaser	Chair: Xuebing Cao	Chair: Heidi Gottfried	Chair: Banday Muneeb UI Lateef	Chair: Wen Wang	Chair: Wendy Olsen	Chair: Maeve O'Sullivan	
Roth-Kirkegaard Carl Stefan	Audu Aminu Musa	Moriarty John	Runciman Carin	Haunschild Axel	Selenko Eva	Alkadi Faisal	
Baum Myriam	Bailey Nicholas	Jenkins Jean	Seymour Kate	Williams Helen	Christie Fiona	Healy Josh	
Barnes Tom	Chakraborty Saikat	Pustelnikovaite Toma	Cioce Gabriella	Croft Lacey	Adjei Arthur Susanna	Suzuki Kyoko	
				Adjei Arthur Susanna			

Paper Session 4 16:00 - 17:30 (Day 1)

Breakout Room 1	Breakout Room 2	Breakout Room 3	Breakout Room 4	Breakout Room 5	Breakout Room 6	Breakout Room 7	Breakout Room 8
Technology, AI, Big Data, algorithms and new forms of work	Professions, occupations, skills, careers and self-employment	COVID-19 effects on work, employment and power	Gender, work and social reproduction	Inequalities and their intersections	DISCUSSION ROOM**	Open Stream	DISCUSSION ROOM
Chair: Helen Norman	Chair: Denise Currie	Chair: Katharina Sarter	Chair: Rijak Grover	Chair: Xanthe Whittaker		Chair: Toma Pustelnikovaite	
Huang Hui	Torre Margarita	Dunn Michael	Handley Karen	Trusson Diane		Atfield Gaby	
Kango Ujjwal	Matsunaga Shintaro	Marsh-Davies Katy	Lloyd Michele	Gavrilyuk Tatiana		Kauhanen Merja	
Robertshaw David	Kele Juliet		Read Rosie	Stafford Lisa		Hunt William	
	Luchinskaya Daria						

Note: Presenters highlighted in grey in the programme grid are 'On the Frontline' presentations

THURSDAY, 26 AUGUST 2021

Paper Session 5 11:00 - 12:30 (DAY 2)

Breakout Room 1	Breakout Room 2	Breakout Room 3	Breakout Room 4	Breakout Room 5	Breakout Room 6	Breakout Room 7	Breakout Room 8
Technology, AI, Big Data, algorithms and new forms of work	Dignity at work, decent work and job quality	Social movements, unions, voice and activism	Insecurity, precarity and peripheralisation	Conference Doctoral Stream	COVID-19 effects on work, employment and power	DISCUSSION ROOM**	DISCUSSION ROOM**
Chair: Denise Currie	Chair: Knut Lasser	Chair: Arntsen Alexandra	Chair: Axel Haunschild	Chair: Yao-Tai Li	Chair: Wendy Olsen		
Gregory Karen	Granter Edward	Pero Davide	Mendonca Pedro	Lee Kun	Brzozowska Anita		
Dencik Lina	Halliday Sallyann	Blundell Peter	Thomas Peter	Teixeira Fernanda	Adams Tracey		
Hunt William	Naik Vani	Patrick Holly	Kohn Paula	Ferns James Patrick	Orel Marko		

Paper Session 6 13:30 - 15:00 (DAY 2)

Breakout Room 1	Breakout Room 2	Breakout Room 3	Breakout Room 4	Breakout Room 5	Breakout Room 6	Breakout Room 7	Breakout Room 8
Technology, AI, Big Data, algorithms and new forms of work	Migrant work, employment and racialised identities	COVID-19 effects on work, employment and power	Open Stream	DISCUSSION ROOM**	Dignity at work, decent work and job quality	Bodies and work - emotions, aesthetics, health and bodily functions at work	Professions, occupations, skills, careers and self-employment
Chair: Galata Paraskevi - Viviane	Chair: Shoba Arun	Chair: Petra Sauer	Chair: Gaby Atfield		Chair: Denise Currie	Chair: Jill Timms	Chair: Wendy Olsen
Cotton Elizabeth	Rauseo Sterling	Yang Feifan	Chivers Wil		Cao Xuebing	Hickman Laura Anne	Antonazzo Luca
Kissoon Chavan	Pustelnikovaite Toma	Elmezraoui Wafaa	Korczynski Marek		Carson Calum	Vedi Priyanka	Grugulis Irena
	Forde Chris	Steiber Nadia	Sandiford Peter			Fleming William	Fisher Nicola
	Salamonska Justyna					Schaefer Anja	Griffin Ray

Paper Session 7 15:30 - 17:00 (DAY 2)

Breakout Room 1	Breakout Room 2	Breakout Room 3	Breakout Room 4	Breakout Room 5	Breakout Room 6	Breakout Room 7	Breakout Room 8
Professions, occupations, skills, careers and self-employment	Dignity at work, decent work and job quality	COVID-19 effects on work, employment and power	DISCUSSION ROOM**	Gender, work and social reproduction	Social movements, unions, voice and activism	Conference Doctoral Stream	DISCUSSION ROOM**
Chair: Chavan Kissoon	Chair: Maria Hudson	Chair: Wafaa Elmezraoui		Chair: Tessa Wright	Chair: Judith Watson	Chair: Denise Currie	
Macleane Gavin	Gonzague Isirabahenda	Hadjisolomou Anastasios		Ackers George	Birelma Alpan	Pasumarthy Aparna	
Timms Jill	Drew Hilary	Guillaume Cecile		Grover Rijak	Mackenzie Ewan	Brierley Lynne	
Nandi Roopa	Arends Iris	Hancock Philip		Schwartz Gregory	Banday Muneeb UI Lateef	Fisher Nicola	
Pettigrew Rachael						Martain Sandra	

Note: Presenters highlighted in grey in the programme grid are 'On the Frontline' presentations

FRIDAY, 27 AUGUST 2021

Paper Session 8 09:00 - 10:30 (DAY 3)

Breakout Room 1	Breakout Room 2	Breakout Room 3	Breakout Room 4	Breakout Room 5	Breakout Room 6	Breakout Room 7	Breakout Room 8
Technology, AI, Big Data, algorithms and new forms of work	Dignity at work, decent work and job quality	Insecurity, precarity and peripheralisation	Open Stream Special Event: <i>Meet the editors</i>	Conference Doctoral Stream	COVID-19 effects on work, employment and power	Inequalities and their intersections	DISCUSSION ROOM**
Chair: Nicola Fisher	Chair: Kauhanen Merja	Chair: Irena Grugulis	Chair: Cotton Elizabeth	Chair: Wendy Olsen	Chair: Katy Marsh-Davies	Chair: Yao-Tai Li	
Weidenstedt Linda	Khan Maria Hameed	Balogh Rebeka	Cotton Elizabeth	Glendinning Andrea	Mehdizadeh Narjes	Airey Laura	
Mosseri Sarah	Magdziarz Wiktor	Shi Cunqiang		Sharma Padmini	Mishra Paro	Galata Paraskevi - Viviane	
Klausing Susanne		Youssef Sherif		Dorschel Robert	Ogbonnaya Chidiebere		
				Hopkins Cate			

Paper Session 9 12:00 - 13:30 (DAY 3)

Breakout Room 1	Breakout Room 2	Breakout Room 3	Breakout Room 4	Breakout Room 5	Breakout Room 6	Breakout Room 7	Breakout Room 8
Technology, AI, Big Data, algorithms and new forms of work	Professions, occupations, skills, careers and self-employment	Social movements, unions, voice and activism	DISCUSSION ROOM**	Open Stream: Special Event <i>China and the Internationalisation of the Sociology of Contemporary Work and Employment</i>	Gender, work and social reproduction	DISCUSSION ROOM**	DISCUSSION ROOM**
Chair: Robert Dorschel	Chair: Kirsty Denyer	Chair: Ewan Mackenzie		Chair: Kofman Eleonore	Chair: Rosie Read		
Newlands Gemma	Richardson Liam	Watson Judith		Kofman Eleonore	Vallely Michael		
Sauer Petra	Varul Matthias	Arntsen Alexandra		Choi Suzanne	Dixit Anukriti		
	Boland Tom			He Gloria	Berrington Catherine		
				Peng Thomas			

Paper Session 10 14:30 - 16:00 (DAY 3)

Breakout Room 1	Breakout Room 2	Breakout Room 3	Breakout Room 4	Breakout Room 5	Breakout Room 6	Breakout Room 7	Breakout Room 8
Professions, occupations, skills, careers and self-employment	Dignity at work, decent work and job quality	Migrant work, employment and racialised identities	DISCUSSION ROOM**	DISCUSSION ROOM**	DISCUSSION ROOM**	DISCUSSION ROOM**	DISCUSSION ROOM**
Chair: Gemma Newlands	Chair: Korczynski Marek	Chair: Shoba Arun					
Denyer Kirsty	Morris Joe	Kozhevnikov Andrew					
Topic Martina	Warren Tracey	Gaggiotti Hugo					
Jephson Nicholas	Ernst Jette	Riordan Tyler					
Koytak Elyesa							

Note: Presenters highlighted in grey in the programme grid are 'On the Frontline' presentations

** Room does not have a moderator or chair and it is available to all delegates.



Sociologies of the Future and the Future of Sociology

Call for Papers - Sociology Special Issue

Special Issue Editors: Susan Halford & Dale Southerton (University of Bristol)

Deadline for submission of full papers: 1 December 2021

Overview:

The British Sociological Association celebrated its 70th anniversary at our annual conference in 2021. Our theme for this conference was '*Re-Making the Future*': drawing attention to the ways in which Sociology and sociological research engages with, understands and shapes futures. That the conference was held during the covid-19 pandemic – which is at once profoundly disruptive to and generative for emergent futures at individual, community, national and global scales – only served to underline the need for renewed sociological attention in this area. This Special Issue picks up these concerns and seeks to provide a benchmark for reflection on sociological futures and consider what this might mean for the future of Sociology.

The future has been woven in and out of the history of Sociology. Imagined futures are *implicitly* central to much sociological research: for example, in arguments about epochal social change, in attention to hopes and expectations and – more generally – in activist and participatory sociological research that seek to bring about social change. And yet, powerful critiques of prediction and determinism deny *explicit* sociological attention to 'actual futures', leaving the field open to other disciplines (for example, Engineering, Economics and Data Science) to lead public and policy debates. Although 'public sociology' is recognised as a priority for Sociology there is an urgent need to amplify sociologists' contribution and voice to futures thinking and futures making.

The Special Issue aims to bridge this 'gap' between implicit sociological engagement in and sociological distancing from the future. It has two key starting points. First, that sociological theories, methods and empirical research have a great deal to offer in understanding how futures are claimed, enacted and made. And second, that a concerted effort is required to excavate, articulate and implement this promise. In contributing to this effort, this Special Issue seeks to draw together a range of theoretical, methodological and empirical resources that, collectively, will offer a powerful intervention for sociological futures thinking and futures making.

Themes may include:

- Sociological analysis of futures and future-making e.g. decolonial and reparative futures, sociotechnical futures, sustainable futures, fair and inclusive futures;
- Futures for Sociology as a discipline and its contribution within inter-disciplinary dialogues;

- Theoretical approaches to futures and future making (e.g. theories of time and temporality, space and spatiality, power and inequality, movements and social change, practices and everyday lives);
- Methods, methodologies and data for futures research (e.g. reflections on mainstream sociological methods, creative methods, new and emerging forms of data);
- Increasing sociological engagement in futures thinking and future making (e.g. in policy, public debate, and with other disciplines and sub-fields such as Design, Responsible Innovation, Anticipation Studies).

Format

We welcome articles of 6-8000 words in the usual house style.

We also welcome novel and alternative contributions. If you are considering this, please contact the Editors in advance to discuss. Such contributions might include:

- Review articles (of a sub-field, a collection of books or specific methods);
- Interviews or dialogues with key contributors to sociological futures research;
- Blog posts on topical contemporary issues.

These should be 2-4000 words in length. We would also be happy to consider non-textual contributions.

Submission Details:

Deadline for submissions: 1 December 2021

For any queries regarding this special issue, please contact the guest editors:

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Submit online: <http://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/soc>

Full submission instructions are available on this site on the 'Instructions and Forms' page. Please read these in full well before submitting your manuscript. All manuscripts will be subject to the normal referee process, but potential authors are welcome to discuss their ideas in advance with the editors.

Paper Session 1

Wednesday, 25 August 2021

10:00 - 11:30

Breakout Room 1

Technology, AI, Big Data, algorithms and new forms of work

The Nature of Unpaid Labour in Platform Work: A Typology of Wage Theft in the Digital Age

Cole Matthew

(Oxford Internet Institute, University of Oxford)

This paper explores the dual nature of unpaid labour in platform work. Drawing conceptually from Marxist political economy, it argues that extant analyses of unpaid labour, in terms of unpaid overtime and the violation of labour laws, neglect not only the systemic dimension of unpaid labour under capitalism but also the emergent expropriation of workers' data as it is transformed into an asset. The paper contends that both location-based and cloud-based platform work systematically institutionalise the theft of workers' labour-time through a number of different strategies, but particularly through piece work. Through a detailed study of a variety of different platforms in different countries, we develop a novel typology of wage theft in such contexts that explores how managers leverage algorithmic control to extract additional unpaid labour through unpaid training time, unpaid waiting time, transportation between jobs, externalisation of costs of production, externalisation of tax obligations, and the expropriation of worker data etc. The platform model of the firm amplifies labour market violations while evading waning labour market enforcement. The paper makes both a theoretical contribution in developing an understanding of wage theft in platform work while also making an empirical contribution in developing a typology of the range of forms workers' unpaid labour is expropriated for profit.

Understanding of the Structure and Nature of Work on MTurk to Guide Future Research

Brawley Newlin Alice, Pury Cynthia L.S., Saylor Shawn, Switzer Fred S.

(Gettysburg College)

Many researchers have suggested or found that existing work-related theory does not fully generalize to gig and crowd work (e.g., Ashford et al., 2018; Brawley & Pury, 2016; Bush & Balven, 2021; Ellmer & Reichel, 2018; Kuhn & Maleki, 2017; Lemmon et al., 2020; Meijerink & Keegan, 2019; Schroeder et al., in press). Schulte et al. (2020) note that, in particular, the study of "more general characteristics of tasks are necessary within crowdwork... to understand its mechanisms" (p. 64) as they affect workers' experiences (cf. Orlikowski, 2010; Sharma, 2017, 2020), and to facilitate our understanding of this type of work.

To address this need, we contribute a two-part description of work on MTurk: (1) its structure and content (i.e., how can we meaningfully summarize this work?), and (2) the characteristics and tools used to do this work (e.g., what skills, exactly, are needed for this work?). We adopt a sociomaterial perspective by examining the entwined nature of this technology and the work (e.g., Orlikowski, 2010): rather than investigating the technology separately from its use, we study the work as it is done by incumbent MTurkers. From these findings, we propose several specific avenues for future research, with the goal of building our understanding of crowd and gig work as a whole.

Method and Results Overview

In Study 1, we conducted literature review and site observations in order to develop and validate (with N = 249 MTurkers) a framework of five types of HITs on MTurk. These five HIT types are: (1) Surveys, (2) Translation/Transcription, (3) Writing, (4) Evaluation/Feedback, and (5) Identification/Categorization HITs.

In Study 2, we conducted in-depth interviews of the experiences of and tools and characteristics used by incumbent Workers (N = 30) in doing this work; and in Study 3, we collected frequency-of-use ratings (N = 228) to identify important characteristics and tools used to do work on this platform (e.g., coding/programming, efficiency, goal setting), and to explore how these vary by type of HIT (e.g., scripts/extensions used frequently in Evaluation/Feedback HITs only).

We also identified three potential "organizational citizenship behaviors" (e.g., sharing knowledge about Requesters or HITs on forums; cf. Smith et al., 1983) and explored effects of Workers' tenure (cf. Gatewood et al. 2015) on the frequency of using various tools.

Discussion

We identify future research directions based on our findings, including that on training and development (e.g., Ellmer & Reichel, 2018); perceptions of, measurement of, and coping with job characteristics and demands (e.g., Bucher et al. 2020, Gandini 2019); work engagement and meaningfulness (e.g., Kost et al., 2018); and the work-life interface (e.g., Williams et al. 2019). For example, the “potential for minute-by-minute flexibility” (Lehdonvirta, 2017, para. 11) in this work could be examined starting with a focus on variation in completing HITs that correspond to the five HIT types identified here. This study provides a detailed understanding of the experience of a “well-known” type of gig worker, the MTurk Worker, in order to focus our efforts to understand the changing nature of work.

Beyond the dot on the map. Using multimedia and illustrations to research platform food deliveries

Popan Cosmin, Lovelace Robin, Sherwood Gonzalez Jose, Tamasan Alin, Lohan Oana, Dulamita Ionut
(Manchester Metropolitan University)

This presentation draws on preliminary data resulting from an ongoing project on the social implication of platform-based food deliveries. We use a mixed methods approach involving ethnographic work alongside creative methods comprised of graphic illustrations and multimedia interactive mapping to account for the working conditions of platform food couriers in Manchester, UK.

The work in the gig economy is characterised by opacity and alienation. Using sleek and shiny app interfaces accessible at a finger's touch on our smartphones, digital platforms effectively hide from view the intensive human labour that ultimately enables our daily instant gratifications. In the case of platform food deliveries, this hidden work is concealed behind a dot moving on and across a map, deprived of identity or history, yet invested with the luring promise of the instant delivery of a tasty and warm meal. Our relationship with workers is turned into a simple ranking and reputation system designed to regulate the performance of workers (Gandini 2016). As the possibilities for social bonds and empathy with workers are often denied to us, there are very few opportunities to get to know about the working conditions in the gig economy (Woodcock and Graham 2020).

We argue that the use of inventive methods is instrumental to the process of addressing a specific problem, as well as to change what the problem is (Lury and Wakeford 2012). We do so by using graphic illustrations and digital mapping to reveal to a broader audience the hidden labour which effectively mobilises these dots on the map. We show the individual and collective work struggles behind the opaque algorithms powering these platforms and the prevalent claims of flexibility, independence and entrepreneurship surrounding gig work. We thus follow Carruthers Thomas' (2019) contention that the practice of creating a graphic essay and multimedia storytelling enriches the process of data analysis while offering an alternative way of thinking about work in the gig economy. Additionally, comics have the potential to transform attitudes, awareness, and behaviour around social issues as they can engage non-academic audiences while working across platforms to engage younger, more visually oriented readers, and transcend cultural borders (Cardiff University 2014; Polgreen 2014).

In this presentation, we will exhibit some of the finished work as well as snapshots of the process such as sketchbooks, key texts and photographs of work in progress. The aim is to reflect on how the use of graphic illustrations and multimedia interactive mapping to describe the work of five platform food workers in Manchester can contribute to addressing the opacity and alienation in the gig economy.

Breakout Room 3

COVID-19 effects on work, employment and power

Well-being of the Health and Social Care Workforce during Covid: The role of line managers as 'border keepers' between work and non-work life.

Currie Denise

(Queen's University Belfast)

The experience of Covid 19 has upended how individuals might normally navigate the boundaries between work and non-work life (Ashforth, Kreiner, & Fugate, 2000; Clark, 2000). The pandemic has caused a 'boundary violation' (Delanoije et al, 2019) where established boundaries had to be breached to accommodate the disturbances that manifested in both home and work situations, creating shifts in how individuals negotiated the integration-segmentation continuum of work-life balance (Bulger et al, 2007). This paper draws from data collected using an online cross-sectional survey of health and social care (HSC) workers across the UK (nurses, midwives, social workers, social care workers and Allied Health Professionals). It explores how this workforce coped through the pandemic using segmentation and integration strategies, and how these strategies could be deployed to address their specific circumstances.

Data was collected over two stages of the COVID 19 pandemic, with over 3000 responses for each. The objectives of the continuing study are to determine the perspectives of the HSC workforce on the challenges they are facing during the pandemic. The surveys included measures for wellbeing (SWEMWBS; NHS Health Scotland, 2008), quality of working life (WRQOL; Easton & van Laar, 2018) and strategies for coping (Carver, 1997, Clarke et al. 2014). The survey also included qualitative questions to explore HSC workers' perspectives on employers' supports. Two online focus groups were also conducted to gain deeper insights into the HSC workers' experiences; one with managers (n=3) and one with frontline workers (n=6). We interrogated specific findings about how the HSC workforce used family-work segmentation and work-family segmentation as coping strategies and how this impacted well-being. Phase 1 of the study did not reveal significant results. In phase 2 of the study we found significant results where respondents with higher family-work segmentation scores had lower Wellbeing scores. Respondents with higher work-family segmentation scores had higher Wellbeing scores. A multiple regression analysis showed a significant decrease from Phase 1 to Phase 2 in respondents' use of work-family segmentation. There was no significant change in respondents' use of family-work segmentation. These results indicate a decreasing use of work-family segmentation as a coping strategy throughout the pandemic, yet using this strategy may lead to better wellbeing outcomes. To explain this finding, we present an analysis of the qualitative data, revealing the challenges of handling non-work circumstances alongside changes to working conditions. The analysis shows how the professional and personal experiences of frontline workers intersected and how this impacted their overall wellbeing. Responses revealed an integral role for line management as 'border keepers' particularly for limiting the 'border strength' from family to work so that individual circumstances, particularly around care giving, could be accounted for when managing workloads and schedules. The respondents revealed the benefits of having a line manager who understood and who helped to address their individual circumstances so to avoid additional stressors. The accounts demonstrate the increasing importance of inclusive cultures, where individuals feel comfortable integrating non-work lives into work when it is required, and ensuring supports remain as the pandemic continues.

Changes to employment practices in response to the Covid-19 pandemic: evidence from Danish SMEs

Shulzhenko Elena, Secchi Davide, Senderovitz Martin, Rune Hansen Kristian, Van Bakel Marian
(University of Southern Denmark)

The Covid-19 pandemic has caused radical changes to working lives globally. Companies introduced different adjustments to their employment practices in response to the regulatory restrictions of the lockdown and to changes in market conditions and the economic downturn. The range of possible HR responses in recession spans from temporary freeze of new recruitments to compulsory redundancies (Lai et al. 2016). Compared to previous economic downturns, the pandemic also caused one more response: 'Work from home'. In the sectors where it is practically feasible 'Working from home' has become a prevalent way to (try to) keep up the activities during the lockdown. The choice of HR responses in a lockdown situation has both important social and economic implications. If 'working from home' is utilized, people may keep their employment and maintain their financial and social status. Prior research shows that firms that are quick to resort to layoffs may – in the long run – be worse off financially compared to firms that attempt to hold on to their staff (Casio et al. 2020). However, little is known about how companies make decisions about HR adjustments and actions during a lockdown as well as what role the existing HR policies play in these decisions.

The study analyses the changes to work policies that SMEs in Denmark introduced in order to cope with the restrictions of the first lockdown. We focus on the question how the participation of different actors, incl. CEO, HR, line management, employees and unions, in the decisions regarding the adjustment of work policies affected employee resistance to the measures chosen. The study focuses on the first phase of the current pandemic during the Spring of 2020 and is based on a quantitative survey of approx. 250 Danish SMEs.

We are analysing the data at the moment. Preliminary findings of the survey show, among others, that the extent to which different organisational actors participated in decisions on HR adjustment, had a significant effect on 'working from home' and on both voluntary and involuntary dismissals. The findings also indicate that the degree of HR-formalization is important for the SMEs: firms with a more formal HR-policy seem to resort to dismissals to a lower extent.

Speaking about switching to work from home, if top-management was involved, the companies were less likely to introduce work from home. The involvement of HR in the decisions regarding the adjustment follows the same line as that of the top-management, rather than deviates from it. Smaller companies introduced work from home to a larger extent than larger company, which can be explained by their greater flexibility.

Wellbeing, Work-Life Balance and the Quality of Working Life in the New World of Hybrid work

Skountridaki Lila, Marks Abigail, Mallett Oliver
(University of Edinburgh, University of Stirling, Newcastle University)

Real wage suppression and underemployment are persisting trends in the UK labour market for over a decade (Blanchflower 2019). The COVID-19 pandemic one year long home-based work experience for a large portion of the UK workforce (ONS 2020) has made home-based work an appealing work arrangement to both employers and employees: from a largely 'on-papers-only' option until the pandemic, hybrid work now features as the 'future' of (desk-based) work (Walker 2021). How can the quality of working life (Warhurst and Knox 2020), however, be best promoted in the new world of hybrid work?

Our UKRI/ESRC funded working@home study highlights that the majority of workers wish to partially continue working from home. Yet, it also suggests that organisational support is crucial for workers' wellbeing and work-life balance when working at home. Repeated qualitative interviews with 80 home-workers and data from nearly 2800 responses to two UK-wide surveys, suggest that those workers who are very satisfied with the organisational IT support and support to adjust their work station at home, report higher levels of wellbeing and work-life balance. Simultaneously, our findings show that the majority of home-workers have invested in equipment, furniture, and the physical space to improve the quality of their home office (e.g. light, heating, sound and audio/visual distractions, view etc.) and, thus, the quality of their working life. These findings coupled with the potential savings that organisations will make from increased home-based work due to the reduced use of office space and increased productivity, suggest that employers have a responsibility and duty to support workers who will engage in hybrid work patterns.

At the same time, our study participants' experience of home-based work largely depends on the local infrastructure. For example, the perceived quality of the internet (a good internet connection improves the experience of home-based work) and that of transportation (expensive and unreliable transport is linked to an increased desire to work from home) are crucial factors in workers' desire and ability to engage in remote / home-based work. These findings highlight the necessity of state intervention to improve the experience of home-based work. Warhurst and Knox (2020) in their manifesto for the quality of working life make a compelling argument for establishing and monitoring minimum job quality standards overseen by a regulatory governmental authority. In the aftermath of the pandemic, which has arguably redefined the locus of work for a large portion of the workforce, there is a real danger that employers will internalise benefits of home-based work (such as increased productivity), externalise operational costs to workers (such as utility bills), and neglect the new types of support needed for wellbeing and work-life balance in hybrid work arrangements. This paper echoes Warhurst and Knox's (2020) call for minimum standards to ensure the quality of working life and suggests that the new locus of work implies that new understandings of the quality of work are necessary, if workers are to meaningfully enjoy a share in the benefits of hybrid work patterns.

Breakout Room 4

Social movements, unions, voice and activism

Addressing workplace inequalities: how effective is staff race network activism?

Hudson Maria, Hammer Anita
(Essex Business School)

Staff Race Networks (SRNs) are on the rise in the UK workplaces as structural discrimination and institutionalised racism is brought to the fore by the Black Lives Matter Campaign. SRNs provide a fertile ground for research as they represent an intersection of race, voice and activism at the workplace. Debate surrounds SRNs ability to address inequality and the possibility of SRNs as posing an alternative to unions (Healy and Oikelome, 2007). While SRNs may provide voice and representation to racialised groups at the workplace, there is an evidence gap around whether and how SRN activism is performative, engaging with workplace inequalities and making a difference to low as well as higher paid workers through emergent collective action. Addressing this research gap is timely in the context of contrasting narratives around the end of institutional and subtle racism (Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities, 2021) and continued reports of its persistence in recruitment and progression (see for example Hudson et al, 2017; The McGregor Review of Race in the Workplace, 2017).

Recent workplace research engaging with ethnicity and low wage traps across a range of employers suggests that forums such as SRNs have the potential to provide a collective voice on organisational policies and practices that might foster racial inequalities, challenging racialised barriers (Hudson et.al, 2013). Indeed, staff networks are seen by some as a new industrial relations actor in the UK (for example see Colgan and McKearney, 2012). Research engaging with other forms of networks (gender, sexual orientation) further suggests that collaboration across network groups potentially supports progressive change (Colgan, 2016; Scully, 2009).

This paper argues that SRN research needs to be informed by an anti-racist understanding of the labour market and the workplace. It will develop Virdee's (2014) concept of the racialised outsider trying to influence the activities of social movements, as race relations play out in the contemporary workplace. Engaging with the lived experience of SRN members the paper will explore the following issues:

- How inclusive SRNs are (whether they include low paid as well as higher paid ethnic minority workers, and allies).
- Reasons for joining SRNs
- Perceptions of racialized inequalities encountered by SRN members, and how these are reflected in SRN aims.
- Tactics and strategies deployed in SRN activism. For example cross network collaboration to engage with inequalities, and the enlisting of allies, and the contours of collaboration and conflict.
- Perceptions of the success of SRN activism, and factors that support it.

The paper draws upon preliminary analysis of research funded by Acas in 2021 ('work in progress'), involving the development of six case studies of SRNs in private and public sector organisations. Data collection involves focus groups with SRN members, interviews with SRN Chairs and observation of SRN meetings, as well as interviews with Diversity Managers, Race Champions, Senior Managers and Trade Unions.

Advancing in gender equity in Chilean organisations: The role of trade unions and collective bargaining

Ugarte Sebastian, Martin Caballero Angel

(Faculty of Economics and Business, Universidad de Chile)

This research seeks to expand knowledge about the role that trade unions and collective bargaining play in reducing gender differences in wage and contract arrangements in Chilean organisations. The study contributes to the debate of the influences of trade unionism and collective bargaining in social equality, particularly in gender equity, whose interest has grown in recent years (Briskin and Muller, 2011; Rubery and Johnson, 2019; Pillinger and Wintour, 2019). We assess the extent to which these regulatory bodies and institutions could contribute to equality in organisations in a national context when the prevailing regulation is still driven by a high degree of employer discretion, unions are highly fragmented, and collective bargaining is restricted to the organisational level (Sehnbruch, 2006; Ugarte, 2017). Nevertheless, this scenario interacts with a broader union renewal process (OHL, 2019), characterised by a change in trade unions' socio-demographic composition and a new gender equality agenda. In particular, women have increased their unionisation rate and leadership roles (Dirección del Trabajo, 2019), whereas collective bargaining has included new gender equity issues and clauses (Sjöberg, 2018). However, the extent to which these changes have impacted organisational (in)equalities empirically is still a scarcely explored subject.

We elaborated four main hypotheses to conduct the analysis, summarised in two propositions: (1) Trade unions in organisations predict less gender wage and contract disparities. (2) Collective bargaining arrangements predicts less gender wage and contract disparities. We used OLS to assess these propositions from the Labour Survey, an employer-employee database managed by the Labour Direction, for the years 2008, 2011, 2014, and 2019. Pay and contractual dissimilarity were measured through Duncan's indices, an adequate coefficient to measure gender inequality.

There were significant differences in gender wage and contractual equality between companies with unions and collective bargaining versus companies that do not have. In general, companies with unions and collective bargaining are more gender-equal. Collective bargaining and unions have a negative and significant effect on gender wage disparities, following institutionalist theories that emphasize the importance of regulatory institutions' to achieve equality (Hayter, 2015). Furthermore, the evidence indicates that unions and collective bargaining predict less disparity in contractual status between men and women working in an organisation. The research contributes with the evidence to assess these regulatory bodies' relevance to confront the fragmentation and precarization of work, reflected in contractual arrangements, that often penalises women's employment more intensely (Rubery, 2015). Finally, a moderation analysis indicates that both unions and collective bargaining instruments are more relevant in those companies where women are more segregated (minority)—reducing its effect when feminisation rates increase.

Understanding the role and scope of equality bargaining and women's union leadership in a context of crisis: the Chilean experience

Ugarte Sebastian, Martin Caballero Angel

(Faculty of Economics and Business, Universidad de Chile)

There is a growing academic and policy interest in the discussion on the role of Industrial Relations in achieving gender equality to improve conditions of employment (Briskin and Muller, 2011; Pillinger and Wintour, 2019; Abramo y Rangel, 2003). Trade unions and collective bargaining could play a crucial role to regulate contemporary working life matters such as the work-family balance, maternity and shared-caring policies, the gender pay gap, among others (Rubery and Johnson, 2019; OECD, 2019). The growth of female membership in trade unions would be one of the main drivers in explaining the workforce composition of the union renewal (Schnabel, 2012), which could open new paths for women's union leadership (Milner and Gregory, 2014; Kirton and Healy, 2013); and exercise an influence towards an agenda of "equality bargaining" (Dickens, 2000; Heery, 2006). Equality frames must deal with facilitative and inhibitory factors within existing opportunity structures, explaining why many processes have not reached their full potential (Kirton, 2021). These limitations or "trade-offs" are expressed in both the ability to change the union agenda and the moderation of women's leadership, which can be particularly affected in contexts of social crisis and

pandemic. In this line, the present "work-in-progress" explores the challenges of the Chilean trade union's equality frames agenda, considering three main research dimensions. First, the extent that equality frames are incorporated in collective bargaining. Second, the changing dynamics in which local union culture shapes female union leadership. Third, the impact of the pandemic and the economic crisis on equality frames and female union leaders' actions. The Chilean experience is an interesting case to analyse these challenges, at least for three reasons. Firstly, the unionisation growth since the 2000s is led by the increasing female participation, and since 2016 the unionisation rate of women is even higher than their male counterparts, shifting the insider-outsider balance (Dirección del Trabajo, 2019; Riquelme y Abarca, 2015). Secondly, although the national regulatory framework is based on a decentralised organisation-based model -which is often associated with weak institutional support for equity (Berg, 2015; Ugarte et al., 2015)- recent labour reforms have made it mandatory for women to join as union leaders and participate actively in collective bargaining. The latter can be seen as a sign of the state's commitment to union modernisation (Stuart et al., 2013). Finally, the Chilean labour market and the employment relationships have been highly stressed due to a profound social crisis in 2019 and the ongoing pandemic.

The analysis is based on 23 interviews of women union leaders from banking, retailing, and mining organisations, conducted in 2020 and 2021. These three industries were chosen for having a high degree of unionisation but divergent market realities in aspects of feminisation rates and precarious/quality working conditions, allowing rich data comparability between and within industries. The research shows how these three dimensions -negotiation content, leadership development and crisis- interact with each other, generating new challenges and "trade-offs" to develop a more progressive gender equality agenda.

Breakout Room 5

Conference Doctoral Session

Navigating the Myth of Religious Constraints: A Canadian Study of Second-Generation Immigrant Muslim Women's Experiences in Paid Work

Aslam Awish

(University of Western Ontario)

Despite their high levels of educational attainment, existing research suggests that second-generation immigrant Muslim women in Canada (the children of immigrants born in Canada) experience alarming rates of un(der)employment and poverty. Existing stereotypes assume that an unequal division of labour in Muslim households discourages women from taking part in paid work, as they are preoccupied with childcare and housework. However, research on the second-generation Muslim population is in its infancy and the challenges that are central to their work experiences remain largely unexamined. This study address this gap through qualitative in-depth interviews with 95 second-generation Muslim women participating in paid work. Participants' narratives uncover how processes of social exclusion disadvantage and marginalize these women through everyday encounters. Social exclusion takes many forms that interact and accumulate to limit Muslim women's full participation in the workplace and deny them safe working environments in which they may thrive. Occupational and workplace characteristics are also found to impact the likelihood of encountering such barriers. Additionally, interviews reveal how these women attempt to overcome the obstacles they face through formal and informal practices. These findings can help inform our understanding of the structural challenges Muslim women face at work, moving beyond simplistic stereotypes, to inform potential solutions that can improve their experiences.

Gender segregation in vocational education: the structural, the individual, the inertia

Burgess Jo

(Leeds University Business School)

The persistence of occupational gender segregation in vocational education and training is either a structural failure to realise equality in the largest sector of post-compulsory education in the UK, or a manifestation of choice and preference. This presentation intends to explore the experiences, choices and opportunities of young people. The research findings from interviews with young people in vocational education will indicate whether career decision making represents choice or is shaped by predictable patterns of gender and class. For young women, particularly, in VET the intersection of gender and class maintains disadvantage, they lack the agency of their academic peers and are concentrated in sectors that offer low financial returns and poor opportunities for progress. Addressing gender segregation in this sector of education could have significant impact upon the broader debates around occupational gender segregation and the material opportunities of young people.

Beyond the representations of choice and self-determination manifested in the neo-liberal individual, young people negotiate the challenges of an unequal and restrictive education system which replicates advantage and disadvantage. The impact of maintaining inequalities in VET is evident in the labour market, gender pay gap and poor

social mobility. Class and gender stereotypes hinder progress in equality and obscure opportunities for young people which represent rational choice such as: career options in emerging markets and sectors and the achievement of optimum financial returns for their labour. Gender blindness has been a feature of VET policy despite continual change over the past three decades.

Barriers to access formal work: A study of women street vendors in Delhi, India

Sharma Shweta

(Sheffield University Management School)

There has been a constant debate about agency and structure in social theory (Walby, 1996). However, in the context of barriers to access formal jobs by women, it becomes difficult to compartmentalise these barriers into the agency-structure dichotomy. Semi-structured interviews conducted with 105 women street vendors, from August to November 2019, in Delhi revealed that their agency was constrained and was akin to a 'forced-choice' because of their structural setting which made a chosen line of action the only possible action for these otherwise agentic beings. The impact of the structures and systemic factors on the agency of the women differed according to their age, education and marital status. However, the most prominent underlying cause of all barriers to access formal jobs was patriarchy exhibited in gender domination of men over women. Within the home, the women were restricted to work due to the cultural norms, stereotypes, and prejudices, while outside the house they are deterred to work for the fear of sexual harassment or exclusion/ discrimination based on their ethnicity or human capital endowments. A behavioural reconceptualization of agency might bridge what Stone (2007) calls the 'choice gap', that is, the disconnection between the expression of choice and the reality of constraints to work, which determines women's agency to join, continue, or quit their jobs.

Navigating the Myth of Religious Constraints: A Canadian Study of Second-Generation Immigrant Muslim Women's Experiences in Paid Work

Zapata Rodriguez Maria De Los Angeles

(Heriot-Watt University)

Despite their high levels of educational attainment, existing research suggests that second-generation immigrant Muslim women in Canada (the children of immigrants born in Canada) experience alarming rates of un(der)employment and poverty. Existing stereotypes assume that an unequal division of labour in Muslim households discourages women from taking part in paid work, as they are preoccupied with childcare and housework. However, research on the second-generation Muslim population is in its infancy and the challenges that are central to their work experiences remain largely unexamined. This study address this gap through qualitative in-depth interviews with 95 second-generation Muslim women participating in paid work. Participants' narratives uncover how processes of social exclusion disadvantage and marginalize these women through everyday encounters. Social exclusion takes many forms that interact and accumulate to limit Muslim women's full participation in the workplace and deny them safe working environments in which they may thrive. Occupational and workplace characteristics are also found to impact the likelihood of encountering such barriers. Additionally, interviews reveal how these women attempt to overcome the obstacles they face through formal and informal practices. These findings can help inform our understanding of the structural challenges Muslim women face at work, moving beyond simplistic stereotypes, to inform potential solutions that can improve their experiences.

Breakout Room 6

Dignity at work, decent work and job quality

"I just go home and vomit!". Child protection social workers' emotional wellbeing and the working environment: two uneasy bedfellows.

Poletti Alberto

(University of Bedfordshire)

In the last two decades, the public perception of the social work profession has been heavily influenced by well-publicised public inquiries into child-death tragedies (Parton, 2006; Ayre, 2001; Cooper et al, 2003; Jones, 2013; Shoesmith, 2016). In particular, the 'Baby P case' brought about an unprecedented number of reviews of both social work education and practice (DfE, 2009; Laming, 2009; Munro, 2012; Croidale-Appleby, 2014), which led to the introduction of more and more sophisticated systems of accountability and scrutiny of front-line practitioners' work. These substantial developments, alongside the ongoing uncertainty regarding public funding, are having a profound impact on the nature of the emotional responses front-line professionals' experience in their everyday practice (Whittaker & Havard, 2015; Parton, 2014). Therefore, it is no surprise that child protection social workers appear to experience a low level of job satisfaction (Coffey et al, 2004) with nearly 80% of social workers acknowledging how

work-related stress deeply impacts their ability to carry out their job competently and safely (Schraer, 2015). Issues of staff retention are also significant in child and family social work (Wiseman & Davies, 2013).

This paper will draw upon the outcome of a qualitative doctoral research project which has closely followed the emotional vicissitudes of a group of social workers of two different child protection teams (Yin, 2004), one in Italy and one in England, over a period of eighteen months. Data have been gathered through periodic interviews with six social workers (three from each team), psychoanalytically informed observations of their supervision sessions, periodic observations of team meeting discussions, and an interactive activity that involved the entire teams. The discussion will focus on the importance, for social workers, to be able to rely on an emotionally responsive working environment. Where this occurs, social workers appear to be better able to deal with the demands of their work with a sharp boost reported in their job satisfaction. Conversely, if professionals are not adequately supported within their working environment, they might be left feeling 'doubly deprived' (Henry, 1994). These emotional deprivations may adversely affect their ability to work competently and safely creating a situation whereby less resilient practitioners might identify themselves with negative aspects of their working environment. This may not only negatively affect their ability to fully appreciate the circumstances of the people they work with but also promote a sense of alienation from their work and profession. Ultimately, it might result in practitioners leaving the profession (Poletti, 2019). The voices and narratives of the research participants will be actively utilised throughout the paper to powerfully convey the 'smell of the real' (Cooper, 2009; 432) of the emotional experiences of child protection social workers. Finally, the paper will make a series of recommendations that could improve the retention of child protection social workers, foster their connectedness with their emotions and enhance the outcomes of their work.

The politics of working life and the many faces of meaningful work

Laaser Knut, Karlsson Jan

(Brandenburg University of Technology Cottbus–Senftenberg)

The interest of academics and policy makers in meaningful work (MW) increased significantly in the last decade and is likely to be further heightened in the light of the COVID-19 pandemic that sparks public and policy debates about the nature and future of work, asking questions about what is essential work and how work should be socially and economically valued, rewarded and organised in order to become more meaningful. Indeed, for over a decade management research utilizing primarily social-psychological theories and humanist approaches informed by normative concepts have controversially debated whether the nature of MW is objective or subjective, what factors contribute to meaningful work and what its implications are for workers, management and society more broadly (e.g. Bailey et al., 2018; Yeoman et al., 2019). While providing invaluable insights and discussion points, the field of MW has been characterized as 'contested'. This evaluation is grounded in the observation that theoretical and empirical approaches to MW lack a commonly accepted definition of MW, emphasizing either its subjective or objective characteristics. In this light, a robust understanding of the interplay of workplace, managerial, individual and societal factors continues to be scant. Consequently, in order to understand better in what contexts MW arises, persists, or is challenged and whether and how far meaningfulness can be engineered by the organisation, conceptual work is called for that focusses on the multi-layered objective and subjective factors of MW and their interplay. The need for sociological approaches to MW have therefore been particularly emphasized, as distinctive sociological theories of MW have been rare thus far, despite their rich heritage in exploring related themes, such as the changing meaning of work, the politics of working life and familiar constructs, such as decent work.

The presentation addresses these calls by developing a novel framework of MW that is informed by social theory, a politics of working life approach and critical realism, seeking to transcend the debate by offering a MW typology that combines objective and subjective dimensions of MW. The typology has at its core the dimensions of autonomy, dignity and recognition. The focus of the typology is explicitly on waged work and allows an acknowledgement of the politics of working life and agents creating, defending and maintaining meaningfulness against the backdrop of the 'contested terrain' of the workplace. In this way, the MW typology suggests that meaningful work is experienced at the individual and relational level, but is shaped by wider dynamics at the structural level, such as the particular characteristics of work under capitalism and the dynamics of the labour process. The presentation suggests that this MW typology can act as a complementary lens to job quality and decent work typologies.

Working class alienation: The search for agency, dignity, and communitiy both at work and within wider society

Hill Sam

(University of Bristol)

I am a part-time worker at Tesco after having been full time before the beginning of my PhD. I have held a few jobs in leisure and hospitality before taking up my current job. The experience of this work, with its zero or minimal hour-contracts, constant supervision, and imposition has led me, inspired by discussions with my colleagues, to undertake a PhD which focuses upon a central problem of working class alienation.

Here in I take the conferences themes of “Connectedness, Activism and Dignity at work in a Precarious Era” and place these within a wider context, considering how the degradation of “good work” has been coupled with the broader loss of community, dignity, and agency that the working class has faced. Each of these losses is mirrored in work and in society. For instance, worker agency has been in decline due to the further routinisation of work, as well as the decline in associations which working class people recognise as listening to, and defending, their interests. Dignity has been undermined by precarity in pay, the decline of worker benefits, and the overt-disciplinarian approach that seems to be taking hold in low-wage jobs, whilst in wider society there is a sense that working class people are under-appreciated for their efforts- despite the important role which may of them have played on the ‘front lines’ of the pandemic- because they often are at the bottom of the knowledge-meritocracy. Finally, community is in decline as many people no longer work in collaborative or creative ways, nor are able to imagine the positive development of their workplace community owing to the fact that their employers increasingly appear to make unethical decisions, do not treat them as unique human beings worthy of respect, and therefore do not seek to recognise the importance of human bonds between colleagues. In wider society, they feel peripheral, with the sense that one is ignored and under-appreciated limiting their sense of being able to engage in communal matters, or with those in other roles within our society. They are made to feel stupid and are unable to seriously engage with debates that are overly technocratic and devoid of the moral and other sentiments which are often expressed in relation to one’s hopes and desires for communal betterment.

My response to these issues is to develop a critique of contemporary society which seeks to address them in a comprehensive, philosophically rooted, manner. This is done through the synthesis of Hegel, Marx, and Alasdair Macintyre, in relation to alienation, which defines it according to the lack of community, agency, and dignity. These three components of alienation are then addressed by a combination of British Idealist principles, which maintain a focus on equal human worth and the common good, alongside the theories of English Pluralism and Ethical Socialism, which are themselves rooted in the Labour Party, and provide an alternative conception of the Fabian-style workplace and social policy than that which was adopted in the post-war era.

Breakout Room 7

Bodies and work - emotions, aesthetics, health and bodily functions at work

Ethnography in the resuscitation room: emotional labour on the front line

Kirk Kate

(University of Nottingham)

It is undeniable that the challenges facing the NHS have implications for the staff tasked with delivering care. Low rates of well-being have a direct impact on the quality of care delivered (Boorman, 2009). English nurses’ rates of stress, burnout and intention to leave the profession are among the highest in Europe and are higher than those in America (Aiken et al, 2012). Despite evidence showing the importance of positive nurse well-being, the emotional component of the role (a great influencer in well-being) (Warren, 2016; Johnson and Spector, 2007), is overlooked (Smith, 2012). An integral part of nursing is often neglected: the emotional labour of nursing.

I have applied Hochschild’s theory of emotional labour to a previously unexplored clinical speciality: emergency care. Emergency departments (EDs) are struggling to meet demand, with increasing patient attendance over the last 70 years (The King’s Fund, 2018) and intense government targets (NHS England, 2018). In spite of these challenges, and the nature of EDs, an exploration of ED nurses’ emotional labour is missing from current understanding. We know little of how the ED environment influences the management of emotion. There is also limited knowledge of how nursing specialties, such as emergency care, drive the ‘speciality-specific’ feeling rules.

The ED therefore offered a fitting case study to explore and contribute to the concept of emotional labour.

Ethnography, through an interpretivist philosophy, enabled immersion in the ED setting, gathering the lived experiences and narratives of the ED nursing team. I undertook direct and first-hand observations, using an ethnographic approach. This allowed room for the dynamism of the setting, workload and pace. Semi-structured interviews were also undertaken with ED staff and the wider ‘well-being’ team. I used two departments for a rich and illuminative dataset.

I firstly aimed to understand how the environmental, institutional and organisational dynamics of the ED instrumented the emotional labour. I found that elements of time and space were ‘moderators’ of ED nurses’ emotional labour – in essence, understanding these moderators’ integrated relevance offers the first contribution to knowledge.

Understanding the moderators of emotional labour from an organisational ‘meso-level’ perspective, in addition to the study of the more familiar micro level exploration is of interest to those outside of the case study. In particular, those

studying organisational behaviour and sociology. Secondly, I aimed to understand the feeling rules driving and underpinning this behaviour. I found that ED nurses' feeling rules were grown from the distinctive context and that four feeling rules drove their emotional labour.

This paper and subsequent presentation (in alternative presentation mode) aims to offer a snapshot of the methodological challenges of this study, exploring the highly volatile emergency setting - insight will be offered through audio stimulation, focussing on a period of observation located in the resuscitation room of a large trauma centre. It is also important to note that this presentation may also be able sit within the theme "on the front line" (as I am also a registered nurse).

Mobilised Precarities: Embodied experiences of delivery driving

Hopkins Debbie

(University of Oxford)

In recent years there has been increasing attention paid to the work of delivery drivers in terms of their employment contracts (or lack thereof) and working conditions often through a lens of the 'gig economy', and since March 2020, their status as 'essential' workers through the pandemic. In recent months, the popular press has reported on conflicts between delivery drivers and customers; with bottles of urine mistakenly delivered with Hello Fresh orders, and photographs circulated by the press of delivery drivers urinating in laybys – and described as "totally unacceptable". This is but one example of the challenges of delivery driving – particularly during a pandemic which has seen services and facilities closed. Yet urine and acts of urination can help us to think through and with delivery driver's bodies as they negotiate the challenges of work in a precarious era.

In this paper, I interrogate the mobile geographies of precarity as experienced by delivery drivers in the UK in 2021. I follow conceptualisations of precarity as lived, differentially experienced and embodied, and use worker stories to show how precarities play out 'on the ground' and 'in place' in seemingly mundane ways (i.e., through eating, urinating, sleeping). The paper questions how mobilised precarities manifest in ways that are characterised as 'non-standard' employment in relation to the 'standard' or 'male breadwinner' model. Mobile work is understood in contrasting – but often value laden – ways; to be mobile for work can indicate success and prestige (i.e., international business travel). At the same time, mobile delivery work can involve long hours, low pay and insecure contracts. Delivery driving here is used as a broader category than 'parcel delivery', 'courier', or trucker, to describe drivers who move 'stuff', using a variety of different vehicles including cars, vans and 7.5 tonne lorries¹.

While seeking to avoid romanticising delivery work, this paper draws from mobilities studies and labour geography to characterise the distinctly mobile nature of the work, and how ideas of mobility-for-work emerges in ways which are deeply classed and gendered. In discussing the mobile nature of delivery work, this paper differs from the traditional framing of work-places 'as static'. From this, I seek to contribute to a spatialised – and mobilised - theorisation of precarity (Strauss, 2018). The theoretical argument is developed through empirical material collected by delivery drivers in early 2021, with the drivers collecting visual, audio and textual material to represent their working lives. It considers different spatial scales at which experiences of mobile work play out, and foregrounds the relations between different groups of people; drivers and customers, drivers and drivers, drivers and their families, drivers and the company/management. The paper seeks to highlight the different ways that delivery work is performed, experienced and organised which points to worker agency, activism and community-building.

'If the toilets are clean in here, I will be ok': Hospitality, health and bodies at work during Covid-19

White Lauren, Jones Charlotte, Slater Jen, Pluquailec Jill

(University of Exeter, Sheffield Hallam University and University of Sheffield)

In this paper, we share reflections from 'Beers, Burgers and Bleach: Hygiene, Toilets and Hospitality in the Time of COVID-19', a research project exploring the impact of additional cleaning and the monitoring of customer toilets during a public health crisis. Toilet availability entered the news in May 2020 when the easing of UK lockdown measures led the public to venture further from home. Concerns about people using outdoor sites to relieve themselves provided a reminder of the decline in public toilet provision over the last decade, brought about by austerity (Slater and Jones 2018; White 2019). It was thus proposed that the pandemic had revealed England's 'public toilet crisis' (Elledge, 2020). These closures have made it increasingly necessary for the public to make use of private facilities as substitutes, such as toilets in pubs and cafes, whose initial re-opening in July 2020 - amidst a profusion of anxieties about hygiene, safety, and transmission risks - needed to be administered by workers. Preparing these spaces for use has required significant ongoing labour for hospitality staff, with workers required to clean the premises repeatedly throughout the day, in some cases entirely replacing the work of cleaning staff in addition to usual duties (Wood, 2020), and not always in safe and healthy environments.

This paper draws on a series of solicited work diaries and in-depth interviews with 21 UK hospitality staff. The research was conducted in the midst of localised restrictions and national lockdowns between December 2020 and April 2021. The accounts look at the ways in which these workers' employment relations and their practices of

cleaning and maintaining venues and toilets have been transformed by public health guidance. Toilets are intensely embodied spaces; they are the site in which we attend to our bodily functions and needs and, to make this possible, working bodies are required to preserve and care for the facilities. In this paper, we focus on the physical and emotional labour of the cleaning and servicing of toilets within the hospitality sector. Our findings indicate a significantly increased workload, compounded by anxieties of risk, and covid regulation and hygiene work. They also include the spatial negotiations of bodily boundaries surrounding hospitality work and the discomforts of toilet spaces. These findings demonstrate the physical and embodied impacts of such cleaning practices on precarious workers, including sore hands. Through this, we consider workers' perceptions of their environment, and particularly of toilets as sites of significant health 'risk' in need of management. Finally, as toilet scholars, we reflect on the importance of the embodied work put into the facilities' maintenance, and the extent to which working bodies are also produced or changed by labour in the toilet (Gimlin 2007; Shilling 2003, 2005; Twigg et al., 2011). This paper offers contributions into social science scholarship exploring toilets through the lens of embodied work. Further to this, it illuminates the space of the toilet as a key site within hospitality that highlights the role of bodies, inclusion and regulations of semi-public and commercialised space.

Breakout Room 8

Open Stream – Special Event

Global Labor: Economic Transformations

Gottfried Heidi

(Wayne State University)

All over the world, working men and women toil in nations or regions far from their birthplace. They clean houses, care for children and elders, and construct soccer stadiums and skyscrapers. Labor migrants build and sustain the world around us, and yet they face complex structures that constrain them, deny them rights, and force them to work without union representation. The contemporary problem of labor migrants toiling amidst heightened degrees of exploitation and lacking in rights is a considerable one. What dynamics and drivers have created a world in which such a sizeable--and rapidly growing--group toils as marginalized men and women, existing as a lower caste institutionally and juridically? What opportunities exist for migrant laborers to shape their own living and working conditions? This special session would feature four papers by noted scholars working on global labor migration. Bridget Anderson brings a temporal lens to consideration of global labor migration. Noting that temporality is often overlooked in the analysis of human migration, she will address how it shapes subjecthood and citizenship as well as the experience of work, life stages, mobility processes, regulations, and the ways all of these intersect with precarity. The other papers address themes of regulation, precarity, and possibilities for change in Asia. These papers reflect Asia's centrality as a hub of both South-South and South-North migration. International migration.

1. Matt Withers and Nicola Piper, "Decent Wages for Decent Work in Asia: Addressing the Temporality-Precarity Nexus in South-South Migration"
2. Ngai Pun, "Mapping Infrastructural Capitalism: High-Speed Rail Construction, and its Spatial and Class Conflicts in China"
3. Jenny Chan, "Buy with 1-Click: Independent Contracting and Migrant Workers in China's Last-Mile Delivery"
4. Nicola Yeates and Ross Fergusson, "Age and the Social Division of Labour: Transnational Perspectives, International Contexts"

Decent Wages for Decent Work in Asia: Addressing the Temporality-Precarity Nexus in South-South Migration

Matt Withers (Macquarie University)

Nicola Piper (Queen Mary University of London)

International migration is arguably *the* intractable development challenge of the 21st century. Significant shifts in the scale, diversity and direction of migration flows for work, education, family reunion and protection have reinvigorated the migration-development debate and commanded global policy attention. Yet, amid these unfurling migration dynamics and the tensions they produce, glaring continuities endure for some of the lowest paid and most vulnerable labor migrants working in the Global South. The most prominent South-South migration corridors are structured around a rigidly circular supply of low-wage labor between less and more developed countries in Asia and characterised by alarmingly poor working conditions and rampant violations of human and labor rights. The entrenched severity of exploitation within these international labor migration regimes undermines much of the apparent promise that migration

holds with regards to promoting development. We introduce the concept of a temporality-precarity nexus (TPN) to theorise how the coordinated rotation of a vulnerable reserve army of labor has been integral to processes of uneven development across the Global South. We then present evidence on the wages, recruitment fees and migration-related indebtedness within major migration corridors in West, East and Southeast Asia to demonstrate that an array of 'mobility costs' associated with temporary labor migration constitute an effective wage penalty for foreign workers. Our analysis suggests there is a significant disjuncture between the optimistic discourse surrounding migration, development and decent work in the Global South and evidence to support these claims. Finally, we link our discussion to the International Labour Organisation's decent work agenda and argue the need to bridge principles of 'decent work' with the realisation of 'decent wages'. To date, advocacy politics 'from below' have driven progress in this respect; equivalent advocacy 'from above' is critical in advancing more equitable labor governance within these migration corridors.

Buy with 1-Click: Independent Contracting and Migrant Workers in China's Last-Mile Delivery

Jenny Chan

(The Hong Kong Polytechnic University)

"Buy now with one click" has simplified the different stages of online shopping. E-commerce behemoths like Amazon and Alibaba have created a high-speed, high-tech logistics ecosystem through partnering with contracted or third-party delivery firms. This ethnographic research analyzes the social organization of delivery work by focusing on labor subcontracting practices. Through first-hand interviews in Beijing, the author documents the informal working conditions of male migrant workers and explores their individual and collective coping strategies to fast-delivery demands. As "independent contractors", they have to provide their own means of production at work (such as the delivery vehicle and parcel packaging materials), and face the uncertainties and risks shifted by the delivery firms. Migrant informal workers are thus doubly trapped in non-standard employment relations and an unequal citizenship regime segmented by rural/urban household registration status in China. Importantly, familial and social resources are frequently drawn upon to complete the delivery tasks, thus the emergence of a less visible and more exploitative form of unpaid homework in the downstream logistics chain. This field study will contribute to the growing debates of labor informality, migrant labor and the role of the state in employment protections in a highly competitive market environment.

Foregrounding infrastructural capitalism: the double logic of high-speed rail development, spatial injustices, and class conflicts in China

Ngai Pun

(Lingnan University, Hong Kong)

China's high-speed rail network is an epochal project signifying the advent of infrastructural capitalism in the age of monopoly capital. As a distinctive form of geographies of capitalism, China's infrastructure projects serve socio-techno, spatial-economic and geopolitical purposes to rescue the preceding economic crisis since 2008 and to further expand and consolidate China's territorial power. To conceptualize the capitalist dynamics of the contemporary moment as infrastructural capitalism and their relationship to social and labour conflicts, this paper moves beyond a dichotomous constellation of the logic of capital and the territorial logic of power, and argues that these two logics, in the context of China, are not only closely intertwined, but also work as a double logic attempting to resolve the economic crisis and ensure China's subsequent development. In this article, we argue that the Chinese spatial economic system is not an alternative to capitalism but, at best, is a variegated form of capitalism, which we call infrastructural capitalism—a reaction to neoliberal capitalism shaped largely by the dual logic of territorial power and capital. Contributing to illustrations of the dialectical relationship between the geographies of capitalism and labour geographies, this article highlights the political role of the infrastructural projects in creating invisible social contradictions, enabling a wide array of affected working-class masses to take individual and collective actions.

Age and the social division of labour: transnational perspectives, international contexts

Nicola Yeates, Ross Fergusson

(The Open University, UK)

This paper concerns the social division of labour in early working lives in relation to on-going processes of labour restructuring worldwide. We distinguish between social divisions of age that separate young people (15–24-year-olds) from adults (25-year-olds +) as well as those that differentiate among young people within the youth cohort. Through a critical re-reading of expansive literatures on the globalisation of production, global 'assembly lines', global labour forces, labour market restructuring and social policy, we make connections across data and literatures that have not hitherto given systematic consideration to young people, but which, taken together, provide key insights into how young members of the workforce are re-positioned as 'flexible factors of production' within the on-going restructuring of the world economy and the significance of (young) age as a key social division of global labour. We draw out points of connection between globalising production and global youth labour forces and discuss how social divisions of labour revolving around (young) age are being reconfigured.

Paper Session 2

Wednesday, 25 August 2021

11:30 - 13:00

Breakout Room 1

Insecurity, precarity and peripheralisation

The age of precarious work: Policy-making and its implications

Knox Angela, Ainsworth Susan

(University of Sydney)

Precarious work has been described as insecure, uncertain and often low paid (Kalleberg 2018). Growth in precarious work, including forms of temporary, zero hours and gig work, is increasing. In UK, around 3.7m workers have insecure contracts (TUC 2019), with nearly one million workers on zero-hours contracts; a significant increase over the last decade (ONS 2020). In Australia, around 33 per cent of employees were temporary in 2015 and non-standard work accounted for almost half the workforce in 2018 (Ai Group 2018).

Precarious work is associated with negative outcomes, including financial insecurity, deterioration in health, and in-work poverty (Quinlan and Bohle 2015). Precarity and its effects also disproportionately impact younger workers. In Australia, workers aged 15-24 are more likely to be in precarious jobs than those aged over 25 (ABS 2020). Similarly, in other developed countries young workers face difficulties gaining secure career-focused jobs and risk becoming trapped in a cycle of precarious, 'dead end' jobs (O'Reilly et al. 2019). These effects are felt in the short term and accumulate, generating longer-term economic, social/health problems.

Subsequently, calls for Governments to develop targeted policy responses are increasing (OECD 2018). However, policy-making is "not just a matter of finding acceptable solutions for preconceived problems" (Hajer 1995:2), it affects "the future shap[e] of collective life" (Kögl and Kurze 2013:63). Drawing on a Government Inquiry, we use discourse analysis to explore how younger workers are depicted in present and future labour markets, examining their experiences of insecurity, and responses constructed to address such challenges. We explore how discourse influences the policy debate about younger workers in the contemporary and (imagined) future labour market.

Our research uses an Australian Government Inquiry examining the Future of Work and Workers to "inquire and report on the impact of technological and other change in work and workers in Australia" (Senate 2018) including: job security, earnings, inequality, institutions and regulations. It encompasses 163 separate submissions, eight public hearings, and a final report. We systematically analysed all material to explore knowledge claims constructed by actors and how they are discursively supported, focusing on the following questions: How are younger workers depicted in present and future labour markets? How is insecurity and related challenges portrayed among younger workers? What responses are constructed to address these challenges? What impact does this discourse have on the final report's recommendations?

Our findings reveal overly simplistic, individualistic constructions of younger workers' experiences of precarious work and how they could be addressed through policy-making. There is little explicit recognition of the cumulative and interactive effects of precarious work over the life course, or their subsequent implications, including attention to the temporal dimensions of age. Overall, our research highlights the difficulties policy-makers have in thinking through the consequences of current precarity, imagining alternatives to present arrangements and how this could affect the prospects of younger (and future older) workers.

How does precarious employment affect mental health? Findings of a thematic synthesis of qualitative evidence.

Irvine Annie, Rose Nikolas

(ESRC Centre for Society and Mental Health, King's College London)

This paper will present the findings of a scoping review and synthesis of qualitative research on the relationship between precarious employment and mental health. Quantitative research on this topic is plentiful but presents inconsistent results, indicating a mediating effect of sociodemographic and contextual factors. Synthesis of qualitative evidence offers a deeper understanding of the situated experience of precarious work, and the complex and contingent relationships between employment status, mental health and broader social wellbeing.

The review was conducted according to JBI guidance for scoping reviews (Peters et al., 2020). Search parameters were primary qualitative studies conducted within western economies from 1980 to present day, published in English.

The conceptualisation of precarious employment centred on insecure forms of work, namely temporary agency, fixed-term, casual, zero-hours and gig work. Mental health was conceptualised broadly, to include clinically specified conditions, stress and subjective psychosocial wellbeing. Searches were conducted 24-25 November 2020 in the databases Proquest, OVID and Web of Science. Database searches returned 3,798 results. An iterative screening process reduced this to a core set of 34 items, reporting 31 unique studies.

A thematic synthesis of findings revealed four main themes: financial instability, temporal uncertainty, marginal status and employment insecurity. Financial instability was prominent; beyond overall income level, stress and anxiety resulted from complex budgeting decisions of managing uncertain income schedules, both in the short and longer term. However, other aspects of precarious employment affected mental health, notably temporal uncertainty and the significant socio-relational consequences that followed. Studies also revealed common experiences of marginalisation among precarious employees, with workers feeling undervalued, socially excluded and exploited within the workplace. Fragmented and transient employment experiences also impeded career progression, skill development and the experience of positive work identity and job satisfaction. Qualitative research also illuminated the behavioural responses to insecurity that compound stress and distress. Overwork, presenteeism, tolerance of poor conditions, coupled with the constant search for work, led to physical and emotional exhaustion, familial tensions and conflict. Overall, extant qualitative research illuminates how insecure employment entails multiple and interrelated consequences at the economic, socio-relational, behavioural and physical levels, all of which contribute to negative mental health impacts.

The review makes both theoretical and practical contributions, offering an advancement on existing conceptual models of the relationship between precarious employment and mental health, and an accessible starting point to consider potential points of intervention for social policy, as will be discussed during the presentation. Findings indicate that solutions lie primarily within social security policy, employer practices and workplace relations, rather than mental health policy or psychological treatment services. The pathway from precarious employment to mental distress has clear social and economic roots, and it is there – rather than in mental health services – that primary efforts must be focused.

Delivering security service: ‘professionalism’, precarity, and identity in the private security industry

den Outer Birgit

(Oxford Brookes University)

Nearing data collection completion, my PhD research explores professionalism and identity in the UK-based private security industry. Informed by the literatures on professionalization (Evetts 2013; Muzio & Kirkpatrick 2011), professional identity (Ibarra and Barabalescu 2010; Lund 2013), and identity work (Brown 2015), I collect identity talk (Alvesson and Willmott 2002; Ybema et al. 2009) from a range of sources. The aim of my analyses is to make visible, first, the ways in which broader ideologies and market-forces around (in)security and threat shape professional security identities; and second, the part social actors’ accounts play in construction of realities (Watson 2008), i.e. the professionalization of private security.

The tremendous growth of the UK-based private security sector is often attributed to the end of overseas deployment of the British army, austerity in the public sector, and home-grown threats, including terrorism. Professionalization has expanded rapidly since the founding of the Security Industry Authority (SIA) in the early 2000s. Reporting to the Home Office, this non-departmental public body is tasked with “ensuring that only fit and proper people and organisations deliver regulated private security services” (SIA Website). There are numerous professional bodies, certifying organizations, NGOs, and training and development providers, including a variety of university degrees. During the pandemic, frontline security staff were recognised as key workers. However, challenges to professionalization are numerous: the industry seems fundamentally gendered (it is estimated that 90% of security staff are male, e.g. SIA, 2015), providing mostly insecure jobs on low wages for on the ground security staff, and offering little in terms of career structure. Additionally, there are multiple discourses as to what counts as security expertise (e.g. Lund 2013), with ‘security’ itself referred to as an elusive notion (e.g. Kirsch 2016)

Broadly located in an interpretivist paradigm, my research collects qualitative data from a range of sources: trade magazines, professional bodies, governance organizations and policy documents, and qualitative interviews. With 25 of the 30 interviews completed, interviewees occupy a variety of roles, and career histories include government, law enforcement, journalism, and training; 10 participants are ‘on the ground’ security staff. Interview participants were asked to talk about their experiences of private security work, issues of professionalization, and their perspectives of (in)security more broadly.

I propose the notion of ‘professionalism’ – the art or manner of being professional, which, in the light of limited clear career paths and formal recognition, draws on both past working lives, and (real or imagined) external threat to construe security identities. Building on Brown’s (2017) development of the concept of ‘identity work’, professionalism work is construed as taking place on a continuum between polar opposites. Identified in my analyses so far include diversification/opportunity versus stuck-ness; invisibility versus ‘first-on-the-scene’; old, masculine jobs versus new,

feminized careers; violence and excitement versus uneventful everyday; highly skillful labour versus 'can't do anything else'. My preliminary proposition is that professionalization accounts and the development of 'professionalism' lend a helping hand to legitimisation of the need for security, even though precarity of notably frontline job roles remains.

Breakout Room 2

Dignity at work, decent work and job quality

The Dignity of Working Female Migrants from Bangladesh

Sambajee Pratima, Scolarios Dora

(University of Strathclyde)

Achieving a fully dignified work experience can be more challenging for those whose jobs may not offer typical qualities associated with workplace dignity (Hodson, 2001). The last two decades have seen many developing countries become destinations to more than one-third of international migrants in the world (OECD, 2018) with increasing immigration from poorer countries (Bakewell, 2009). This phenomenon, also known as south-south migration, has created a job market for poor, uneducated rural women in the ready-made garment industry. With Western economies moving their production facilities and industry to areas of the world with plentiful cheap labour and less regulated governments, these working females are now victims of some of the worst cases of occupational unwellness (Dale and Burrell, 2014; Akhter et al., 2017). Studies found that during the migration journey, female migrants are systemically marginalized (Reza et al., 2019; Akhter et al., 2017; Arnold and Bowie, 2003); are absent from mainstream health policy discourses in host countries (Jamil and Kumar, 2020; Sambajee et al., 2019; Reza et al., 2019); are victims of suppressed human rights (Sookrajowa and Joson, 2018) and suffer from depression and other mental health issues (Kuhn et al., 2020; Akhter et al., 2017). It is claimed that dignity can be sensed when threatened or absent (Sayer, 2011; Thomas and Lucas, 2019). The paper presents findings from interviews held with 14 female migrants from Bangladesh working in the garment's industry of Mauritius. It uses autonomy as an important dimension of dignity (Lamont, 2009; Yeoman, 2014; Hodson and Roscigno, 2004) to explore how working female migrants negotiate and redefine dignity in their work. This theoretical framing allows for a deeper understanding of how working female migrants maintain self and relational dignity in the migration journey. This dialectic of autonomy is symbolic that an individual has dignity by virtue of being human (inherent dignity) and at the same time, dignity can be earned through actions that are worthy of respect by oneself and others (Hodson, 2001; Hodson and Roscigno, 2004; Thomas and Lucas, 2019). The findings reveal that female migrants' absence through their roles as wives, mothers and homemakers leads to complex emotional and affective ruptures together with a sense of guilt. The feeling of self-worth is reinstated by rethinking the meaningfulness of their work such as being able to take responsibility of others, ensuring others have a better future, feeling trusted by one's family, becoming self-reliant, remembering and keeping in touch with family, putting one's duties first, keeping moral standards through spirituality and following religious values, and obeying the rules. These thought processes allow them to find dignity in their work but also imposes an additional emotional labour of caring and nurturing the family left-behind.

'It's something that you should go to HR about': The Role of Social Interactions and Banter on Career Progression for Women in Public Relations, Advertising and Journalism

Topic Martina

(Leeds Beckett University)

The study explores the office culture in the communications industry in England (journalism, advertising, public relations) with a particular emphasis on the women's perceptions of the office culture (social interactions and banter). Studies on women in journalism show that women have to merge to masculine newsrooms and become 'blokish' to succeed (Mills, 2014; 2017; Topić, 2018). While some women can embrace masculine identities and merge into men's way of doing things, including engaging in masculine banter and doing things the way the men do, many women are unable to do this and thus fall off the ladder and end up leaving the profession. I have conducted 41 interviews with women from advertising, 24 interviews with women from public relations and 20 interviews with women from journalism. I am using Bourdieu's (2007) habitus theory and the Difference Approach in feminism (Tannen, 1995; 1990; 1986; Yule, 2006) to argue that organisations are masculine habitus where women who want to succeed have to embrace characteristics usually ascribed to men.

While this paper derives from the programme of three different projects I have designed, led and implemented since 2018, and the projects have analysed lived experiences, office culture and leadership, in this paper, I am focusing on the office culture and masculine habitus across three industries to show how women in three industries negotiate and manage their feminine identities and what structural barriers women in communications industries face. The research particularly looks at the role of early socialisation in being able to interact in offices and the impact of office culture on

career progression. I am particularly focusing on social interactions and banter in offices and its link with exclusions and career barriers.

Findings show that across three industries women face masculinities and the so-called 'boys clubs', which result in exclusion from business decisions and career barriers. This is in large part perpetuated with gendered social interactions, which often results in segregation in offices and banter. However, there are differences between industries. For example, whilst women have to merge and become 'blokish' in journalism to succeed (and if they succeed, they are usually as successful as men), this is not always the case in public relations (where women are called 'comms girls' and PR labelled as 'fluffy') or advertising (where women face open sexism, sexual harassment and are often openly told they cannot do certain aspects of job because they are not good enough as women), however, the data indicates that even in these two industries women who embrace masculinities fare and succeed better and that communications industry in England functions as a masculine habitus.

Paper analysing lived experiences from all 3 projects have been recently presented at the annual BSA conference. This is not a repeated presentation though, as I am looking at the office culture with a focus on banter and social interactions here.

Breakout Room 3

COVID-19 effects on work, employment and power

Diversity management: the need for an intersectional approach in getting at the new inequalities prompted by COVID-19 driven working from home

Parry Jane, Tochia Chira
(University of Southampton)

The rapid shift to entirely home-based workforces during the COVID-19 lockdown has necessitated organisational and individual adaptation on a multitude of fronts. A significant point of learning for managers has been around absorbing knowledge about staff's unique circumstances, and providing support and work redesign around that: labour that was vital in order to maximise productivity and to protect worker well-being during the pandemic. In considering these issues, we draw upon our ESRC-funded research, *Work After Lockdown* (Parry et al., 2021), which used a mixed methods approach focusing on the Professional, Scientific and Technical (PST) and Public Administration and Defence (PAD) sectors, which together represent 1 in 7 of all UK jobs. These sectors offer diverse insights for managerial theory, PST having a higher than average percentage of white-collar desk-based jobs, potentially suitable for adaptation to working from home, while PAD has a high proportion of key workers and mixed workforces, where complicated work spaces and working patterns are, and will increasingly be, in operation. The dataset upon which this analysis is based comprises 1,035 survey responses and 38 qualitative interviews across four case study organisations.

We will utilise intersectional feminist theory (Atewologun et al., 2016; McCall, 2015) in our analysis to uncover the meaningful clusters of power and privilege that have been brought into relief by lockdown-enforced working from home. This offers new insight for diversity management, which had previously focused on protected characteristics, but in which knowledge about hidden differences, such as family circumstances and mental illness, and how these intersect with other characteristics, had been limited. The pandemic provides an opportunity for pre-existing approaches to diversity management (Avery & McKay, 2010; Kulik, 2014; Tuan et al., 2019) to be refined with this more nuanced knowledge about hidden aspects of workforce diversity, and how they complicate other aspects of inequality. We argue too that intersectionality will offer significant valuing in informing the new managerial strategies in the post-pandemic context of hybrid working that reflect the dynamic needs of employees drawing more heavily upon flexible working arrangements. Insight into complex workforce needs will be ever-more relevant, as the flexible working arrangements mobilised during lockdown are combined with more variations around space and collegial interaction. The unfolding labour market context provides a unique opportunity to formulate more responsive managerial responses to complex and dynamic workforce inequalities.

Managing family and flexible work during Covid-19: The changing sense of entitlement?

Adamson Maria, Beauregard, T.A, Lewis, S.
(Queen Mary University of London, Birkbeck University of London, Middlesex University)

The Covid-19 crisis has had a significant impact in how we do our work and manage our family and careers. This paper, which is a 'work in progress' seeks to understand how individuals' experiences of managing work and family throughout this pandemic have shaped the ways in which they think about work, family and their careers. The paper draws on forty interviews with UK-based male and female managers and employees with children under the age of 18, who have worked and managed childcare throughout the pandemic. While we found significant variations in the experiences of our interviewees depending on the industry, nature of the job, number of children and household

arrangements (e.g. full-time vs part-time workers, or whether both partners worked from home or one was going out to work), our findings indicate that one of the effects of the pandemic for both men and women was the increased 'sense of entitlement' (Lewis, 1997) in relation to their attitudes in asking for flexible work as well as disclosing their family circumstances; while there were slight variations in how this manifested, this was the case for both fathers and mothers. Our analysis outlines a range of factors that may have shaped this process, suggesting that this was partially due to the collectivity of the experiences, the experiences of the increased visibility of family life during remote working, and the perceived change of onus to prove the impossibility of remote work on the employer. Notwithstanding these changes, we also found that there is a significant variation in parents' perceptions of potential change in organisational policy and work demands going forwards, which poses a question of the extent of shift in work regimes that may come as a result of the pandemic. Our findings develop further the notion of 'entitlement' (Lewis, 1997) among employed parents regarding access to family friendly and/or flexible working and personal career advancement.

Mind the gender gap: COVID-19 lockdown effects on gender differences in research

Torre Margarita, Ucar Inaki, Elias Antonio

(University Carlos III of Madrid)

Women under-representation in scientific publications is well established in the literature. Despite their growing presence in all areas women continue to publish less than men, even in fields where they are not a minority. Here, we contend that the process towards parity could be further slowed down as a result of COVID-19.

This health emergency has completely interrupted social and economic activities in most countries, where both paid and unpaid work were deeply reshaped. Regarding scientific research, short-term analyses on COVID-19 suggest a decrease in female productivity among academics during the months of confinement. Descriptive studies on submissions to preprint servers indicate that female academics are posting fewer preprints and starting fewer research projects than their male peers. Yet, empirical evidence is still very limited both in time scope and depth of analysis.

In this work, we model the evolution of the gender gap in preprint submissions from March 2017 to May 2020 to measure the impact of COVID-19. Specifically, we examine a total of 309021 research articles deposited in 5 major repositories: arXiv, MedRxiv, BioRxiv, PsyArXiv and SocArXiv. Our research contributes to prior studies in several ways. First, previous analyses largely neglect long-term trends in gender attitudes towards open access over time. To overcome this limitation, we examine the trends in preprint submissions from 2017 to 2020, which allows us to discern what part of the observed change in 2020 corresponds to the effect of lockdown and social distancing. Second, our analysis covers a total of 10 major academic fields and 235 subfields. This level of disaggregation is crucial to avoid incurring a Simpson's paradox, where group trends disappear or reverse when data is aggregated. Finally, unlike existing analyses, we examine whether patterns of authorship between men and women vary among solo authors, first authors, and last authors. It is common practice across many areas that the first author is the person who contributed most to the work and receives most credit. Therefore, given the asymmetric share of domestic responsibilities during confinement, we expect a decrease of females as first authors as well as solo authors, the two positions requiring most intensive research work. This might be particularly noticeable in areas of knowledge where women have recently joined, since young female academics are more likely to have kids and experience the caregiver burden. As for the rest of authorship positions, expectations before lockdown are not so clear.

Current differences in productivity levels might result in higher rates of gender inequality in the next few years, particularly in high-skilled occupations where promotion tracks, and human capital accumulation are crucial during early career years. Academics -but also executives and other professional workers- often work in up-or-out environments, where early productivity falls often leads to job loss. Therefore, assessing the magnitude and scope of the current gap in academic production is crucial to design and implement effective actions that prevent a dramatic increase of gender inequality in future recruitment and promotion processes in academic work.

One step forward, two steps back: Gender impacts of Covid-19 for working women

O'sullivan Maeve*, Nata Duvvury**, Aileen Murphy*, Edel Walsh*

(University College Cork, Centre for Global Women's Studies, NUI Galway **)*

Context

The impact of Covid-19 is likely to have both short and long-term consequences on every aspect of our lives including job, livelihoods and health. While fatality rates are higher for men, the socio-economic implications are more severe for women (OECD, 2020). In addition, the pandemic has further eroded progress towards gender equality, setting the gender equality agenda on a retrograde path. Most countries are experiencing a deep recession and as many as 255 million full-time jobs may have been lost globally in 2020, up to four times more than were lost during the 2009 global financial crisis (ILO, 2021). However, the impact of the pandemic is not felt equally. According to Madgavkar et al. (2020), women's jobs are 1.8 times more vulnerable to this crisis compared to males. To put this in context, women represent 39 percent of the global workforce but account for 54 percent of overall job losses.

In a European context, women are more likely than men to work in occupations where there is a high risk of COVID-19 infection such as the health and social work sector, where 80% of workers are women (OECD, 2020). In addition, women are more vulnerable to the negative economic impact of the crisis, partly due to the fact that 31% of women in the EU work part-time, compared to 9% of men (Eurostat, 2020). Women, young people and migrants in low-paid and low skill sectors have dominated COVID-19 related job losses and are at greatest risk of in-work poverty.

Purpose of the research

In order to better understand how the pandemic has affected women in the short-term, this research aims to explore the gender impacts of the pandemic across Europe for women who remained working throughout, those who were furloughed and those who completely withdrew from work. Each of these trajectories have implications for women's future well-being and the quest for gender equality.

Research questions

This research aims to unpack the gendered impacts of the pandemic across the EU by exploring the following questions.

1. How has the pandemic impacted upon European labour markets and what does this mean for women and gender equality?
2. Which specific challenges has the pandemic produced for women workers differentiated by class, ethnicity and age?
3. Do these challenges differ by country, age, employment status, occupations?

Design/methodology/approach

Using data from the European Labour Force survey 2020, this paper employs regression analyses techniques to interrogate the retrospective experiences of COVID-19 on women's work and to explore the likely longer-term consequences of the pandemic on continued female labour force participation.

Findings

This study adds to our knowledge of female labour force participation in the EU by unpacking the nature of this participation in addition to exploring the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on this heterogeneous cohort. Specifically, new evidence is presented, highlighting the worrying and retrograde impact which this crisis is having on gender equality.

Breakout Room 4

Migrant work, employment and racialised identities

“This isn't forever for me”: Constructing the employability of migrant gig workers in Norway and Sweden

Newlands Gemma

(University of Amsterdam and BI Norwegian Business School)

Although transnational migration is often motivated by a desire for greater social and economic opportunities, many migrants experience a sharp decline in their employability on arrival. Information asymmetry regarding local job prospects, imperfect portability of qualifications, and a lack of host country language skills combine to reduce migrants' employability. Due to lower entry requirements, rapid recruitment procedures, and the promise of steady income, platform-mediated gig work has become a common labour market entry point for new migrants. While on-demand gig work comes with its own precarities and risks, research has shown that many workers prefer gig-work to other forms of low-wage employment, such as in retail or fast food service.

Apart from a few empirical studies which address migration and gig work in conjunction, the majority of research on the still nascent topic of platform-mediated gig work focuses on micro-level concerns such as the labour process, managerial structures, and worker motivations. Dominant representations of gig work are also largely micro-temporal, focusing on the immediacy of labour management processes and income gains. Indeed, a near-universal expectation among workers is that gig work will be undertaken short-term, rather than as the first step of a longer gig-career. While a limited temporal attachment to gig work often functions as a coping mechanism, enabling workers to focus on securing more stable work, it can also restrict workers' interest in improving working conditions or taking part in industrial action.

Regardless, gig work needs to be examined also from a longer-term perspective, particularly since gig work is often temporally situated at the start of many migrants' entry into a new job market. Following the entrapment hypothesis, gig work not only offers migrants limited opportunities to develop market-relevant skills but can also act as a negative market signal to potential employers regarding the worker's productivity or employability. Cognisant of how migrant workers' own imagined futures intersect with their structural positioning, I therefore explore how gig work can have a destabilising effect on migrant employability.

In this article, I draw on 37 semi-structured interviews with migrant couriers working for the food-delivery platform Foodora across Norway and Sweden. To date, international migration into Norway and Sweden has been fuelled by ideals of Nordic exceptionalism and egalitarianism. As universalistic welfare states, both countries are distinguished by high job quality and worker protections. However, although increasingly diverse, Nordic countries have high levels of ethnic segregation and large native-migrant employment differentials.

I show how gig work offers only a weak stepping stone into Nordic labour markets, as a result of low occupational prestige, a labour process adverse to developing local language skills, and an organisational culture which disincentivises workers from exerting their labour rights on a full and equal basis. However, I also explore how migrants' short-term orientation to gig work enables them to frame the work relationship as profitably extractive. Workers can draw what they need from the company in terms of immediate financial rewards, while minimising personal investment into occupational identification or workplace improvement.

Where nationalism meets class formation: hiring discrimination against applicants with a migration background by Dutch municipalities

Siebers Hans

(Tilburg University)

Hiring discrimination (Pager and Shepherd 2008) against migrant people has been documented and demonstrated extensively (Baert, 2018; Riach and Rich, 2002; Zschirnt and Ruedin, 2016). The literature focuses particularly on forms of discrimination, including taste-based and statistical discrimination (Birkelund et al., 2020; Midtbøen, 2014). However, much less is known about the factors and mechanisms that actually produce this discrimination (Gaddis, 2019; Midtbøen, 2014; Reskin, 2003).

In 2018 and 2019, we studied hiring processes of four Dutch municipal organisations by way of a questionnaire among selectors (N = 551), a questionnaire among migrant and non-migrant applicants (N = 751) as well as 48 interviews with selectors, migrant and non-migrant applicants. Findings showed that these municipalities discriminate against applicants with a migration background. One factor and one mechanism are responsible for this discrimination.

Factor: This discrimination is driven by Dutch nationalism. Both in its previous multicultural form and in its current ethno-nationalist form, it classifies people with a migration background as outsiders based on origin and assumed cultural differences. This othering reduces the chances for applicants with a migration background to be hired.

Mechanism: Processes of class formation allow nationalism to become operational in hiring. As gatekeepers of class, selectors assess applicants' disposal of cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1984, 1986), i.e. being 'enthusiastic', 'energetic' and 'motivated'. Due to insecurity stemming from nationalism, migrant applicants are less successful to profile themselves on those job-unrelated and non-functional requirements and thus tend to be rejected as applicants. These findings provide an original contribution to the literature.

Pentecostal migrant women entrepreneurs doing identity work: complying and contesting faith and neoliberal subjectivities in the UK

Villares-Varela Maria, Sheringham Olivia

(University of Southampton)

This paper critically analyses how migrant women entrepreneurs of Pentecostal faith do identity work whilst navigating their entrepreneurial journeys against the backdrop of neoliberal Britain. Pentecostalism is the fastest growing Christian denomination in the UK and is particularly popular amongst migrant communities of African, Caribbean and Latin American origins. Pentecostalism is part of Charismatic Christian movements, and central to this faith is the so-called 'prosperity gospel', which signals that 'God wants all believers to be rich, healthy and successful' (Hunt, 2000 in Haynes, 2013, p. 85). Within these values, Pentecostalism is a particular relevant lens to study migrant entrepreneurship since it encourages entrepreneurship amongst its members and, as Grier (2013) puts it 'through Pentecostalism ethnic minorities are able to re-educate the community to the requirements of capitalism' (Grier, 2013, p. 244).

Drawing on 19 in-depth interviews with business owners who are members of Pentecostal congregations and pastors of these churches, we argue that women entrepreneurs simultaneously comply and contest religious norms and values in their entrepreneurial journeys by displaying narratives of gendered submission in the household whilst gaining empowerment as rightful business owners. Whilst complying with traditional familial structures where collective strategies follow the husband's/patriarch's goals and realisation, emphasis on education and on self-betterment allows women to accommodate and succeed in their entrepreneurial journeys. Moreover, their religious identity and values seem to aid becoming an apt neoliberal subject. The focus on self-betterment, individual trajectories and wealth/health of Pentecostal denominations seems to be accommodated within some of broad characteristics of neoliberal subjectivities. Our article contributes to ongoing debates on the identity work of entrepreneurs (Marlow and McAdam, 2015; Watson, 2009), the study of gender and migrant entrepreneurship (Essers

and Benschop, 2009; Villares-Varela, 2018), and the intersection between religion and entrepreneurship (Balog et al., 2014; Neubert et al., 2017).

Hard exterior, soft interior: The adaption of skilled immigration selection to contemporary notions of skill

Wright Chris, Boucher Anna
(University of Sydney)

Governments and employers in liberal market economies have relied more extensively upon immigration as a source of broader labour market skills in recent years. However, there has been limited acknowledgement within academic studies of the growing importance of this relationship between immigration and skill. This paper addresses this gap by drawing together disparate areas of theory to address the following research question: to what extent are 'soft skills' a selection criterion in skilled immigration selection policies traditionally focused on 'hard skills'?

The paper analyses skilled immigration selection in Australia and considers the relative balance between hard skills, which are the formal basis for selection, and soft skills. It draws upon analysis of employer survey data and regulatory analysis of four major skilled immigration sub-visas (the Skilled Independent Visa, the Skilled Employer Sponsored Scheme, the Temporary Skills Shortage Visa and the Global Talent Visa) to consider the ways in which soft skills have become embedded within skilled immigration selection, and the benefits and disadvantages of such an approach. We critically analyse the shifts in the way 'skill' is conceived within these four major visa sub-classes and consider the implications for transparency and fairness in selection, diversity and the relative power distribution between employers and employees.

The paper addresses important gaps in the industrial relations and skills literatures relating to the role of immigration policy and especially the importance placed on competencies and soft skills. We argue that hard skills are often necessary but insufficient for migrants to gain skilled entry into Australia, especially when considered against the backdrop of recent changes to policy and planning levels. Australian skilled immigration policy has increasingly focused upon 'soft skills', in particular the prior relationship between employer sponsor and employee that is cultivated through job offers. As such, we characterise Australian skilled immigration policy as having a hard exterior with a soft interior with the extent of this characterisation varying across visa classes. These findings are theoretically important for understanding skilled immigrant selection in other countries beyond the exemplar of Australia to other liberal market economies including the UK.

Breakout Room 5

Conference Doctoral Session

Investigating cognitive adaptability in new workplace cultures with the Imitation Game

Stephen Katherine
(Edinburgh Napier University)

This paper discusses a new methodology in investigating cognitive adaptability, defined as "the ability to effectively and appropriately evolve or adapt decision policies given feedback from the environmental context in which cognitive processing is embedded" (Haynie et al, 2012). Cognitive adaptability is an example of a 'metaskill' – a practical application of metacognitive abilities. Metaskills are foundational in workers successfully negotiating evolving and precarious labour markets. Workers entering new workplace environments are exposed to multiple inputs at once; these can be either explicit or tacit. Tacit knowledge sharing in workplaces has been shown to require trust, as well as a practical competence. It may not be possible to make totally explicit this type of knowledge. However, practical exercises could 1) unveil existing levels of cognitive adaptability to deal with its acquisition, and 2) examine expectations placed upon new workers. The Imitation Game (Collins and Evans, 2014) is a methodological formalisation of a parlour game which seeks to investigate expressions and expectations of tacit knowledge by asking an expert judge to determine which of two participants is an 'outsider'. This paper evaluates the deployment of this method with Scottish Apprentices to determine workers' application of cognitive adaptability when entering new workplace cultures.

Examining the social implications of platform-mediated care work

Khan Maria Hameed
(Queensland University of Technology)

Domestic care work has historically been an unregulated and informal sector, plagued with precarious, indecent and exploitative work conditions (Blackett, 2011; England et al., 2002). Serviced by a predominantly female workforce, often from socially disadvantaged and marginalized backgrounds, the domestic care work sector is nefarious for producing structural, social and gendered inequalities (Charlesworth et al., 2015; Charlesworth and Malone, 2017;

Tomei and Belser, 2011). However, a recent emergence of digital platforms to organize care work has disrupted the traditional care work environment, and arguably created opportunities which could mitigate existing deficits in work conditions in domestic care work (Flanagan, 2019; Ticona and Mateescu, 2018; Trojansky, 2020). As the extant literature on platform mediated work has mostly focused on sectors such as ride-hailing, transport and micro-tasking (Churchill and Craig, 2019; Goods et al., 2019; Schor, 2017), there remains limited research of the social implications of digital platform-mediated work for domestic care workers. This study aims to understand the extent to which organizing work through digital platforms in the domestic care work sector (re)produces social and structural inequalities. A qualitative methodological framework is proposed to explore the organization of work through digital platforms, by analyzing platform website features and conducting interviews with care workers. The data will highlight the benefits and challenges of platform-mediated care work and identify the extent of decent work conditions created by using platforms. Collectively, these insights will advance an understanding of how digital platforms mitigate or perpetuate existing inequalities in the domestic care sector.

Uneven development: The case of the coconut value chain in Vietnam

Nguyen Thu Thao
(Cardiff University)

The World Bank recently acknowledged that global value chains are characterised by uneven development (World Bank 2020). Actors in emerging economies seem not to reap the full benefits of their participation in such chains and socio-economic upgrading is in doubt (Barrientos et al, 2016). This paper draws from a larger qualitative PhD project. It contributes empirically and theoretically to the understanding of socio-economic upgrading at firm-level in an emerging economy, Vietnam. It presents a rich case study of issues facing small coconut processing businesses in the Mekong Delta region, which supplied domestic and international customers with food products and other coconut by-products. The study relies on secondary data and primary research in the form of semi-structured and unstructured interviews, and non-participant observation. Two key findings emerge: first, in the businesses studied, it was found that the understanding of 'upgrading' was variable and contingent and defied standardised definition; second, the role of the state is crucial for the ability of such firms to optimise their activities and participate fruitfully in the value chain. The two findings are linked as inconsistent definitions of upgrading stem partly from the variable treatment meted out by the state. Larger businesses typically received more financial incentives and support such as networking with other supply chain actors from foreign investors to farmers while smaller producers were gradually crowded out by intense competition in lower value segments of the chain. This case highlights the role of the local state in the context of uneven development.

The influence of cultural norms on freelance contracting

Zeng Yiluyi
(University of Warwick)

The categorisation of freelancers as self-employed suggests that workers exchanging labour for income is perceived as spot market business-to-business transactions instead of industrial relations. Cultural norms affect all kinds of social relations, including freelance contract relations. However, it is open to question as to whether cultural differences in social norms affect contracting dynamics. The study chooses Taiwan and England to explore the implications of cultural values on freelance contracting dynamics. With analysis of interviews with freelancers working in each society, the findings suggest that freelancers' contract negotiation and tolerance of violation are culturally dependent. Taiwan values interpersonal relations associated with affect and reciprocity, but in freelance contracts, the responsibility of relationship maintenance seems to fall on freelancers who feel obliged to extend favours by compromising their own interests. In England, which values credibility and is influenced by the ideology of equality, contracting parties have lower expectations of the other to compromise, and deviations from fulfilling mutual obligations are limited. The study also found differences in respect for professional expertise, providing additional explanations for the differences in contracting dynamics.

Breakout Room 6

Technology, AI, Big Data, algorithms and new forms of work

Working with new digital technologies: Frontline employee experiences in Indian Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) industry post 2008 economic recession

Roy Chandrima

(University of Leicester)

This research examines the impact of the new digital technologies on the work experiences of customer service representatives (CCRs) who deliver IT enabled customer services from Indian sites of large global service delivery organisations. This research is situated within the wider context of business process offshoring to India where the decisions by lead firms in the West to offshore servicing activities (Kuruville and Raganathan, 2010) since early 2000s generated rapid growth of the Indian BPO/M (management) industry. The sector's rapid expansion until 2008 and the profound challenges it faced drew significant media and academic attention in the past decade. The general logic of BPO offshoring produced an intensively target-driven management approach (Kinnie, et al., 2008; Walsh and Deery, 2006) driven by clients' or lead firms' service level agreements (SLAs) and enforced by service providing organisations. Excessive attrition, demanding, monotonous tasks, job design, nocturnal work, long commuting times, harsh management control have been reported (Batt et al, 2006; Budhwar et al, 2006; Kuruville and Raganathan, 2010; Deery et al, 2012; Nasscom-McKinsey, 2005). The literature (Budhwar et al, 2006a;b; Noronha and D'Cruz, 2009; Thite and Russell, 2009) has reported 'progressive' and 'world class' HRM initiatives to address the needs of a young middle-class workforce that included positive psychology approaches to combat attrition and burnout (Combs et al, 2010).

While extensive research was undertaken to study work and employment in this sector in the pre-crisis years (Taylor and Bain, 2005; D'Cruz and Noronha, 2010; Mirchandani 2004; Poster, 2007; Budhwar et al., 2006b; Russell and Thite, 2009), limited academic attention (pace Noronha et al., 2016; Taylor et al., 2014) has been paid to understand the developments post-2008 economic crisis. Indian BPO's continued expansion in an increasingly competitive post-recession recovery market and amidst technological disruption generates renewed interest in understanding work and employment in the sector. In an effort to deliver impact beyond labour cost arbitrage in an increasingly competitive market, the Indian BPO service providing companies have embraced new and superior technologies to enhance operational efficiency and provide more value added services to lead firms which have translated into frontline Indian BPO employees experiencing not only high work intensification and extensification but also isolation, job insecurity and constant anxiety.

The empirical evidence collected from 26 in-depth semi-structured interviews conducted with senior management, middle management executives and frontline employees (including team leaders) in Pune, Mumbai and Gurgaon contributes to understanding digital workplaces and workers' experiences from a labour process perspective. The digital technologies contribute to the BPO labour process by collaborating with the human skill sets of the customer services agents or frontline workers to create several intensified ways to capture labour power. Marx's concept of incorporation and absorption of workers as appendages within the machine is revisited, and argued that in the contemporary capitalism, workers are now not just an appendage to the machinery but are integrated into the machines' settings in such a way that they become complicit in their own subjugation.

Deplatformizing data labour ? An empirical study of french IA companies organisation

Le Ludec Clement, Cornet Maxime

(Institut Polytechnique de Paris / Télécom Paris)

Over the last few years, scholars have started to investigate data annotation, which is crucial to Artificial Intelligence (AI) development. Machine learning algorithms rely on a precarious workforce to collect, annotate and verify datasets used by AI companies (Gray & Suri, 2019; Tubaro et al., 2020). Literature focusing on "the future of work" (Berg et al., 2018), and the evolution of labour practices implied by the development of AI, often uses the term of "Micro-work" to define those precarious workers.

"Digital labour" as a concept has been linked on one hand, to the increasing precariousness of some types of jobs, mostly through platform work (i.e uberisation), and on the other hand to "non remunerated work" performed by Internet users on a routine basis (Scholz, 2010 ; Casilli, 2019). In a sense, "platforms as factories" are a new signal of an evolving world of work, inscribed in the notion of "digital taylorism": complex service work could be split into small subtasks, and algorithmically distributed to a global workforce of precarious piece-workers (Altenried, 2020).

Scholars consider data labour as deeply linked to platformized microworkers, managed in accordance with the taylorist doctrine of a scientific optimization of labor according to which workers are interchangeable, undertaking specialized tasks, in an optimizable and quantifiable work-flow (Moorkens, 2020). In this perspective, micro-work, in its initial vision, embodies the taylorist management of work.

However, scholars also consider the effects of algorithmic work as not exclusively related to the way it affects the emergence of new kinds of jobs (digital labour), but also as something pervasive to "traditional jobs" (Posada, 2021) with increasing algorithmic management and work digitization. The usefulness of digital labor as a theoretical concept has therefore been questioned (Gandini 2019).

Nonetheless, evidences point to an ongoing "professionalisation" and a "specialisation" of platformized micro-workers (Silberman, 2015), which contradict the assumption that micro-work would only be a supplemental activity, and challenge the model of digital labor platforms. It also allows us to formulate the following hypothesis: micro-work is

undergoing structural transformations in both the way workers are managed (deplatformization) and the kind of “tasks” that are effectively delegated to micro-workers (cultural judgement on data).

We provide an empirical study on the use of data work by French AI companies, at the intersection of a sociological approach of AI (Joyce et al., 2021) and the field of “Digital Labor”. We argue that, just as the capacity of the Taylorist doctrine to increase productivity in the 20th century industrial context has been heavily criticized, micro-work seen as the future of all services work is facing increasing criticism, even in the AI industry, which saw the birth of the concept of micro-work. By conducting 13 interviews with data labelling companies and French AI companies regarding their annotation work management - an activity traditionally associated by scholars with platformized micro-workers - we show that the feasibility of “pure” algorithmic management and even the employability of a piece-work remunerated crowd is heavily dependant on the end use of the data.

Breakout Room 7

Professions, occupations, skills, careers and self-employment

From loyalty to solidarity'

Oborn Regin David
(*Karlstad University*)

This presentation is based on data from an ongoing mixed methods research project on the changed organizational position of department administrators within a Swedish university. As the administrators are further separated from the academic staff, while still at a distance from the management, one consequence is the possibilities of the department administrators to play off one side against another and in that process starting to build something of a community among themselves.

The advancement of 'managerialism' with shifting power dynamics and increased administration in (western) universities is a well-established narrative. Administrators in general within Swedish universities have been described as moving away from the academics and closer to the management. (Agevall & Olofsson, 2020, s. 7). Previous research has mainly concerned the interactions between management and academics, while less attention have been paid to the ones in the margin of the organizations power structures. By focusing on this specific group, the presentation brings additional perspectives on our understanding of the academic organizations, and the university as a workplace, (cf Smith, 2005), how loyalty relations inform job content, and the risks and possibilities with multiple belongings.

A re-organization of the university changed the organizational affiliation for this group of administrative staff from being formally employed by the departments within which they were active, to instead be organized in a separate administrative unit. Findings suggests that the department administrators' new organizational belonging to a separate unit helps buffering demands from the academics located within their departments (cf Axelsson et al., 2019; Lysgaard, 2001). While the department administrators consider themselves as belonging to the academic unit, they are sometimes questioned and mistrusted by the academics, as they tend to become mediators of managerial decisions. The re organization could be considered a strategy to break up a sort of a shared communal identity with the academics (cf MacKenzie & Marks, 2019), and findings in this presentation suggest that it in some aspects might have been a successful attempt. But rather than having a shift of loyalties from the academics towards management, the data indicates a strengthening of the position of the department administrators in their own right and increased grounds to develop an identity among themselves, rather than being a group on the margin of the professions (cf McLachlan et al., 2019).

Rather than placing the department administrators on the side of the management or the academics, data in this presentation indicates a position in between multiple expectations as well as having their own agency and intentions. Relations to both actors within the organizations, management and academics, and those on the edge, students, as well as more abstract categories as the public and the law comes in to play. There also seems to be a strengthening of the position of the department administrators in their own right and increased grounds to develop a sense of solidarity and an own community among themselves.

Learning or labouring? Exploring the intersection of identities and (counter-)cultures in the apprenticeship systems of England and Germany

Roberts Maisie
(*University of Leeds*)

The English and German apprenticeship systems face change, with increased investment and interest in apprenticeships in England contrasted with the growing emphasis on higher education in Germany (Bosch and Charest, 2010). The paper maps how these policy reforms and broader institutional changes are impacting apprentices' everyday working and learning experiences and sense of identity in two large chemical companies in England and Germany.

Apprenticeship research has relied heavily the comparative political economy discipline to explain processes of institutional change (Hall and Soskice, 2001). While this perspective has usefully detailed the institutional architecture that shapes systems of skill formation and apprenticeship, it has, at its crudest, presented an overly macro-focused and technocratic analysis, in which the theorising of change can become highly functionalistic and divorced from workplace analysis (Deeg and Jackson, 2007; Hauptmeier and Morgan, 2014; Streeck, 2016). The paper departs from this approach, by bringing workplace analysis into the conversation with an assessment of broader institutional pressures, thereby illuminating the interplay between micro and macro (Burawoy, 1999). It argues that apprenticeships cannot be studied in a vacuum and that important social and cultural relations of the apprenticeship employment relationship must be considered. The paper develops a novel conceptual schema that draws on the communities of practice literature (Lave and Wenger, 1991) and Fuller and Unwin's (2003; 2004) expansive and restrictive continuum to understand how the culture of the workplace shapes apprentices' learning experiences. Furthermore, by drawing on Willis (1977), Brockmann (2012) and Evans (2002) the paper also explores the impact that identity and agency have on apprentice trajectories and how this intersects with workplace culture and broader processes of institutional change.

The study draws on 50 interviews with apprentices, managers, labour market institutions, training providers and other associated actors in two case studies in the chemical industries: PharmCo in England and ChemCo in Germany. It found that although both companies experienced converging market-led pressures, their apprentices faced diverging experiences and outcomes. Apprenticeships at PharmCo were viewed as work, which led to restrictive and individualised working environments, narrow skills development and insecure job mobility. The apprentices embraced precarity as a lifestyle and counterculture, foreshadowing their insecure futures. At ChemCo, apprenticeships were understood as an educational journey during which apprentices learnt in expansive and collective learning environments. The apprentices expressed themselves through structured working identities which gave them broad skills and labour market agency. By integrating socio-cultural perspectives into the political economy of apprenticeships, the paper highlights the impact of broader institutional pressures on apprentice trajectories and outcomes.

Not as expected: 50+ Senior Military Officers and Civilian careers in the UK

Wang Wen, Bamber Matt, Flynn Matt, McCormack John
(University of Wolverhampton)

In an ageing society, having multiple-career has become common. However, our understanding on late working-life career transition is very limited. Drawing on theories of occupational identity and economic theory of job search, this study focused on 50+ military officers' transition to civilian jobs in the UK. Military personnel are frequently portrayed as regiment, unadaptable and authoritarian; especially those successful senior officers who have spent a long time in the service. Thus, it was expected to be commensurately harder for them to engage with transition to civilian work. In addition, there is the perception that veterans' skills acquired during their military lives is less thought after in the civilian workplace. To this end, veterans are expected to engage in whatever work in order to avoid unemployment. This can further diminish the opportunity for veterans to identify with civilian work.

Based on 203 valid survey of 50+ former veterans of all ranks in the British Armed Forces in 2019, the majority are senior officers, 75% of the sample has achieved Major or above rank, one in five are very senior officers (Colonel to General, Captain to Admiral or Captain to Air Chief Marshal). These 50+ veterans tend to be well qualified (57% with a tertiary education degree and 42% with a Master or PhD degree) and felt "have to go" (59% reported being told to leave, no promotion prospects, dislike salary, physically demanding, or too stressful). One in three of these veterans have searched below skill level in order to secure a civilian job. Our Generalised Structural Equation Modelling analysis does not support any negative correlation between military success (being Colonels or above, felt valued by the Army and highly paid) and civilian employment outcomes (being employed and civilian job satisfaction). Instead, it shows those Colonels or above rank officers and those who felt valued by the Military are significantly likely to engage with Career Transition Partnership Service (offering individual career advice, employment training and workshops) which is significantly correlated to be in civilian employment 4 years (on average) after exit. Those who considered themselves being highly paid in the Military are more likely to search jobs below their skill level. Unfortunately, this approach does not contribute to civilian employment compared with searching at the right level. Instead, jobs secured through such means is significantly correlated with poor job satisfaction.

This study thus makes two contributions. First, it challenges the assumption that people can only have one occupational identity in an ageing society. Even among those long-standing and successful veterans, military identity

does not appear to be a factor that hinders a successful career transition to civilian work, nor civilian job satisfaction. Second, the traditional job search theory, taking whatever work to avoid unemployment scar, may not apply to those highly skilled and mid-life career switchers. We highlight the role of the career transition service during mid-life career transition with an ageing workforce. Theoretical and empirical implications are discussed.

How do student internships affect labour market outcomes? Signalling, human capital, and institutional differences in Italy and the United Kingdom.

Luchinskaya Daria, Pedrini Giulio, Tzanakou Charikleia, Cattani Luca
(University of Strathclyde)

Higher education (HE) students are often advised to do internships during study to improve their chances in the labour market after graduation. However, different types of internship can lead to different labour market outcomes even within the same country, while similar types of internship may lead to diverse outcomes in different countries/institutional settings. We explore to what extent institutional configurations affect the role of internships in shaping post-graduation outcomes through a detailed cross-country comparison between Italy and the UK. Our paper draws on institutional literature (Iversen & Stephens, 2008) and situates the two main competing economic theories on the effect of internships, (1) the human capital/skills development perspective and (2) the signalling perspective, in the countries' institutional contexts.

We argue that the institutional configurations, in particular of the education and labour market systems, will affect the role that internships play in post-graduation labour market outcomes. We view the UK as an example of a Liberal Market Economy (LME) (Hall & Soskice, 2001) and Italy as a hybridized Mixed Market Economy (MME) (Molina & Rhodes, 2007; Pedrini, 2016). We assume that, in LMEs, government has relatively low involvement in economic coordination, resulting in a loose link between HE and the labour market and in a differentiated HE system stratified by institutional reputation. In MMEs, high levels of fragmentation and inertia coexist with wage coordination and stratification of occupational entry routes, and there is a tighter coupling between HE and the labour market than in LMEs (Willemse & De Beer, 2012)). In MMEs, education to work transitions are arguably smoother than in LMEs (Leuze, 2010), though may suffer from a lack of adequate institutional complementarities. It is therefore less likely that work placements are used as a signal to employers in MMEs compared to LMEs (Allmendinger, 1989), while internship effects on wages are expected to be higher in LMEs due to the lower wage coordination and to the better functioning of institutional complementarities.

We explore these issues using comparative analysis and rich longitudinal graduate tracking survey data from the UK (Futuretrack) and Italy (AlmaLaurea) to investigate graduates' transitions into the labour market. We use regression models and test the robustness of our results using matching approaches to estimate the impact of participation in internships on alternative measures of labour market outcomes, building on the work of Weiss and colleagues (Klein & Weiss, 2011; Weiss et al., 2014).

We find that in Italy, curricular internships in a firm are associated with higher chances of employment but not with wages. In the UK, selective internships are associated with higher labour market gains than curricular internships, but curricular internships still have some positive effects, more so than undertaking paid work 'only' for the money. Overall, our evidence points towards the signalling view of internships in both countries, although the human capital view has some support in the UK only, which we attribute to differences in the national context. Our findings inform the development of better equality internships with implications for both policy makers and employers.

Breakout Room 8

Open Stream – Special Event

Women, work and care during COVID

Tomlinson Jennifer
(University of Leeds)

The pandemic has created job loss, work instability, financial hardship and great insecurity, damaging work-life balance and overall levels of wellbeing. Women, and particularly working class women, are heavily and disproportionately impacted (WBG 2020; Fawcett Society 2020). There has been time squeeze and work intensification for some, a desperate search for new jobs for others, alongside more unpaid care with school and early childhood education and care (ECEC) setting closures and wider on-going operational disruptions due to COVID within and across school and ECEC settings.

This Special Event brings together two UKRI/ESRC funded COVID rapid response projects and a third funded by HDR-UK to use and enrich the data within the Data & Connectivity National Core Study. All projects are related to

women, care and work during COVID. Each project has a strong policy orientation, concern for dignity at work, and focus on the impact of COVID on both care work and gender and class inequalities in paid employment. The first of the UKRI/COVID projects (Hardy, Tomlinson, Norman and Cruz) focuses on the impact of COVID on sustainability and working conditions in the ECEC sector in which young working class women are heavily concentrated. It explores how the absence and disruption to ECEC has affected parents, particularly mothers' work during the pandemic. The second project "Carrying the work burden of the Covid-19 pandemic: working class women in the UK" (Warren, Lyonette and the Women's Budget Group) focuses upon the essential work of working class women. It asks in what ways they are working class women carrying the work burden of the COVID-19 pandemic and what are the urgent policy needs required to address this. Linked to this project, 'How is COVID-19 impacting women and men's working lives in the UK?' (Warren, Torres and the Women's Budget Group) examines the social impacts of COVID on the UK's labour force through a gendered lens to better understand gender inequalities in working lives in the UK.

This session presents key findings from three projects which share the common goal of asking what policy solutions are required urgently to support women, particularly working class women, during the pandemic and beyond. What policy solutions are required to ensure the sustainable future for the ECEC sector given it is foundational to families' wellbeing and parents' access to work?

Drawing on a mix of quantitative and qualitative methods involving the statistical analysis of rich household data from the UK Household Longitudinal Study, bespoke quantitative surveys and in-depth interviews of women working in ECEC and juggling work and care as parents, the session brings together different perspectives and experiences that show how women have managed different forms of paid and unpaid work throughout the pandemic and what the future of work and care might look like after COVID-19.

The Special Event proposed takes the form of four presentations, 250 word abstracts detailed below, all presenters are confirmed and committed to attending the conference.

Women, work and care during COVID

Whittaker Xanthe, Cruz Katie

(University of Leeds)

The COVID-19 pandemic amplifies the devaluation of feminized early childhood education and care (ECEC) work, with current conditions testing workers' resilience and many considering leaving for less intensive, more COVID-secure and better paid work. Despite its foundational role within the UK economy, little attention is given to how the crisis in the sector will affect its workers, nor what this means for future sustainability.

We present new data and findings from three quantitative surveys and 130 in-depth interviews with nursery managers, early years educators, childminders and nannies, to examine how ECEC has been disrupted during COVID-19.

Against the backdrop of chronic and historic underfunding of the sector, COVID has intensified demands on this highly feminised sector and further highlighted the financial precarity of early years settings. The workforce has been excluded from support packages and side-lined in discussions about safety. Additionally, the prevalence of zero hours contracts and the absence of paid sick leave is a major concern.

ECEC is essential to parental employment and reinvigorating the economy. Yet nursery staff have been treated as both 'indispensable and disposable', continuing to work during a third national lockdown without PPE or access to regular testing nor priority access to vaccines. Respondents feel their work as educators is rendered invisible in government and public discourse. We examine the labour market and state-driven processes which institutionalize the undervaluation of feminised work and the care penalty (Folbre, 2017) to produce a highly-skilled workforce that earns little over national minimum wage with limited pay progression.

Women, work and care during COVID

Norman Helen

(University of Leeds)

This paper focuses on how formal and informal childcare has changed through the COVID-19 pandemic, which types of families and workers have been impacted the most by these changes and what this means for parents trying to reconcile work and care. Evidence shows that the pandemic has exacerbated pre-existing gender inequalities in paid and unpaid work. Women comprise a higher proportion of low paid and temporary workers so have been more exposed to job loss and low pay and they are more likely to have assumed additional care work following the closure of and disruption to schools and nurseries. Yet we know little about how access to formal and informal childcare mitigates or perpetuates inequalities, or how resilient childcare arrangements are for supporting working parents beyond COVID-19.

Drawing on the first wave of data collection from our ESRC/UKRI COVID project, we analyse data from a survey of 1,020 parents and 55 in-depth interviews with parents and grandparents, across England and Wales. We find that the disruption to formal and informal childcare support has hampered the ability of parents – particularly mothers – to

return to paid work and work at full capacity, which risks exacerbating inter- and intra-household inequalities, and gender inequality in economic recovery.

To conclude we provide some reflections on the sustainability of the ECEC sector in the context of the experiences and data we have discussed from the perspectives of both ECEC providers and user-families, linking this to implications for parental employment and children's immediate and ongoing educational development.

Women, work and care during COVID

Torres Luis

(University of Leeds)

The economic upheaval caused by the COVID-19 outbreak has substantial ramifications for gender equality. Previous economic recessions have affected men's employment the most. However, this is not a typical recession. The impact of lockdowns and social distancing have a large impact on sectors with high female participation. Similarly, the closure of schools, nurseries and the working from home requirement for many workers increased caring responsibilities, which has large impacts on working mothers, but also on fathers taking responsibility for childcare. The early response by governments and flexible working arrangements adopted by businesses may be mitigating these impacts in ways not comparable to previous social and economic crises.

In this paper, we explore the impact of Covid-19 on the paid work of women and men in the UK. We ask how the workplaces of women and men, and their types of work, have been impacted as the pandemic effects rolled out. The research asks whether the pandemic is narrowing or reinforcing existing (pre-pandemic) gender inequalities in our ways of working

This paper draws on the analysis of a selection of the 2020 releases of three national-level datasets: Coronavirus and the social impacts on GB (around 3,000 individuals in 35 waves); the Business Impact of COVID-19 Survey (5,000 firms in 19 waves) and the Labour Force Survey (71,000 individuals in 10 waves). We analyse different industries and workplaces, including examining which businesses were most likely to close; the extent of remote working; and whether this varied by gender composition of the workers.

Women, work and care during COVID

Lyonette Clare

(University of Leeds)

In this paper, we explore the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the paid and unpaid work of working class women, including comparisons with women and men in other class groupings. Questions around the differential impact of crises on diverse social groups are not new, with previous periods of recession, for example, raising concerns over who is most affected by, and most protected from, negative ramifications. This paper offers a much needed focus on crisis, class, gender and work. We ask whether 'unsettled times' such as those created by the Covid-19 pandemic create an opportunity for 'gender undoing' (as opposed to 'gender doing') and for challenging and changing everyday work practices. Or has the pandemic intensified existing gender and class-based disadvantages both at home and in the workplace, bringing with it the prospect of an attack on - or at best a stalling of - equality in work in the UK?

This paper draws on new survey data on the impact of Covid-19 on women and men in the UK. In 2020, participants in the 'UK Household Longitudinal Study' were invited to take part in new monthly surveys and 17,450 participants filled in a first-wave questionnaire in April. We show that the women's working lives are shaped by gender, class and their intersections. Working class women were experiencing the worst of both paid and unpaid work: they fared worse than middle class women in the paid workplace (class) and worse than working class men in the home (gender).

Paper Session 3

Wednesday, 25 August 2021

14:00 - 15:30

Breakout Room 1

Technology, AI, Big Data, algorithms and new forms of work

A process-based approach to contradictions at work. The case of new forms of management information systems

Roth-Kirkegaard Carl Stefan
(University of Southern Denmark)

My abstract speaks to the activism part of the call for papers. The paper explores a Marxian process-based approach to contradictions within new big data management information systems - known as people analytics. Recently some scholars have suggested that the concept of contradiction and its theoretical heritage out of time (McGovern, 2014). This paper follows the subsequent defense for contradiction made by Harvey et. al. (2108) in arguing that contradiction can be fruitfully used to analyse processes of production and can illuminate conditions for employee activism and resistance. The paper draws on Marx's dialectical analysis of the process of circulation of capital at the beginning of capital vol. 2 (1981), as well as Althusser's (1962) and Jessop's (2013) subsequent notions of contradictory relations and their regulation. On this backdrop, I develop a description of the activity of big data analytics in organization as a production process entailing inherent contradictions between its moments of transformation. This description leads to a typology of possible regulations of the process, that organizations may utilize, which entails distinct consequences for worker activism and resistance. These includes negative consequences such as illusion of transparency and employee voiceless but also positive openings for worker resistance in data activism, increases in worker data literacy and whistleblowing.

Does the technological change of the labor market foster fixed-term work arrangements?

Baum Myriam
(Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training)

The digital transformation of the economy leads to fundamental changes in the dynamic and structures of the labour market. The skill-biased technological change approach and the polarization or routin-biased technological change are subject to intense discussions (Arntz et al. 2016; Goos et al. 2009; Oesch/Rodriguez Menes 2011). Automation rapidly changes the working environment, affecting the task composition of workers and skill demands (Acemoglu/Restrepo 2018; Autor 2015; Autor et al. 2003). Moreover, modern communication and production technologies allow for more flexibility regarding time and place of work. In addition, working arrangements as well as the employer-employee relationship are subject to major changes. New models such as employee sharing and crowd working challenge "traditional" standard working arrangements (Degryse 2016).

This paper tries to shed light on the relationship between technological progress and temporary employment contracts. Technological advancement allows more flexible work arrangements. This leads to a decrease in standard employment contracts and less planning and financial security for employees. In addition, workers have less bargaining power in times of vanishing local boundaries of the workplace. Therefore, within the course of this study, the hypothesis is tested, whether the introduction of digital technologies fosters fixed-term contracts. For this purpose, this study examines firm-level data from Germany between 2012 and 2018. As treatment, the introduction of new technologies from one year to the other is observed. Dependent variables are the share of employees with fixed-term contracts. The introduction of new technologies is expected to lead to an increase in temporary employment contracts.

Labour displacement, labour reinstatement, labour augmentation? The transformation of supermarket warehouse logistics by automated technologies

Barnes Tom
(Australian Catholic University)

The disruptive effects of Industry 4.0 technologies have been described as job displacing (Frey & Osborne, 2013), job creating or 'reinstating' (Acemoglu and Restrepo, 2018), or job 'augmenting'—a process in which working minds and bodies are enhanced but also exploited by automated and wearable technologies in the workplace (Moore, 2018;

Moore and Woodcock, 2021). However, these processes can combine in sectors such as warehouse logistics, where the rise of e-commerce and automated technologies are revolutionising work organisation (Gutelius & Theodore, 2019). The combination of displacement, reinstatement, and augmentation is occurring within a sector well-known for exploitative labour practices based upon physically arduous work and precarious employment arrangements (Briken and Taylor, 2018; Alimahomed-Wilson and Reese, 2020). This paper contributes to the growing literature on the combinative effects of technology and work organisation in warehousing by taking a longitudinal approach. It documents and analyses the gradual closure of the largest supermarket-supply Distribution Centre (DC) in the Australian city of Melbourne from 2015 to 2019 and its replacement by a new state-of-the-art DC from 2018 to 2020. The old DC employed around 700 workers as 'picker packers' who undertook labour-intensive, physically-arduous work, with high rates of injury. Most of these workers were retrenched shortly before the Covid-19 pandemic and recession began. The new DC employs around 250 workers in a semi-automated site and is regarded as a model for future DCs across the Australian retail sector. In the new site, a fully automated section uses robots to stack pallets, while a semi-automated section moves goods to workers on a conveyor belt. Through sample surveys of workers before and after the relocation, and interviews with warehouse managers, shift supervisors, picker-packers, and trade unionists, the paper documents the impact of relocation in terms of displacement effects (retrenchment and unemployment), reinstatement effects (redeployment of workers from the old to the new site and creation of new roles), and augmentation effects (the transformation of working bodies by new technologies).

Breakout Room 2

Dignity at work, decent work and job quality

The Gangs Have Superior Weapons: Nature Of Police Work And Community Policing In Nigeria

Audu Aminu Musa

(Institute Of Community Policing)

The increase in perception of crime in Nigeria necessitated the £30 million UK-DFID overseen community policing initiative between 2002/3 and 2010, in conjunction with the Nigerian Security Justice and Growth and managed by the British Council. This program seeks to promote partnership between police and community to foster reassurance of safety and security in Nigeria and the global community generally. Further, the Nigerian government has also approved the enabling community policing policy and practice in 2019 and with a £26 million investments to consolidate on this aspect of internal security strategy in the country. However, the Nigeria police organisation and other relevant authorities are confronted with challenges such as under-funding, inadequate human, material and other logistics for the job of policing. The prospective candidates for the police jobs are usually not vetted, a situation which provides the possibility of recruiting persons of low academic background and questionable character. Adopting qualitative methods and interpretative framework; focus groups discussions and individual in-depth interviews approaches to generate the views and perspectives of the police and community participants in Nigeria, this paper examines the nature of police work and the impact on community policing in Nigeria. In the light of Ochamalienwu Theory of Community Policing, the empirical findings have demonstrated that there is poor handling of human and material resources with debilitating work experiences among the police personnel.

Justice between agency and community: the constitution of equity in the world of international seafarers

Bailey Nicholas, Winchester Nik

(Cardiff University)

Social justice is intimately tied to notions of both equity and equality – at the global level philosophers have long debated the relevance of scale to the constitution of these key concepts. In this paper, we bring a sociologically inflected view to these abstract debates by exploring understandings of fairness in a context shot through with porous boundaries and intrinsic mobility, that of the international seafarer. In so doing we seek to explore both the theorisation and practical accomplishment of fairness in a global context through the understanding of those experiencing inequality (e.g. divergence in terms and conditions) in their day-to-day experience. The paper reports on the findings of a qualitative interview study with international seafarers on how they view their terms and conditions and, in particular, draws attention to perceived inequities. Seafarers are drawn from across the globe, mainly developing economies, work in mixed nationality crews aboard ships traversing the world's oceans on single voyage contracts. While aboard ship, they live and work within an international regulatory regime, including an international system of education and certification. However, dependent upon their country of origin are employed on very different terms and conditions. The findings highlight a range of perceived inequities along multiple dimensions. In making sense of these experiences seafarers provide narratives that portray themselves as economically aware individualised (neoliberal)

agents. At the same time, their narratives oscillate between awareness of the significance of wider groups and rejection (typically informed by lack of understanding) of the relevance of international institutions to aid their situation. We argue that underpinning this liberal individualised conception is the precarity of their employment situation. These findings provide insight into the contractual conditions of a particular group of transnational workers and highlight issues of social (in)justice. In doing so, the paper raises important issues about how these workers position themselves, and their seeming lack of awareness of the role of trade unions and international Conventions that have implications for collective organising and improving their working conditions.

Redefining dignity: Indian security guards' unionized response to precarity

Chakraborty Saikat, Noronha Ernesto, D'Cruz Premilla, Gupta Parvinder

(Indian Institute of Management Ahmedabad)

Precarity has become a significant feature of contemporary regimes of work and employment. This is particularly so in India wherein 93% of the workforce is informally employed. The rise of informal jobs even within the formal sector has increasingly worsened employment conditions and social security arrangements. This has resulted in denial of labour rights and amplified the implementation of repressive employment policies and legislation which favour employers and structurally constrain the capacity of workers to organize a response. One such category is security guards whose dignity is harmed and challenged by the increasing precarity emanating from poor wages and working conditions, inadequate social security, job insecurity, demeaning nature of work, lack of upward career mobility and training, and everyday social interactions with customers and clients marked with servitude, insult and humiliation. Under these conditions it is only possible for workers to reclaim their dignity by organizing themselves.

To understand how unionization influences worker dignity, we collected data through semi-structured interviews with 22 unionized security guards and their union representatives. Their experiences were then compared with 34 non-unionized security guards. We find that compared to the non-unionized guards, the active presence of unions helps redefine dignity. The findings indicate that as a strategy the unions in our study invoked the legislation provided by the state to instil a sense of worth among workers. The unions undertook casework against unlawful employment practices and first ensured implementation of minimum standards, and then upped demands by raising the dispute for equal pay for equal work, which indicated a progressive struggle for dignity. Union-led collective disputes against the employers helped the guards to realize and assert their collective identity and as a result of longstanding litigation, the employers acceded to sign a settlement in place of collective bargaining with the unions which further resulted in substantial improvements in pay, benefits, job security and working conditions for the guards. Unionization also helped instil a sense of regaining equality among the guards by constantly driving them to collectively resist structures of inequality and instrumental valuation at the workplace. Nonetheless, the trajectory of unionization depended on how the guards and their unions responded to the structural and institutional pressures that continued to restrict opportunities for collective action. The process of redefining dignity thus remains fraught with challenges and constraints of union sustenance and action, including issues of union leadership that can potentially restrict workers from truly experiencing dignity as a collective achievement.

Breakout Room 3

Open Stream

Urgent or Just Important? Mental Wellbeing Training and the Need for Multilevel Support and Tangible Organisational Commitment

Moriarty John, Forbes Trisha, Galway Karen, Gillen Patricia, Mcfadden Paula, Schroder Heike, Tully Mark, Best Paul
(Queen's University Belfast)

Poor mental health is now cited alongside back pain as one of the two major occupational health issues which are most costly to UK business in terms of sickness absence and lost productivity. This appeal to organisations' bottom line has prompted a variety of strategies, preventative measures and good practice case studies around how employers mental wellbeing can be promoted. The COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated this conversation, with flexible working policies and other provisions introduced at speed both to counteract the mental impact of lockdown and also to ensure the steady functioning of those organisations equipped for a work-from-home model. However, organisations wishing to proactively invest in improved employee wellbeing may face ambivalence or unintended negative consequences if the provisions are viewed as tokenistic, or place increased onus on the employees without commensurate adjustment of policy and organisation-wide practice.

iAmAWARE is an online platform, co-developed by charity, academic and frontline employee partners, providing access to psychoeducation and stress reduction training. We sought to involve prospective user from the design phase through to data interpretation. First, we carried out focus groups in two business settings and at three key

organisational level: leadership, human resource management and operational or customer-facing. These were aimed at elucidating the operating understanding of mental health and wellbeing in the organisations, baseline levels of wellbeing policy and provision, and expectations for online training. Following a Participatory Theme Elicitation (PTE) protocol, a different set of workers worked with the research team to analyse and interpret the focus group data. These emergent themes are presented alongside survey responses from users of the pilot iAmAWARE programme, which was rolled out following COVID-19 lockdown of March 2020. Open text survey items asked participants about the impact of the pandemic and any benefits they gained from the iAmAWARE training while working from home. Focus groups and the subsequent participatory analysis framework stimulated repeated reference to organisational systems and hierarchies. Members inferred from colleagues' responses a nervousness and taboo about raising mental wellbeing issues, for fear this might suggest they were 'not up to it'. For some staff, seeking workplace accommodations or workload relief could represent a challenge to the authority and competence of senior leadership and thus be seen as too costly. iAmAWARE was viewed positively as engaging and accessible, though employees recommended greater personalisation and visibility of their own organisational leaders, including a message that engagement with the programme should inform ongoing re-evaluation of work culture. The results of this co-design study suggest that symbolic resonance of workplace wellbeing programmes are as important to consider as the properties of the programmes themselves. An organisational welfare and solidarity framing may garner more sustainable buy-in from frontline staff, but this requires tangible evidence that the organisation is listening and concerned not just with the symptoms, but in its own role in shaping employee wellbeing or the lack thereof.

Barrier to Remedy or Guarantor of Social Compliance? The Role of the Human Resource Manager in the Indian Garment Sector

Jenkins Jean, Blakely Helen, Chakravarthi Rekha, Davies Rhys
(Cardiff University UK)

This paper presents first findings from a two-year programme of research into access to remedy for workers in export-facing garment factories located in Bangalore, India. The research project was made possible by an award from the ESRC's Global Challenge Research Fund.

Since September 2018, data on individual worker grievances has been collected by project fieldworkers who are all former garment workers now active in a small female dominated grass roots union. Extended case notes have been recorded on a tablet tool the research team developed for the purpose. In addition, 20 in depth interviews have been undertaken with workers, as well as observation of gate meetings, workers' forums and union training events. To date detailed information has been collected on more than 300 individual and collective worker grievances at the workplace. In addition, a further 700 sets of case notes were made documenting the needs of individual workers in the months following the first national Indian Covid lockdown in March 2020, when the tablet tool was temporarily adapted to assist in the delivery of humanitarian aid. The research findings provide rich accounts of the concrete realities of the factory floor. For the purposes of this paper, we concentrate our focus on the role of the human resource (HR) function within factories where the labour process is feminised and women enter the factory gates subject to multiple layers of socio-economic disadvantage.

We find that despite the overwhelming majority of grievances being reported to HR, little is done by the HR function to resolve matter – rather it is deeply involved in the blocking of access to remedy for individual workers. In only a tiny minority of cases could we identify HR driving a mutually acceptable solution to the matter under contention. On the contrary, we identified a preponderance of unhelpful HR practices that ranged from careless negligence of key bureaucratic functions, to direct involvement in abuse, such as forced statements of resignation, forced written statements of apology, lengthy and inconclusive appeals processes and forced isolation of workers in the HR office (as a sanction or part of a process of intimidation) for many hours or even days at a time. Such intimidation was increasingly targeted at workers identified either as a trade union sympathisers or as workplace leaders who were 'outspoken' in defence of their interests.

Empirically, the paper reveals rich detail on workplace realities that are generally hidden from scrutiny. Theoretically, it problematises the moral consciousness of managers (see Kirk, 202) and the role of HRM in silencing worker voice and collective organisation. This is of crucial importance in a global value chain where the commodification of labour is rife and access to remedy is directly related to power relations, not only within the workplace but also without (see Hale and Wills, 2005; Mezzadri, 2017), and the very existence of an HRM function is increasingly likely to be conflated with social compliance (see, for example, Bartley, 2018; Jayasinghe, 2016). Evidence from this research contends that this last assumption is unsupported.

“Brilliant at everything, saying yes to even more”: The realities of overwork in academia

Pustelnikovaite Toma, Richards James, Ellis Vaughan, Saxena Siddhartha
(Abertay University)

Leaveism is an important yet underresearched phenomenon in contemporary work and employment. It refers to employees using allocated time off to work, such as taking work home that cannot be completed in normal working hours, working while on leave to catch up, and working while ill (Hesketh et al 2014). Despite having negative implications for employee well-being and performance (Hesketh et al 2015; Gerich 2015; Miller 2016), leaveism remains pervasive across a range of sectors (CIPD 2018), highlighting its relevance to labour process studies. This paper aims to deepen the understanding of leaveism through a case study of UK academia. A number of studies have recognised that “being an academic is not a 9-5 job” (Sang et al 2015:235), suggesting that leaveism, or overwork more broadly, are becoming normalised in academia. However, the extent of leaveism in the profession, as well as its function and effects on academics, are less well-known. Consequently, the research questions that this paper addresses are (1) how pervasive is leaveism in academia?, and (2) what are academics’ experiences of leaveism?

Data was gathered via an e-survey on personal experiences of leaveism that was distributed primarily via Twitter but also through LinkedIn and Facebook. The survey was not exclusive to academics and was completed by 1237 people. Nearly 500 participants provided comments on their experiences of leaveism, generating approximately 34 000 words of qualitative data. From this sample, we have separated quantitative data provided by academics (n=403, or 32%), as well as analysed qualitative comments that explicitly mentioned academia (n=143, circa 11 200 words).

A full analysis of data is ongoing and is set to be completed by August 2021. Analysis conducted so far sheds light on causes, rhythms and feelings about leaveism, cutting across macro-, meso- and micro-levels of analysis. Both quantitative and qualitative data suggest that organisational factors such as unrealistic workloads, underfunding, lack of support from managers or lack of job stability are among the main causes of leaveism. Furthermore, work is not only extensified but also intensified, and leaveism is usually necessary to perform ‘deep work’ tasks such as research. Although often accepted as “just part of the job”, leaveism is largely experienced as a negative phenomenon and resistance seems to be growing. The paper concludes by examining theoretical and practical implications of these findings.

Breakout Room 4

Social movements, unions, voice and activism

The Simunye Workers Forum: The possibilities and limitations of organising precarious formal workers across industrial sectors in Gauteng, South Africa

Runciman Carin

(University of Johannesburg)

How to organise precarious workers has been a critical question for activists and scholars for some time. However, there has been a tendency in the academic literature to continually frame this question around what trade unions can or should do to organise such workers and related questions about the possibilities for revitalising trade union power. While these are not unimportant questions, the privileging of the trade union form as the central unit of analysis has, arguably, obscured an understanding of the processes of struggle and collective action that precarious workers are actually engaged in, which may occur as an alternative to, outside of, or in parallel to trade unions. This paper contributes to scholarship that seeks to de-centre the trade union form to consider the key question: how, under conditions of heightened precarity, precarious formal workers have organised? To answer this question, the paper presents an analysis of the Simunye Workers Forum (SWF) based in Gauteng, South Africa. Formed in 2015 in response to organising efforts around new labour rights, the SWF has grown to a membership of over 6,000 members across various industrial sectors. The analysis presented is based on over five years of ethnographic scholar-activism within the SWF and provides a strategic-relational analysis of power relations to critically analyse how precarious workers are organising and mobilising under conditions of precarity. Through its focus on precarious workers in the formal sector, this paper provides new insights into the possibilities and challenges in organising precarious formal workers in the Global South. To date, much of the scholarship about organising precarious workers in the Global South have tended towards analysing the struggle of precarious informal workers. While these struggles and their analysis are vital, it has somewhat overshadowed an understanding of alternative forms of worker organisation and organising in the formal sector, which this paper provides. This paper, therefore, contributes to the growing scholarship about the organising of precarious workers in the Global South from the distinct perspective of formal workers in industrial sectors.

Building Precarious Solidarities in the Face of the Pandemic: A Case Study of Organising in Higher Education

Seymour Kate

(University of Essex)

The challenge of organising (amongst) precarious workers has been widely noted. Factors such as poor working conditions, insecurity, long hours, fragmentation and a lack of resources raise considerable organisational challenges. Under these circumstances, it is difficult to build solidarity amongst precarious workers, as well as between precarious workers and their allies (for example permanent colleagues or customers). Nevertheless, we know that precarious workers are organising and that they have achieved some notable successes, including during the pandemic, as shown by the recent Uber ruling. Whilst the range of 'atypical' contracts and significant differences in employment between and within sectors make it hard to draw generalisations from individual cases of resistance, documenting and analysing these specific examples nonetheless remains important. It enables us not only to analyse, compare and learn from different strategies for building and maintaining solidarities, but also to assess how this activity reshapes our theoretical understandings of solidarity and organising.

This paper examines the impact of Covid on the organising activities of a specific group of precarious workers: Higher Education (HE) workers on insecure contracts (non-permanent or where hours are not guaranteed). In many respects, this group was relatively privileged compared to other precarious workers: for example, because of comparatively high levels of social capital, relatively well-developed prior organisation and, for the most part, physical presence in the workplace. Indeed, as the pandemic began to sweep across the UK, many HE workers were on strike, in part because of casualisation across the sector – demonstrating relatively high levels of existing solidarity-building. Nevertheless, as vulnerable employees in a suddenly vulnerable sector, it swiftly became apparent that a substantial proportion of employees were at immediate risk across the sector, just as the pandemic itself seemed to undermine many of the pre-existing advantages.

This paper examines two key impacts of Covid on organising of/by precarious workers in HE in the months following the onset of the pandemic, focusing specifically on attempts to build solidarities and alliances. Firstly, it examines the effects of increasingly financially insecure conditions within HE institutions (HEIs), brought about by Covid, on attempts to build and maintain solidarity internally amongst precarious workers and externally with permanent staff and students. Secondly, it examines the effects of new, remote ways of working on organising and solidarity-building. Drawing on semi-structured interviews with activists in a number of HEIs, it examines the impact on how solidarity was understood and the importance attributed to it by activists. Under these conditions, with whom was solidarity sought and built? Which strategies were used and with what level of success? Were there common prerequisites for successful solidarity-building? What, moreover, hindered or prevented the construction and maintenance of different solidarities? This paper reports the initial findings of this project.

Walking the talk in the gig economy: the successful organization of precarious migrant workers in Britain and Italy

Cioce Gabriella, Pero Davide
(University of Nottingham)

Structural transformations such as outsourcing, fragmentation, decentralization, tertiarization and financialization have resulted in job degradation and increased precarity for a vast and growing number of workers especially if migrant (Alberti et al. 2018; Anderson 2010; Standing 2011; Wills et al. 2010). The labour movement has struggled to navigate these transformations with established unions being unable to prevent the working conditions of their decreasing membership from deteriorating (Levesque and Murray 2010; Ness 2014) as well as unable and/or unwilling to organize precarious workers (Alberti and Però 2018; Moyer-Lee and Lopez 2017). Even the recent adoption on the part of some large unions of the social movement and community unionism based on the organizing approach in the attempt to revitalize themselves seems to be delivering rather disappointing results (Holgate et al. 2018; McAlevey 2016; Però 2019). Yet, effective organizing experiences of precarious workers are emerging in a number of contexts outside of large unions producing remarkable outcomes in term of advancing workers rights and limiting their precarity. This paper sets out to explain the effectiveness of precarious and migrant workers organizing in hostile environments and without material resources and institutional support. Drawing on comparative ethnographic insights obtained through fieldwork conducted in Britain (London) and Italy (Bologna and Milan) which included 135 semi-structured interviews, the paper shows how material and non-material improvements were made possible through workers-centered unionisms in which the practices of representing migrant workers are highly consistent with the rhetoric of workers' empowerment and inclusion – a consistency that the workers of these unions failed to experience in mainstream organizations. In addition to being experienced as a credible and effective tool for the representation of their material and non-material interests, the paper shows that this type of unionism takes the form of a space where precarious migrant workers become involved in meaningful, supportive and empowering webs of action-oriented relationships and decision-making (communities of struggle) in which they redefine (rather than accept) the customary 'battlefield' and the rules of industrial engagements in more advantageous terms. In doing so, the migrant workers combine different power resources in ways that ultimately enhance their overall negotiating power vis-à-vis that of the employers. Theoretically, through its comparative ethnographic discussion, the paper will identify the common traits and defining characteristics of precarious workers-centered grassroots unionism and document its strategic

deployment and adaptability across different national contexts (e.g. Britain and Italy), sectors (e.g. cleaning and logistics) and 'ethnic' groups (e.g. Latin Americans, Africans and South Asians). In addition to shedding some light on the possibilities for effective industrial action by precarious and migrant workers across different context, through this contextualized and detail-rich comparative ethnography, the paper will contribute to dispelling the diffused assumption existing among trade unionists that precarious and migrant workers are 'unorganizable'. It will also help to dispel the belief existing among many social movement activists that unions as an organizing format have grown irremediably inadequate as an emancipatory tool.

Breakout Room 5

Methodology and methods

Four Eyes See More – How Theatrical Performance Analysis Can Enrich Work and Employment Studies

Haunschild Axel, Zum Eschenhoff Silke, Quickert Anja, Wesemuller Mara Ruth

(Leibniz University of Hannover)

Performance analysis is at the core of theatre studies. Research on performing artists from a labour studies perspective is existing but not abundant. In a research project funded by the German Research Foundation (DFG), we have studied how funding policies, working conditions, forms of production and theatrical aesthetics are intertwined in the independent theatre scene. Our project is part of an interdisciplinary research group investigating the fabric and discourses of crises as well as transformational dynamics within the performing arts in Germany. In our study, we coalesce theatre studies with work and employment studies to gain a better understanding of how independent theatre artists develop their self-image and artistic identity in the context of mainly project-based funding, precarious working conditions (low pay combined with extreme market pressure) and an imperative towards originality, innovativeness and artistic but also social value.

Empirically, our study is based (1) on more than 20 interviews with artists, funders and producers, (2) observations of rehearsals and performances, (3) performance analyses and (4) case studies of independent theatre groups in Berlin and Lower-Saxony.

In our paper, we concentrate on the methodological question of how performance analysis and the investigation of theatrical aesthetics can enrich work and employment studies. Turning this question around and asking how work and employment studies can enrich theatre studies is of equal interest and relevance but not in the focus of our analysis. A sociological view can see, identify and explain the backstage: market and funding structures, forms of production, individual coping strategies, artistic working conditions (in contrast to working conditions in other industries or occupations), (collective) identity formation and lifestyles, social inequalities and milieu / class segmentation or segregation. However, if and how (1) these social and societal conditions are related to how artists produce their artistic works in rehearsals and on stage, (2) if and how these forms of working and producing are changing, (3) if and how artists reflect these conditions in their work and (4) if and how specific artistic formats and aesthetics emerge that refer to structural conditions of work and production can only be answered by an analysis that is grounded on methodologies and methods stemming from performance studies.

In a first step, we will provide answers to the above questions by using examples from our rehearsal observations, case studies and performance analyses. In a second step, we reflect upon and discuss what the perspectives of theatre studies and performance analysis see and what they do not see and how exactly they can inspire and enrich a sociology of work and employment perspective. We therefore seek to contribute to the conference stream a specific disciplinary methodology (theatre studies and performance studies) and see a great potential in bringing together different methodologies and methods such as the analysis of sound, music, images, film and performance in order to discuss their differences and similarities as well as their overarching methodological and epistemological irritations and contributions to the sociology of work and employment.

Brickstorming: using materials to elicit meanings in research interviews

Williams Helen, Pritchard Katrina

(Swansea University)

This article draws upon our experiences using Lego as a co-creative method in research interviews. To investigate the lived experiences of entrepreneurs, we developed an approach in which Lego was used during interviews within an Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) framework (Smith et al., 2012). Using materials in interviews is not novel, but understanding how we (participants, researchers) encounter them and the impact they have is yet to be fully examined. Thus, we seek to build on the work of Woodward (2016, 2019), by reflexively exploring how our use of materials, in this case, Lego, enabled both participants and researchers to connect more fully with phenomena under investigation.

While visual and creative methods are becoming firmly embedded approaches in organisation and management research (Höllerer et al., 2019), we distinguish our work from this 'visual turn', where scholars have begun to pay closer attention to the 'visualisation' within their areas of study (Boxenbaum et al., 2018; Bell et al., 2014). This work tends to focus on the analysis of pre-existing or created in-situ images (Rose, 2016). In contrast, our research explicitly uses objects as material elicitation tools alongside standard interviewing techniques. The choice to do so was motivated by two principle factors. First, there was a need to address a commonly cited limitation of the research interview; the overreliance it places on language to communicate meaning (Woodward, 2019). Indeed, the fullness of lived experiences are not always easy to access or communicate verbally (Boden et al., 2019) and some are non-verbal (such as habitual practices). Sometimes people cannot find the words to say things, falling silent, or expecting the researcher to reach a similar level of understanding, "you know what I mean?" (Wills et al., 2016). Secondly, many qualitative approaches require a need for rich, detailed first-person accounts of phenomena. This necessitates asking participants to reflect in ways they perhaps have not previously, often in time-limited circumstances.

In light of these two factors, we developed a 'dialogical approach' (Meyer et al., 2013: 502), whereby materials (or Lego models in our case) are generated by the participant. This can be empowering, affording participants control of narratives explored during an interview, but consequently as we will explore further in our paper, can present ethical challenges (Borer & Fontana, 2014).

We found using Lego helped disrupt participants rehearsed narratives (Manney, 2016). Constructions provided a platform for exploring their experiences in reflexive depth, enabling participants to 'see' their worlds beyond the means of language. Using data collected from the field we explore our experiences by illuminating the benefits and limitations of our approach. We demonstrate how we engaged in our method for our own reflexive purposes, leading us to becoming more attuned as to how words refer to and evoke the material. We conclude that the use of materials provides researchers with alternative vehicles for accessing, creating and communicating meaning, but caution they should be employed reflexively to understand their impact on a practical and theoretical level.

Arts-Based Research Methods for the "New Normal": Lessons on Accommodation from Workers with Episodic Disabilities

Croft Lacey, Harrison Elisabeth, Rice Carla

(From Invisibility to Inclusion at the University of Guelph)

From Invisibility to Inclusion (i2i) is a research project hosted by the Re•Vision Centre at the University of Guelph, Ontario, Canada. i2i aims to improve social, economic and employment opportunities for people who have episodic disabilities—long-term conditions characterized by periods of good health interrupted by periods of illness and disability. Some common conditions associated with episodic disability include multiple sclerosis, epilepsy, and depression. i2i brings together scholars, researchers, business professionals, employers, NGOs, and arts communities to build knowledge and develop practical resources. Our goals are to enhance employers' and co-workers' perceptions and attitudes, to facilitate legal and organizational change, and to advance the inclusion of people with episodic disabilities in Ontario workplaces.

The COVID-19 crisis has revealed that the kinds of modifications that facilitate the inclusion of people with episodic disabilities are the same changes that have enabled workplaces to adjust to the unexpected challenge of the pandemic. Prior to the pandemic, workers with episodic disabilities described some successes with accommodation and inclusion but many more barriers. Workers with a wide range of episodic disability-associated conditions often require flexibility in scheduling and the location of work (Vick, 2014; Duval, Gulseren & Kelloway, 2020), but have been regularly denied access to these accommodations (Hickox & Liao, 2020; Schur, Ameri & Kruse, 2021). Now that remote work is a necessity in many workplaces, previously "impossible" work arrangements have become the norm. Similarly, research work has also had to adapt to the "new normal." With the participation of employers, workers and income replacement recipients, the i2i project utilizes a mixed methods approach, including surveys, interviews and multimedia storytelling—an arts-based research method that allows participants to create short digital videos expressing their experiences and perspectives (Rice, 2020). While accessibility has always been at the centre of Re•Vision research design (Rice & Mündel, 2019), we have come to recognize that many of the changes we made to adapt our creative research methods to the pandemic have opened new possibilities for storifying experiences of difference and inclusion.

In our presentation, we reflect on the process of transitioning our in-person multi-media storytelling workshops to an entirely online, remote format. We show a selection of multimedia stories created in our pre- and peri-pandemic workshops, to illustrate how artistic, collaborative, and methodological integrity can be maintained while enhancing aesthetics and accessibility. We argue that adapting research methods to incorporate the accommodations that workers with episodic disabilities need in fact enriches outputs by creating space and time for disability and difference (Samuels, 2017), challenging neoliberal pressures in the academy through allowing the participation of a wider range of diversely embodied and situated participants and researchers.

“If Scholars Don’t Want to Pay, I Have no Business Talking to Them”: Methodological Reflections on Doing Fieldwork in the Informal Sector in Ghana

Adjei Arthur Susanna

(Institute of Work, Employment and Society (IWES), University of Professional Studies, Accra)

This paper discusses the methodological reflections and decisions rising from conducting qualitative study among individuals in the informal sector as the literature focus mostly on elite participants. The paper addresses this gap by explaining the process of navigating access, establishing rapport and handling of the interview sessions among participants in the informal sector. The paper argues that researchers would have to first deal with respondents' preconceived ideas of academic research and scholars. In addition, they may need critical strategies such as 'foot in the door strategy' to be able gain access and establish rapport. In particular, this paper contributes to the literature on qualitative techniques as it explains the rationale for these strategies and provides practical reasons why they are useful for a successful data collection. This paper is the result of my experience from a research on organisational justice and employee compliance to the rules within the Ghanaian informal sector involving interviews with apprentices and their supervisors.

Breakout Room 6**COVID-19 effects on work, employment and power****Work-changes in times of Covid: Effects on shared identity and health compliance behaviours**

Selenko Eva, Van Hootegem Anahi, Shoss Mindy, De Witte Hans

(Loughborough University)

The Covid pandemic has dramatically altered how people live and work. There is an increasing agreement that the pandemic can be understood as a shock – an uncontrollable, unforeseen event – that upsets routinized ways of doing things and questions established understandings of the world and one's place in it. For a successful route out of the pandemic governments depend on citizens' continuing motivation to adapt their behaviour and comply with Covid regulations. To achieve this, creating a sense of shared identity among citizens is essential, according to the social science consensus (see Van Bavel et al., 2020).

In this psychologically orientated paper we argue that this sense of shared identity does not exist in a vacuum, but is rather influenced by the experiences that people have. In particular, we investigate the effect of work-related changes due to Covid (changes in workload, decision making freedom, social interaction at work) and how these affect people's identity as members of the working population. Drawing on the Social Identity approach to work, we argue that work-related categories and roles constitutes an important part of people's identity and their understanding of themselves in wider society (e.g., Hulin, 2002; Selenko et al., 2018). If work becomes insecure or changes dramatically, this self-understanding might shift accordingly. This can have dramatic consequences, particularly for publicly orientated behaviours such as compliance to governmental rules, which hinge on people's perceived shared identity.

A three-country survey study carried out among 1,431 Belgian, UK and US employees confirms these assumptions. Results of structural equation modelling show that people who reported less workload and more job insecurity also reported less identification with the working population. Interestingly, people who experienced fewer social interactions at work, reported more shared identity with the working population. Shared identity in turn was related to more Covid compliance behaviour as measured by WHO health recommendations. The results hold even when controlling for endogeneity and common method bias, using a 2SLS instrumental variable regression.

In conclusion, this paper brings novel evidence that illustrates the link between the individual experience of work-related changes, self-identification as a member of the wider working population and societal behaviours. We argue that negatively connotated changes (loss of workload, loss of security) can create uncertainty and thereby undermine the identity as a member of a working population. Changes that are shared with the majority of people in a society (reduction in social contacts) however have the capacity to create the perception of a shared fate, leading to higher identification (Reicher & Stott, 2020).

From a practical standpoint this paper highlights the importance of acknowledging work and work-related events when it comes to governing public health behaviours. Theoretically this paper adds to research on working identities and on the bridge between work and societal behavior.

The impact of Covid-19 on Young Workers: a Qualitative Longitudinal Study

Christie Fiona

(Manchester Metropolitan University)

This paper reports on the progress and early findings from a small-scale qualitative longitudinal project entitled 'Young People and Work in and Age of Uncertainty' which is funded by the British Academy.

Existing economic and political uncertainties, growing inequalities, and the technological transformation of work are having far-reaching impacts on labour markets and work across nations. Despite international, national and local aspirations for decent work, there are fears that an erosion and degradation of work is occurring for many in society. In times of uncertainty, amplified by Covid-19, young people as new entrants to the labour market may be more at risk of precarious/insecure working conditions.

Our longitudinal, qualitative project (Neale, 2018) explores the personal, social and economic consequences of uncertain and disrupted working conditions, and also considers how young people are responding to and resisting uncertainty. Theoretically, our study draws from the psychology of working theory (Duffy, Blustein, Diemer, & Autin, 2016) and the principles of decent work (ILO, 2019). It adds to a burgeoning interest in precarious work (e.g., Work, Employment and Society, Special Issue, 2021). We use biographical interview methods (Merrill & West, 2009), and integrate anthropological social theory (Holland, Lachicotte, Skinner, & Cain, 1998), using textual analysis to interrogate the interplay between structure and agency in participant reflections.

Research interviews are being conducted in two waves (March and September 2021) and the study is based in Greater Manchester, targeting twenty young people (aged 18-30) who live and work in the city region. The research was conceived prior to the pandemic but its timing has led the research team to adapt our focus to the pandemic context. We are particularly interested in sectors that have been hardest hit by the pandemic, e.g., hospitality, retail and the arts. The timing of our research leads us to be able to contribute original insights into young people's experiences in extraordinary times.

Findings from Wave 1 will be shared in this conference paper. Early indications are that the consequences of pandemic disruption are varied. Both negative and positive experiences emerge from participant narratives. Many of our participants have a liminal status in the labour market, neither marginal or traditional (Furlong et al., 2017) in their work conditions. We have observed disrupted dreams, lives being put on hold and issues of wellbeing and mental health are important. We suspect that circumstances may change as we move into Wave 2.

"We are Open but There is no Business": Covid-19 and the Hospitality Sector in Ghana

Adjei Arthur Susanna

(Institute of Work, Employment and Society (IWES), University of Professional Studies, Accra)

The COVID-19 pandemic has triggered wide-ranging changes around the world. Both the pandemic and the policy responses have had economic, social and political consequences on the activities of businesses. We know little known about the effect of Ebola in sub-Saharan Africa due studies by Novelli et al (2018) and Maphanga and Henama (2019), there is no data on the impact of pandemics on the activities of the hospitality sector (food & accommodation sector) in Ghana. This paper discusses the response to the challenges that the food and accommodation subdivision within the hospitality sector in Ghana have/are encountering during this period in light of the Effectuation theory. Data was derived from semi-structured interviews with twenty managers/owners of hospitality facilities from four of the sixteen administrative regions. Contextualized in Sarasvathy's (2001) principle of affordable loss that argues that employers are likely to innovate their business model during crisis by focusing on what they can lose to sustain their businesses. It is highlighted that the hospitality sector is bearing both the economic and social cost of the consequences of the pandemic. The sector's strategic way of staying in business has to do with the delivery service, digitization and automation. This study further reveals how effectual decisions such as losing what one can afford to lose is necessary for restarting an existing business during uncertain times.

Breakout Room 7

Insecurity, precarity and peripheralisation

Employee Experience of Structural and Psychological Precarity in the Saudi Arabian Context

Alkadi Faisal, Aldossari Maryam, Chaudhry Sara

(The University of Edinburgh)

The Saudi Arabian context is underwritten by patriarchal structures whereby gender-segregation remains a socio-institutional norm (Al-Ahmadi, 2011; Al-Humaidi, 2018; Fisher, 2016; Syed et al., 2018). These patriarchal structures can be traced to socio-cultural interpretations/misinterpretations of sacred Islamic texts. The subsequent implementation of these texts has a major influence on the legislative sphere. Therefore, it has been argued that the Saudi legislative sphere may hinder gender equality within socio-economic institutions, including the labour market (Hennekam et al., 2017). This results in precarity for female employees specifically. Recently, legislative reforms have been implemented, emphasising gender equality. Statistically, the Saudi female labour force is one of the lowest in the

region (Al-Asfour et al., 2017). Given the recency of these radical legislative reforms, uncertainty emerges within the external labour market, generating new pockets of precarity beyond the current problem of female under-representation. This paper looks at the impact of state intervention (through legislative reforms and public policy implementation) on reducing labour market inequalities by increasing the female labour force. Twenty-six in-depth, semi-structured interviews were conducted with women and men within the retail sector. For data triangulation, stakeholders such as retail business owners, HR specialists/managers and government officials were interviewed. Our analysis highlights that external, institutional changes do not necessarily translate into congruent changes within deeper societal structures and socio-religious norms that are slower to change. This is consistent with Sian et al. (2020) who investigated conflict between radical legislative changes and predominantly conservative tribal cultures bolstered by patriarchal interpretations of Islam. This tension between state-driven policy and micro-level employee experiences within workplaces helped highlight the manifestation of structural and psychological precarity. Precarity is defined as 'the politically induced condition in which certain populations suffer from failing social and economic networks of support and become differentially exposed to injury, violence, and death' (Butler, 2009, p. 25). The understanding of psychological precarity has received little attention as existing research focuses on macro-level analysis (Choi, 2018; Simola, 2018). Unlike the mainstream literature on precarity (During, 2015; O'Keefe & Courtois, 2019), a unique aspect to this study is that it examines the interrelationship between precarity in workplaces, gender norms and broader socio-institutional arrangements. This helps us to accentuate the interplay between labour market forces, the changing gender narrative in Saudi and a subsequent reconceptualisation of precarity. The reconceptualisation of precarity ideally embeds the broader socio-institutional norms alongside the economic/labour market orientation. The findings contribute to existing precarity research by unpacking the socio-institutional mechanisms that contribute to and potentially exacerbate structural precarity. Furthermore, this study highlights psychological precarity that both genders experience. Despite the newly introduced legislative protections, we argue that psychological precarity can signal the degree and nature of socio-relational protection (or lack thereof) for employees. For male participants, this manifested as heightened job insecurity, a pervasive sense of loss of control, and a threat to existing family ideology and the breadwinner model. However, for female participants, there was evidence of the internalisation and normalisation of sexual harassment given their socio-economic vulnerability and lack of organisational protection(s).

Consumers in the gig economy: Resisting or reinforcing precarious work?

Healy Josh, Pekarek Andreas

(The University of Newcastle, Australia; The University of Melbourne, Australia)

There is a growing recognition of the importance of consumers in shaping the labour process and work. To date, attention has largely focused on frontline service workers and employment in traditional settings. The rise of the gig economy, however, has introduced new business models that alter the power relations between organisations, workers and consumers in ways that are yet to be thoroughly examined and theorised. In this paper, we advance understanding of the multiple roles that consumers play in the gig economy: as market participants, managerial agents, and quasi-regulators of working conditions. We argue that the precarious circumstances of gig workers, who are not employed by but 'contracted to' platforms, create unique opportunities for consumers to directly influence working conditions. Our contribution demonstrates the growing importance of the relationship between platform companies and consumers, and its consequences both for workers' experiences and the role of the state in regulating working conditions in the gig economy. We identify avenues for further developing these themes within debates about platform capitalism, employment relations, ethical consumption, and the future of work.

Workers with less social protection and their responses to COVID-19 in Japan

Suzuki Kyoko

(University of Tokyo, Graduate School of Interdisciplinary Information Studies)

This paper examines the economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on people engaged in less formal employment and self-employment in Japan and their access to financial support from the government. The target workers include people working on nonstandard contracts, self-employment, and family employees.

Labor policies and social security systems in Japan depend largely on protections provided by private companies.

While people in standard employment have access to various protections, people on nonstandard contracts and the self-employed are provided with little protection. It is not easy to estimate the number of people excluded from various protection schemes and evaluate how accessible those schemes are.

We were conducting a survey on people in less formal employment and self-employment to investigate their access to social protection in Japan. Since we experienced the COVID-19 pandemic during the preparation, we added questions about its impact on these workers and their responses. The survey was conducted online in February 2021 and collected 8,000 answers.

The findings from the survey are as follows (tentative results):

1. People in less formal employment were provided with little public social protection even before the pandemic and experienced difficulty accessing schemes for which they are eligible. Women, in particular, are excluded from various social protections even if they are in employment due to the gender-biased social security system in Japan.
2. The government has extended an existing financial support scheme designed for companies to maintain their employment to self-employed people during the COVID-19 pandemic. These subsidies effectively reached self-employed people in need because of the pandemic but were not sufficient to maintain their businesses.
3. Women were particularly hard hit by the pandemic. Japanese companies largely maintained employees on standard contract (most of whom are male) but reduced employees on nonstandard employment (most of whom are female) early on during the pandemic. Some of those who lost their jobs took up new jobs in the self-employed sector. The challenge is to improve protections for people in less formal employment or self-employment in a way that reduces the gender gap prevailing even in the most protected standard employment sector.

Paper Session 4

Wednesday, 25 August 2021

16:00 - 17:30

Breakout Room 1

Technology, AI, Big Data, algorithms and new forms of work

From Dormitory Labour to Platform Labour: The Digital Dividend for Chinese Female Migrant Workers in Online Housekeeping Industry

Huang Hui

(King's College London)

In contrast to recent discussions on the impact of work platformization over workers overwhelmingly exhibits negative ramifications and envisages the dystopian future (van Doorn, 2017; Vallas and Schor, 2020), this paper argues that the digital transformation of work generates digital dividends for workers. Following up Pun Ngai's (Pun, 2005) research on Chinese rural migrant workers, drawing from 52 in-depth semi-structured interviews with digital housekeepers from Ziroom platform, this paper finds that on the whole the gain outweighs lose according to these female perceptions of gig work in platform labour regime. This argument is based on evidence that: first, the platform work allows workers to gain more incomes, both because the payment of platform work is relatively high than their previous job, and they can take multiple part-time jobs to supplement income. Second, the working condition of migrant females is relatively improved compared to their previous dire experiences in dormitory labour regimes (Pun and Smith, 2007). Third, the platform work empowers them autonomy and flexibility, which allows them to balance work and other arrangements, including developing personal interests, social life and domestic affairs. Last, the transition from dormitory labour regimes to platform labour regimes enhances the work dignity of female workers. Albeit new forms of digitalised labour control and exploitation is emerging, it is considered tolerable or normal by digital housekeepers in the Chinese context.

Ziroom platform is a famous platform-based rental service company that provides home rental and property management services in China. As one sector of the booming on-demand economy, its development is a microcosm of China's national industrial policy. China's 'Made in China 2025' initiative, which references German Industry 4.0, is committed to industrial digitalization and manufacturing robotization. The housekeeping industry has become an alternative labour pool for the reserved army of labour from ongoing industrial upgrading. Nearly all housekeepers are young and middle-aged female ex-factory migrant workers, ejected from the shrinking labour-intensive low-end industrial sectors and now shifts into gig work in the platform economy.

By adopting a comparative perspective, in which the labour conditions of female workers in the platform labour regime is compared to the situations in previous dormitory labour regimes, this paper concludes that the platformization has been structurally improved the working conditions of female workers in the Chinese context. This paper contributes to existing discussions of the implications of platform work on labour conditions and extends the Chinese migrant labour studies into the digital age.

The intergration of algorithms and hierarchy on digital labour markeplaces : Uncovering labour process in Indian food delivery platforms

Kango Ujjwal, Bhattacharya Rajesh

(IIM Calcutta)

Digital labour platforms have emerged as significant modes of organising work, with labour available 'on-demand' (De Stefano, 2016), much like any other commodity. The organisation of work by digital platforms has largely circumvented legal or political determination of employer-employee relations, by unsettling the very figure of the "employee"—leading to a fundamental change in the how work is organised. However, in countries like India, with massive 'surplus' labour force in the informal sector, working mostly without the protection of labour laws, organisation of work relations by digital platform companies calls for its specific understanding. Based on ongoing ethnographic fieldwork, both as an observer and a participant on two leading food-delivery platforms in three Indian cities, we attempt to understand how work is organised on digital platforms.

While the literature in Western context has emphasised highlighted an algorithmically managed labour process (Kellogg, Valentine, & Christin, 2020; Rosenblat & Stark, 2016), painting pictures of either a 'digital boss' (Prassl, 2019) or 'being your own boss' (Barratt, Goods, & Veen, 2020; Purcell & Brook, 2020), our study reveals that food delivery workers in India have a human manager(s) as an indispensable mediator of the food delivery labour process. What is then the role of the human manager in algorithm intermediated and market based labour process? Our study explicates a key role of the human manager (hierarchy) in managing the work relations on these digital marketplaces. In doing so, this essay highlights the limitations of algorithms in organising work.

Furthermore, the literature has emphasised on the individualised nature of labour process for platform workers (Lehdonvirta, Kässi, Hjorth, Barnard, & Graham, 2019). We find that social interactions between workers form a co-constitutive element in shaping labour relations of an ostensibly individualised and algorithm intermediated labour-process. The Indian food delivery workers typically used to assemble at a local haunt, their notional office, while they were waiting for orders from the food delivery platform. The notional office served as spaces for informal discussions and exchange information such as the addresses of new restaurants, managing parkings in busy street, or handling requests by team leader.

We argue that labour process in digital platforms is structured through an assemblage of mechanisms that rest upon performance management by the team leader/fleet manager, disciplining effects metrics and feedback ratings, and social interactions amongst workers, all of which interacts with current political economy of a swollen unemployed labour force.

Digitalization of employment services in the UK and Australia

Robertshaw David, Ingold Jo, Carson Calum

(University of Leeds Business School / Deakin University)

Employment services are government-conceived policies that seek to move people outside the labour market into work. This paper offers a comparative appraisal of digitalization trends within employment services in the UK and Australia funded by the ESRC Digital Futures at Work Centre. In extant literature, the digitalization of employment services is typically treated either optimistically, in terms of value added and the delivery of specific benefits, or more critically in terms of exclusion, discretion surveillance and control (Eubanks, 2018; Busch and Henriksen, 2018; Schou and Pors, 2019; Marston, 2006; Henman, 2010). The question remains as to how digitalization is actually unfolding within employment services delivery. What kinds of digital solutions are being adopted? And how are digital tools being used within the sector? This paper examines these questions through reference to two states that are at the forefront of employment services digitalization and are the only OECD countries to have retained a predominantly marketized model of employment services delivery. Firstly, the UK, which has already established a 'digital by default' model through the single working-age benefit, Universal Credit alongside a rapidly expanding employment services sector in the context of COVID-19. Secondly, Australia which is seeking to implement a 'digital first' platform under its Federal New Employment Services Model from 2022.

The paper draws on a mixed methods study of both countries. Firstly, a survey of employment services providers who deliver employability interventions. Secondly, 60 qualitative interviews with providers, developers of digital employment services tools, and other actors within the sector in both case study countries. The paper analyses factors that are impacting the adoption and implementation of digital solutions within employment services, the solutions that digital tools seek to resolve, and the novel issues that arise both for providers and clients of employment services. It also proposes a framework for understanding digitalization within the delivery of employment services in two exemplar liberal market economies.

Breakout Room 2

Professions, occupations, skills, careers and self-employment

Outsiders on the Inside? Occupational Sex Segregation in Online Communities

Torre Margarita, Congosto Mariluz, Ucar Inaki

(University Carlos III of Madrid)

The exclusion of women from male networks where power and information are amassed has been identified as one of the main factors limiting equality at the workplace. Homophile behavior, homo-social reproduction, tokenism, and other exclusionary practices hamper women's performance at work and make their promotion and progress more difficult relative to male counterparts.

Despite the increasing interest around social media use and its consequences, researchers have tended to neglect its potential relevance for gender integration. Therefore, the main research query of this paper is: Do online communities foster gender integration, or do they instead reproduce the inequalities of the offline world?

The scarce literature that touches upon this topic portrays two alternative scenarios. On the one hand, social networks could speed up the economic, political, and social empowerment of women, thus promoting overall gender equality. For example, social networks facilitate professional interactions and facilitate self-promotion regardless of the socioeconomic status of the user. That is, they represent an unprecedented way to diversify social capital and amplify visibility in personal and professional circles. We refer to this as the “Opportunity Window Scenario”. On the other hand, social networks could also reproduce offline observed discrimination and inequality patterns. For instance, according to existing evidence, women are less likely than men to express their opinion on social media, and when they do, they endure more harassment. In this line, some researchers suggest that the online world not only reproduces the inequality and discrimination of the offline world, but also creates new forms of such discrimination. We refer to this as the “Virtual Glass Ceiling Scenario”.

This paper delves into this question by examining the two competing predictions for gender integration. Collecting data from the social media platform Twitter, we create a network of men and women in STEM-related occupations, a typically male-dominated sector. In this network, the nodes are the individuals and the relationship are the edges. First, we examine the level of gender segregation in STEM online communities. Then, we evaluate men’s and women’s position within these communities to determine whether online spaces facilitate female integration and visibility in the STEM occupations or, on the contrary, women continue to be marginalized: outsiders on the inside so to speak.

This study extends existing research on gender inequality in several ways. First, we test hypotheses regarding gender-based exclusion and inequality in a new context for social interaction: the online arena. Second, the article contributes to the study of gender differences based on revealed preferences, complementing research on attitudes and behavior using surveys.

Workplace solidarity of freelance animators in Japan: The multiple management on job insecurity

Matsunaga Shintaro
(*Nagano University*)

Many animators work as freelancers in the animation industry, one of the leading creative industries in Japan. While animators are given considerable discretion in their work, they endure low wages and job insecurity. To address these problems, animators often seek to build solidarity to facilitate mutual assistance. This paper examines how much solidarity is possible among freelancers based on an ethnographic study of a Japanese animation production company.

Recently, freelance work has attracted interest from sociologists. Previous research on the sociology of work has revealed that freelancers are dealing with job insecurity. Such research has argued that freelancers involve in personal or organisational management to cope with insecurity. On the personal side, scholars point out that freelancers working in uncertain environments are apt to consider themselves successful if they have uninterrupted work (Raito and Lahelma 2015; Occhiuto 2017). On the organisational side, some freelancers form occupational communities to help each other build skills and share rewards (Schwartz 2018). This paper argues that both aspects are inseparable and that with the proper combination, freelancers can cope efficiently with work instability.

This paper analyses data obtained from fieldwork conducted at a Tokyo-based animation studio, Studio X, where the author collected approximately 300 hours of data in 2017 and 2020. The data include real-time field notes about the workplace activities and types of jobs being performed by Studio X animators.

At Studio X, animators performed the personal management of job insecurity observed in previous studies. Many animators tried to deal with job insecurity by working on multiple tasks. Rather than merely contracting a lot of work, they ensured stability by combining work that could be expected to remain stable in the long term with work that could be completed in a short period.

Moreover, Studio X had several organisational tools to support such personal management. For example, it had a job called ‘manager’, which is not found in other animation production companies. The manager monitored the progress of the animators’ work and met the animators’ needs when their work was likely to be interrupted by work contracts with other companies. Skilled young animators also collaborated on jobs for the same film or television programmes, creating an environment where young animators could teach each other in-house at any time. This provided opportunities for skills formation that would be difficult for other freelance animators to obtain. In using these methods, Studio X sought to increase the likelihood that job insecurity could be mitigated by helping animators balance personal and organisational management.

In the case of Studio X, this paper can see that the traditional modes of interaction between individuals and organisations are relevant to sociological views of freelance work, but personal management is given priority. This shows that a system that supports organisational measures is essential for worker well-being. The insecurity of

freelance work requires that we consider the ways in which organisations can help and respect, rather than exploit, individual workers.

“Everything to a degree is who you know”: a Bourdieusian analysis of career progression in small law firms

Kele Juliet, Tomlinson Jennifer
(University of Birmingham)

Much employment relations research on professional service firms (PSFs) tends to focus on large, London-based organisations. This scholarship has often employed the work of Bourdieu to investigate barriers to entry and progression within accountancy and law firms. This emphasis on large-firms demonstrates how commercial logics lead to the stratification of the legal profession in England and Wales and the maintenance of social exclusion with elite PSF firms (Cook et al., 2012; Ashley and Empson, 2013; 2017), with the socio-economically privileged – typically white, middle-class men – enjoying the most prestigious and well-rewarded careers (Tomlinson et al., 2019). However, these elite PSFs are not representative of the wider composition of the PSF landscape, most of which are small and regionally based. This paper considers the distinction between large and small firms in the legal profession in England and Wales and examines whether a Bourdieusian framework focusing on different types of capital can elucidate the career progression experiences of employees within these smaller firms; particularly for those from diverse cultural backgrounds. We also analyse the application or absence of HRM practices, notably with regard to recruitment and promotion, in shaping this progression within the small firm context. Embedded in these smaller firms is an interesting dichotomy: a large percentage of their turnover comes from ‘retail market work’. On the one hand, this is considered as the less profitable law specialisms (Bolton and Muzio, 2007; Sommerlad, 2016), which may affect career opportunities in the small- and medium-sized firms. On the other there may be a stronger case for diversity as law firms attempt to provide services to local communities.

Findings from qualitative interviews with participants from all positions of seniority, of all ages, genders and backgrounds within four case studies of small- and medium-sized law firms reveal that the smaller law firm size appears to have a both a positive and negative impact upon perceived and actual career progression. Many interviewees commented that the size of law firm influenced their application decisions, with most identifying advantages of smaller firms. However, the decision to apply for smaller, regionally based firms was also informed by knowledge of what is required to secure a training contact in leading law firms in terms of University degree classification and University status. Additionally, ideas held about other signifiers of human, cultural and institutional capital preferred in these larger firms, typically associated with higher socio-economic backgrounds, became a self-selecting method. Moreover, findings suggest that while smaller law firms attempt to mimic the larger firms by promoting lawyers who demonstrate certain types of embodied cultural capital, of particular importance in the smaller law firm context is the local networks and social capital of their lawyers. Hence, while the smaller firms provided alternative career pathways to some extent, career progression experiences and patterns of gender and ethnicity in these smaller firms appeared to replicate those found in the more elite context: reproducing white male privilege and hindering the career progression of lawyers from diverse cultural backgrounds.

Graduate employability as possession, position and process during the COVID-19 pandemic: a tale of two cities

Luchinskaya Daria, Okay-Somerville Belgin, Hurrell Scott, Anderson Pauline, Scholarios Dora
(University of Strathclyde)

This paper examines the factors influencing graduate employability during an economic crisis, building on the position, possession and process employability perspectives (Holmes, 2013) and focusing on graduates’ experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic. Graduates’ education to work transitions have become increasingly uncertain in recent decades. The COVID-19 pandemic is likely to cause ‘career shocks’ (Akkermans et al., 2020), exacerbating the impact of known sources of disadvantage, such as gender, ethnicity, social class, degree subject and type of institution (Clarke, 2018). The importance of proactive career behaviours and educational credentials on graduates’ objective and subjective employability is well-established in times of relative prosperity (Okay-Somerville & Scholarios, 2017). Although employment prospects of graduates in the UK were better compared to youth employment more generally, COVID-19 still has a considerable impact on the availability of jobs. We question the extent to which career agency, in the form of proactive career behaviours, is still relevant (and for whom) for a cohort of university leavers who joined labour markets during this time.

We address two key research questions relevant for understanding graduate employability during a crisis: (1) which graduates fare better or worse in terms of objective and subjective employability; and (2) how did the relative importance of position, possession and process explanations of graduate employability change during first few months the COVID-19 pandemic. We situate our analysis in the context of the city to capture the influence of the ecosystem of local education and labour market opportunities, and social support networks on graduates’ employability. We draw on sociological and psychological literatures to address career agency and structural barriers to employability.

We use newly collected survey data (N=545) from the 2020 cohort of graduates from institutions in the City of Glasgow (Scotland), and in Preston (England), cities with shared experience of industrial heritage and high incidence of relative deprivation. Our objective graduate employability measure consists of employment status, perceived job quality and overqualification. Subjective graduate employability is captured by Rothwell et al.'s (2008) self-perceived employability scale. We measure the position explanation of graduate employability by comparing differences based on known indicators of disadvantage, such as socio-economic status (e.g., parental occupation). Possession of graduate employability is reflected in educational background (e.g., university type). Finally, process of graduate employability is measured in career thoughts, competencies and behaviours. We control for the role of personal resources such as resilience and mentoring support, as well as the perceived impact of COVID-19 on careers. The analysis builds on and expands previous empirical research on graduate employability (e.g., Byrne, 2020; Okay-Somerville & Scholarios, 2017; Wilton, 2011). Regression analysis is extended by using the qualitative data from free text responses to further unpack the relative importance of position, possession and process explanations and elucidate upon graduates' experiences. Our findings contribute to wider debates on conceptualising graduate employability and will be of interest to soon-to-graduate students, careers practitioners, higher and further education institutions, employers and policymakers.

Breakout Room 3

COVID-19 effects on work, employment and power

Impacts of COVID 19 on Online Freelance Workers

Dunn Michael, Munoz Isabel, Sawyer Steven, Vaccaro Gabrielle, Feldman Lily, Michaels Emily
(*Skidmore College*)

We report here findings from an ongoing panel study of 68 U.S.-based online freelancers, focusing here on their experiences. These findings emerge from analysis of two rounds of data collection: As noted, below, the first round straddled the arrival of COVID and the ensuing pandemic-inspired economic downturn. The current round provides insight into how online work has changed in the ensuing months. We see online freelancing as a window into one future of work that is becoming an increasingly important and precarious form of contemporary working. This form of work is one where the market, not the organization is the primary structure of worker/employer interaction, mediated by digital platforms and relying on both algorithms and interaction between parties. We further note that one of the key reasons for taking up online freelance work is its flexibility, which allows us a window into the ways in which these workers responded to changes.

The study's purposive sampling framework provides for both empirical and conceptual insights into the occupational differences and career plans of freelance workers. The first round of the panel study ran from January through March 2020. The second round of data collection ran January to March 2021. This means the timing of data collection allows us to understand changes in both working and household arrangements in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Data collection included a survey, semi-structured interview and secondary data. The survey and semi-structured interview were designed and tested to be used together and took an hour to complete. The secondary data were gathered by permission of the participants. All participants were hired through Upwork and paid to participate.

Findings make clear these workers are facing a significant change in their work landscape. First, workers saw a marked decrease in the flexibility typically afforded online freelancers including fluctuating work routines, as new jobs became more scarce and competition for these increased. Second, the known precarity of this project-based work was magnified as earnings uncertainty became more acute. Finally, these workers faced a significant decline in client engagement.

Data also indicate that those pursuing creative work (relative to administrative and technology-centered work) are more likely to be impacted by online labor market changes. And, data show women are more likely than men to reduce working hours to help absorb the increased share of caregiving and other domestic responsibilities. These findings challenge the ability of workers to meaningfully engage in collaborative work and amplify the precariousness of online freelance work. This raises questions of online freelancing as a viable career path or sustainable source of work, given the precarity of these arrangements.

The impact of School Leadership decisions upon Teacher Identities during COVID-19

Marsh-Davies Katy, Burnett Cathy
(*Sheffield Hallam University*)

COVID-19 created a unique and unprecedented set of circumstances for teachers in the UK. The associated lockdowns necessitated different modes of delivery, to ensure the continued education of children at a time when their

own parents' employment may have been severely affected by the government-enforced restrictions. Many teachers worked remotely, utilising digital technologies, for the first time. Some teachers concurrently had their own children at home, requiring care and education, and/or elderly relatives requiring additional support. As a result, many teachers experienced significant challenges in their personal and professional lives.

The primary school teachers who participated in our research (5 female and 3 male) were invited to take part in interviews via Zoom at two points in time: early summer and mid-Autumn of 2020. In the intervening months they were asked to share a range of artefacts to document and construct their teacher identities during this pivotal period of history, drawing on their preferred media e.g. blogs, diaries, artwork, photographs and videos. The second interviews explored the significance of these artefacts and the participants' reflections on the short-term impacts of COVID-19. Aligning with our views of identity as a social construction, we conducted a critical discourse analysis of the data to explore the power dynamics between teachers and their schools during the pandemic.

We found that school leadership responses to COVID-19 were key to how participants experienced being a teacher during the pandemic. Whilst teachers themselves constructed teaching as an embodied, situated and relationship-centred activity, what (some) school leaders were saying/doing showed a disconnect between how teaching is presented through official discourses and how it is experienced in teachers' lives. The traditional school environment, with its associated regulated and routinised practices, was presented as inappropriate, absurd, and often counter-productive for the delivery of education in the UK at the present time. Our findings echo those of Burrows et al (in WES, 2020) who highlight the contradictions at the heart of the British education system, and, furthermore, show how some teachers were left even more 'stressed, depressed and exhausted' during the pandemic.

COVID-19 has unsettled the 'habitus' (Bourdieu, 1977) of teaching and our participants are not keen to return to 'business as usual'. By exploring interview data from two points in time we are able to see examples of resistance to the prescribed and legitimated norms of being a teacher. In this presentation we will share data to give voice to these powerful stories and present contrasting case studies to show how school leadership decisions led to a valuable and enhanced professional and personal experience for some, and a diminished, sometimes untenable, situation for others.

This paper will be co-presented by the lead-researcher and one of the participants, who will bring to life her own experiences and views. Our intention is that this paper will form the foundation of a book, to be edited by the authors of this paper, that will highlight further themes around teaching and COVID-19, to inform education policy and practice for a post-COVID era.

Breakout Room 4

Gender, work and social reproduction

Caring while working: The gendered implications of enforced working-from-home during the COVID-19 pandemic

Handley Karen

(Oxford Brookes University)

For decades, the merits and limitations of flexible working arrangements have been debated in the fields of organisation studies and employment relations (e.g. Felstead and Henseke, 2017; Hill et al., 2008). The COVID-19 pandemic provides a context in which to explore the impact of one particular arrangement - enforced working-from-home ('WFH') - for different categories of workers.

This study focuses on UK workers with childcare responsibilities who were sent home to work in March 2020 at the start of the national lockdown. In the Spring of 2020 (and again in early 2021), workers with childcare responsibilities but without access to childcare facilities because of nursery or school closures found themselves juggling caring and working roles (ONS, 2020) and struggling to simultaneously pursue both roles well. On the other hand, some workers divested of routine 'office' duties but who did not take on domestic responsibilities were able to focus on work projects which enhanced their career capital.

These varied experiences raise questions about the possibility, identified in Chung and van der Lippe (2018), that working-from-home might have the effect of reproducing and reinforcing gender roles in the labour market and the family household (see also Lott and Chung, 2016; Sullivan and Lewis, 2001). However, other outcomes are also possible. The COVID pandemic has created a household situation in which family and other household members see each other enacting roles previously unseen (at least partially). For example full-time office workers - absent for 8-12 hours of the day - now see others enacting their 'work role' and not just their role as family /household members. The 'ideal worker', typified by Acker (1990) as a man with no domestic responsibilities that would interfere with his commitment to work, is now at home, witnessing as well as experiencing the implications of family-to-work interference as well as the joys and difficulties of daytime caring.

This paper will explore these dynamics through the data lens of online discussion threads which include the acronym 'WFH' on the Mumsnet-Talk platform during the early days of the COVID pandemic. Mumsnet has been associated with the voice of a female demographic of middle-class working mothers. The forum discussions are anonymous, often lengthy, and sometimes heated. As the UK went into national lockdown, social media platforms and support forums such as Mumsnet, Urban.75 and Quora, erupted with conversation and commentary from individuals about the experience of working-from-home, and of work-life boundaries. This paper contends that such data can complement statistically-oriented survey data and in-depth interviews by giving insights from social media conversations between individuals sharing experiences and seeking advice about new and re-negotiated work-home arrangements. This is a working paper: the data has been collected, and is being analysed over late Spring 2021. Early findings, and reflections on researching using Mumsnet-Talk data, will be presented at the WES conference.

The Impact of COVID-19 on Women's Work and Employment

Lloyd Michele

(Independent Researcher)

This paper examines how women's work has been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic both within the home and in public spheres of employment. Although work and employment inequalities existed before COVID-19, the pandemic has served to widen the gap between men and women. Drawing on statistical data and government messaging during the pandemic, the paper contributes to debates on how the pandemic has had a disproportionate effect on women's prospects and earnings.

As the COVID-19 emergency unfolded, the social, racial and gendered dimensions of the crisis became increasingly apparent exposing the vulnerability of certain groups, including women, in relation to work. The consequences of COVID-19 are not experienced equally across the population with women more likely than men to be furloughed or lose their job as a result of the pandemic.

Precarity and uncertainty are characteristics of contemporary life (Bauman, 2004, 2011) and COVID-19 led to increased job insecurity, particularly in hospitality and retail sectors where women are numerically dominant. Deregulation of employment has meant sections of the workforce have no significant worker protection (Shildrick, 2018) and since 'Precarity is a fundamental condition of neo-liberal society' (Ball, 2013: 134), the paper considers the pandemic's impact on the precariousness of women's work.

In addition to precarity, there were implications for women's work from government messaging during the pandemic. A government social media advert, subsequently dropped, encouraging us to 'Stay home, save lives' is critically analysed for its representations of women doing household chores, looking after children, and home-schooling. Although the advert reinforces gendered stereotypes, the way it paradoxically captures the reality of pandemic experiences of many women is discussed. The paper also analyses a government reskilling campaign advert, likewise later dropped, depicting a female ballet dancer with the caption: 'Fatima's next job could be in cyber'. Much criticism of the advert was expressed concerning the government's lack of support for jobs in the cultural industry as well as the negative depiction of a female ballet dancer of ethnic minority background being advised to retrain. These government adverts led to online activism protesting against their ill-judged content. The paper considers how digital activism can engender a sense of connectedness and shared values among some social media users.

The relationship between women's work in the public sphere of employment and the private sphere of the household is also examined. In the early stages of the pandemic, there was a reaffirmation among some commentators of women's place being in the home. As the COVID-19 lockdown measures were implemented, parts of the media reported accounts of professional women being back in the home, who told of how they were enjoying having time for cooking, cleaning and parenting. The tone and messaging of this media coverage is analysed regarding the mobilisation of gendered stereotypes.

The paper considers the harms of COVID-19 on women's prospects and how through digital and real world activism, gains in gender equality, deemed by the United Nations to potentially have been set back 25 years by the pandemic, can be regained.

Reproductive labour in pandemic times: assessing the caring work of family carers, waged home care workers and volunteers during the Covid-19 pandemic of 2020-1.

Read Rosie

(Bournemouth University)

This paper is based on a qualitative study of household-based caring labour during the Covid-19 pandemic, within a southern English town. The study approaches care-giving as a form of socially reproductive work (Bhattacharya 2017; Dowling, 2021; Ferguson 2020; Weeks, 2011), and explores the experiences of different groups of care providers in domestic settings during the Covid-19 pandemic. Specifically, I examine unwaged family carers, waged domiciliary care workers and volunteers involved in local state and community responses to supporting vulnerable groups at home during lockdowns.

This paper compares the spatio-temporal dimensions of caring labour practices across these groups. The reproductive labour entailed in pandemic lockdown caring produced varied experiences of connectedness, isolation, mobility, enclosure, activism and abandonment amongst these three different groups of care providers. Volunteers described a sense of connectedness, community solidarity and freedom associated with supporting others during a crisis, for example. However, for many family carers, the lockdowns were a time of acute isolation, whilst care workers experienced new levels of fear, anxiety and time-pressure associated with use of PPE in managing risk to themselves and those in their care of exposure to coronavirus. The paper will contribute to scholarly understanding of how these divergent experiences of the pandemic crisis are embedded within historical contexts of reproductive labour practiced within social relations of family, waged labour and charitable support, and their concurrent relations of gender, class and race.

Breakout Room 5

Inequalities and their intersections

Gender inequalities in clinical academic careers

Trusson Diane, Rowley Emma
(*University of Nottingham*)

This paper describes results from a multi-methods study conducted with 67 nurses, midwives, and allied health professionals and 73 medical clinical academics in England. The aim was to explore their respective experiences of combining a clinical role or medical training with academic research. Questionnaires and semi-structured interviews uncovered aspects of clinical academic careers that place women, specifically those with children, at a disadvantage when compared to their male colleagues. Findings align with statistical evidence of attrition of female clinical academics, particularly as roles become more senior. Data revealed evidence of gender stereotyping which can impinge on career progression. For example, nurses described being perceived as 'practical rather than clever' and being traditionally seen as 'handmaidens for doctors' making it difficult to assert their clinical ambitions. Furthermore, female participants described challenges in balancing clinical academic training with family life. For example, some reported difficulties in attending conferences. This not only impacts upon opportunities for dissemination of their research, but further prevents networking and subsequent feelings of connectedness within their academic communities. In addition, some women described motherhood and/or other caring responsibilities as adding another layer to their already hectic life. For example, one woman with two children as well as elderly relatives to care for had decided to leave the clinical academic pathway as she had 'limited reserves of energy' and saw no examples of people getting that balance right. With pressure to compete for limited funding, women (who make up the majority of part-time clinical academic positions) described sometimes having to make difficult choices between holding back their careers or experiencing negative consequences in their relationships. A current lack of clinical academic jobs means that there are reduced opportunities for career progression, particularly when women are confined to a particular geographic area due to childcare issues. Interviewees described feeling isolated from other female clinical academics; with fewer women in similar roles, the opportunity for peer support is constrained. Although steps are being taken by both healthcare and academic bodies to reduce gender inequalities, there are still areas for improvement in order to help women to negotiate a successful career which optimises their clinical and academic strengths and creates a space for a sense of belonging for them. Suggestions from the research participants include having more visible role models (particularly women who successfully combine clinical academic careers with family life), improving childcare facilities at conferences, flexible working patterns and creating more clinical academic posts. This is important in increasing diversity and avoiding homogeneity of clinical academics, especially at higher levels.

Work and personal-life balance of the working-class youth in modern Russia

Gavrilyuk Tatiana, Bocharov Vladislav, Karnaukhov Igor
(*Industrial University of Tyumen*)

The subject domain of the research is the correlation of work and personal-life of working-class young people in modern Russia. The analysis is focused on the subjective temporal modes of work and leisure, the main factors that determine the work-life conflict, the prospects for overcoming negative tendencies and possible ways to achieve a fair balance.

The main fields of studying work and personal-life balance are: 1) the conflict between work and personal life; 2) the conflict between work and family; 3) the impact of the work schedule on the subjective well-being. The "work-life conflict" is the extended notion which can be used taking into account the class dimension in our study. The researches reveal that middle-class people have incomparably greater access to flexible working arrangements than working-class personnel.

The object of the empirical study is the working-class youth (15-29 years old) engaged in the spheres of material production and customer service and living in the Ural Federal District of the Russian Federation (mass survey – 1534 respondents; expert survey – 100 respondents; biographical interviews – 31 informants; discourse analysis of group discussions in social Internet network “Vkontakte”). Using the means of intersectional methodology young people has been examined at the intersection of three stratification features: social class, gender and age. The factor analysis was implemented as a main tool for quantitative data analysis in the SPSS V.20.

It was found that the group under study is those who work most intensively during the longest daily working hours. So, they cannot fully satisfy their needs and find themselves in the conditions of a life survival strategy. With an increase of work hours, satisfaction with the status of work-life balance is reduced. Due to remained gender stereotypes and the weaknesses of Russian state institutions of protecting and supporting families, particularly negatively the conflict between work and personal life is experienced by women.

The qualitative research data made it possible to hear the informants' live voices: their daily working practices are often associated with overtime, lack of days off and annual entitlement, working night shifts without overtime pay. As a result, it leads them to a state of fatigue and depression. However, the working-class youth is not ready to take real actions, except for firing from the current workplace. Its class solidarity is only beginning to take shape as a virtual identity. Russian employers are not worried about the current situation with the conflict between work hours and personal life among young workers. The official trade unions have actually avoided solving problems in the social and labour sphere.

This research was financially supported by the grant of Russian Science Foundation No 17-78-20062 “Young people life strategies of the new working class in contemporary Russia”.

“... just shredding paper”: Accounts of young adults with neurological disabilities precarious journey of unemployment, casualisation and volunteerism in search for dignified secure work

Stafford Lisa, Marston Greg, Hamilton Lisa, Beatson Amanda, Chamorro-Koc Marianella
(*Queensland University of Technology*)

While achieving social and economic participation is a key ethos underpinning the United Nation's Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) 2006, the sustained influence of neoliberal and managerial principles in Australian disability employment policy and practice has significantly influenced the ways in which these systems are serving people with disabilities. Young people with disabilities continue to experience significant unemployment and underemployment in Australia and other OCED countries, while at the same time being targets of Government activation policies. All the while the pathway to sustainable employment opportunities for disabled young adults has become more complex in lieu of changing markets and credentialism (Marston 2013). The social service systems involved in young person's lives also remains fragmented, inflexible and inconsistent (Stafford et al., 2017).

Discriminatory practices (HREC, 2016), socio-cultural barriers (Critten, 2016) along with austerity welfare-to-work policies and practices (Grover & Soldatic 2012; Stafford et.al. 2019) further serve to impede their education-to-employment transitions. While a body of literature exists on factors influencing transitions between education and employment, little is understood about how young people experience their transition to work encounters.

In this presentation, we privilege the voices of five young adults with neurological disabilities (20 to 27 years of age) who are in search of secure meaningful careers using interpretative phenomenology and a critical disability lens. Using in-depth interviews, participants shared and mapped their experiences of their journey so far. A common description emerged of being stuck in a cycle of unemployment, volunteerism and casualization. They told of lengthy periods of volunteering and unemployment, some had short glimpses of paid casual work – for a few months at a time and then unemployed again or back volunteering. The participants also shared devalued, undignified encounters they experienced with disability employment services agencies and within work situations such as underemployment (4hrs/fortnight) and volunteering. What was clear from their experiences, is that secure meaningful work was challenging due to demand side influences and prejudice they encountered. Yet despite these experiences all were still driven to obtain secure meaningful work and careers.

From a critical disability lens, their findings expose the insidious entrenched ways ableism and ageism operate unchecked within disability employment services systems and within workplaces. Their stories also contest the dominate catchcry that young people just need to be more ‘motivated’ that persists within neoliberal conservative welfare to work agendas. While a great deal has been written about neoliberalism and disability welfare, little critical analysis has extended into the transition space. The encounters of the disabled young adults considered alongside broader sociol-political analysis of disability welfare-work policy suggests change is urgently needed in order to end injustices in the education to work journey for these young people.

Breakout Room 7

Open Stream

What's the point of higher education? Successful outcomes and the wider value of HE

Atfield Gaby, Hunt Will
(*University of Warwick*)

The introduction of, and subsequent increase in, student contributions to fees arguably shifted the view of higher education (HE) from that of a public good (an educated and highly skilled population) to that of a private good (an individual investment in human capital). An intensification in research into the financial returns to individuals can be seen as a direct corollary of this shift (e.g. Walker and Zhu, 2013; Britton, Dearden, Shephard and Vignoles, 2016; Conlon and Patrignani, 2011). Statistics showing that a growing number of graduates may never repay their student loans (Bolton, 2019), coupled with research suggesting that some may have earned more if they had not gone to university (Belfield et al., 2018; Britton, Dearden, Shephard and Vignoles, 2020) has only fuelled the flames of debates about the funding and value of HE. A debate that is only likely to intensify as a cohort of students graduate into a difficult labour market, post-Covid with amplified pressures on the public purse. Drawing upon quantitative and qualitative data on graduates from Futuretrack and other projects, many of whom graduated in the immediate aftermath of the last recession, the findings suggest that for graduates of some subjects maximising earnings is a secondary concern to personal definitions of value and success more closely associated with aspirations related to personal fulfilment and contribution to society. There is also evidence that long-term career values may account for some, but not all, of the variation in occupational outcomes. This challenges the view, implicit in the dominant discourse, that studying for a degree should be viewed as a personal investment in human capital to which individuals seek to maximise the financial return.

Multiple job holding in the changing labour market

Kauhanen Merja
(*Labour Institute for Economic Research*)

Rapid technological development, globalisation, and demographic change are mega-trends that are transforming labour markets and the structure of employment. These mega-trends have also brought with them more diverse forms of work. Part of this diversification of work relationship is the rise of multi-activity at work: workers holding several jobs and multiple income sources at the same time. Multiple job holding has become more common also in Finland, but there is still only scarce research on the topic related to the Finnish labour market. The aim of the paper is to provide new research evidence on the determinants of multiple job holding as a whole and its different types and on the income consequences of multiple job holding. The data utilised in empirical analyses (statistical models) is Statistic Finland's large register-based individual level panel data. The results suggest that men, younger, more educated and living in country side are more likely to hold multiple jobs. Insufficient income from the main job seems to be motive for many. The most common type of multiple job holding is to combine salary work in the primary job with another salary work. The determinants differ to some extent by the type of multiple job holding. There also exists considerable heterogeneity in the income consequences between the different types of multiple job holding.

Horses for courses: Subject differences in graduate outcomes at 3.5 years after leaving university in the UK using a skills-based classification of graduate jobs

Hunt William, Baldauf Beate, Lyonette Clare
(*University of Sussex; Warwick Institute for Employment Research;*)

Analysis of the Longitudinal Destinations of Leavers from Higher Education survey for the 2010/11 graduating cohort, a cohort graduating in the aftermath of the last recession, shows that overly-simplistic conceptions of graduate success underestimate the value of obtaining a degree in certain much maligned subjects. Using a skills-based classification of graduate jobs (Elias and Purcell, 2013) the research finds that while vocationally oriented subjects previously associated with higher earnings (Belfield et al., 2019a, 2019b) – Medicine, Nursing, Maths, Computer science and Engineering – increase the chances of having an 'Expert' job, more generalist subjects that have been linked with lower earnings (e.g. Creative arts, Languages and Mass communication and documentation) are better for accessing graduate jobs where ability to communicate is central. The research demonstrates the value of using a more nuanced conception of graduate jobs and shows that debate about the value of a degree needs to move on from an overly narrow focus on earnings. The research also shows that embarking on a subject with lower earnings returns on average may not be such an unwise choice for those who aspire to more communicative graduate jobs and are less concerned about maximising the financial returns to their investments in education, as models based on human capital theory appear to assume.

Paper Session 5

Thursday, 26 August 2021

11:00 - 12:30

Breakout Room 1

Technology, AI, Big Data, algorithms and new forms of work

Conceptualising Worker Data Science: Building Leverage in the Gig Economy

Gregory Karen

(University of Edinburgh)

This paper is a work-in-progress and explores and develops the concept of “worker data science” in relationship to current data-driven organising in the platform economy. As is well documented, the on-demand, gig, or platform economy is predicated on the capture, analysis, and operationalising of data, much of which flows from workers’ individual actions and labour patterns (Rosenblat and Stark 2016). From companies such as Amazon, which continually monitor warehouse workers’ data to maximise productivity and efficiency (Briken and Taylor, 2018), to on-demand services such as Uber or Deliveroo, which rely on granular worker data to manage distributed fleets of workers (Reid-Musson et al, 2020), flows of labour-generated data facilitate the complex coordination of ‘on-demand’ logistics that characterise the digitised economy (Richardson 2019). This proprietary aggregation of labour-generated data has brought forth unprecedented commercial success for platforms themselves, providing them with a structural position from which to control the terms of interaction with entire markets (Rahman and Thelen 2019). For individuals such data harvesting has now simply been built into the terms of work, while companies have continued to develop and deploy digital technologies that use massive data collections to allow tighter monitoring and control over work processes (Taylor and Howcroft, 2021). Whilst courier and distribution platforms have pioneered these data-driven platforms, analogous systems, or the “Uberisation” of work, are also being developed and applied in other sectors, and particularly in the care economy, health care, and mental health (Cotton 2020, Vallas 2019). As such, the platform economy is a data science testing ground for work more broadly and makes this testing ground visible.

As Sadowski (2019) suggests, such data gathering should be understood as a new tool of value accumulation.

However, this new regime of accumulation has largely seen human workers and work processes as opportunities for data extraction. To date, the capacity for workers to resist, reframe, and successfully intervene in the data-as-capital model has been elusive. In this paper, we suggest that the concept of worker data science be developed to facilitate workers to expand their understanding of data-driven work and data rights in order to build their leverage and agency in the platform economy. Worker data science projects enable workers to pursue developments in organising, technology, and observation, and at the same time to contribute to the research and learning agenda in the field of platform work and the gig economy, creating opportunities to draw support from trade unions, universities, funding bodies and other institutions. In parallel, we suggest that worker observatories be developed and we draw on the experience of building The Workers Observatory (2020) in Edinburgh, exploring this site as a case study and model for workers across cities.

Justification in the Datafied Workplace: The Case of Hiring

Dencik Lina, Stevens Sanne

(Cardiff University)

The advent and growth in uptake of automated hiring systems powered by data-driven tools (IFOW 2020, CDEI 2020) has started to garner critical attention from researchers who have explored the implications of these technologies, particularly with regards to issues such as discrimination, accountability and transparency (Bogen and Aaron 2018, Ajunwa and Greene 2019). Much of this has been garnered from industry material and company documents, but often without reflections from actual providers of these technologies on how they understand and position the use of such tools in the automation of various aspects of the hiring process. In this paper we explore the contested terrain of what it means to be qualified for a job by drawing on interviews with eight prominent industry providers of data-driven tools for hiring used in the United States and Europe. In what is still a relatively small and nascent industry, these interviews provide a rare insight into the way providers situate data systems in relation to problem-definitions and solutions in hiring. To contextualise our analysis, we draw on the work of Boltanski (Boltanski & Chiapello 2005, Boltanski & Thévenot 2006) who discusses recruitment as an example of central ‘tests’ in capitalism that undergird the conditions

within which certain economic activities are deemed legitimate and others not. That is, 'tests' refer to the way reality is understood at moments when justification needs to be clarified (Bogusz 2014: 135, Boltanski & Thévenot 2006: 226). We use this conceptual framework as a way to analyse the definitions of problems and solutions advanced by providers of data-driven hiring tools as expressions of the way underlying justification regimes for social dynamics in capitalism are being actively shaped. Whilst we are familiar with justifications for data-driven processes and knowledge in terms of efficiency and objectivity, we find that providers integrate such perceived affordances into a broader vision of datafication in hiring geared towards an optimisation for fit. This vision entails not only a more efficient and fairer hiring process through the unique ability of data analytics to capture people as they actually are, but also shifts the terms of what it means to be suitable for a job towards cognitive and persona-centric evaluations. We therefore see the justification regime supported by providers as part of a process of establishing new tests, understood as procedures that require legitimacy for capitalism to function. These procedures in turn, we suggest, have implications for how problems and solutions are approached in relation to hiring and, moreover, what it means to be qualified for a job.

Rapid Recruitment in Retail: How AI was used in response to increased labour demand during the coronavirus pandemic

Hunt William, O'reilly Jacqueline
(*University of Sussex*)

This paper investigates a large retail firm's use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in response to the need to massively upscale recruitment due to the coronavirus pandemic. It charts how existing recruitment practices were adapted to speed up recruitment to respond to increased labour demand at store level while also aiming to reduce bias and improve employment outcomes. It charts how lack of information and trust in the system among users, led to behaviours that threatened to undermine the organisational objectives of the changes and acted as a form of resistance to organisational and technological change.

Advancements in AI and machine learning (ML) have greatly expanded the range of applications that 'clever robots' can be put to (Brynjolfsson, Rock and Syverson, 2017), reaching far beyond routine manual and cognitive tasks into the domain of professional-level occupations (CIPD, 2019). AI and automated hiring systems are increasingly being applied to all four stages of the hiring pipeline: advertising/sourcing, screening, interviewing/assessment, and selection and onboarding (Raghavan et al, 2020; Brione, 2020). Proponents argue that computers can work faster, for longer and are unencumbered by human biases (Bogan and Reike, 2018). Others argue that Algorithmic Decision Making (ADM) can replicate and even reinforce existing social biases (O'Neil, 2016), while also providing the illusion of objectivity (Eubanks, 2018). This paper presents findings from case study research at a large international retail organisation. Drawing on qualitative interviews with management and staff involved in recruitment at the organisation, and adopting a critical management studies perspective (Burawoy, 1982; Thompson, 2020), the research examines the use of AI in recruitment decisions, the responses of those tasked with using the system and the organisational outcomes.

The research shows how the pandemic acted as a catalyst for bringing forward existing plans to elevate the role of AI in recruitment decisions. This was seen as serving four organisational goals: 1) ensuring hiring decisions were 'fact-based' and not influenced by human biases, 2) improving retention by making hiring 'data-driven', 3) reducing the time needed to fill a position and 4) protecting health and safety during the pandemic. A number of efforts were made during the design and implementation stage in order to achieve these goals including efforts to counter potential algorithmic bias. Lack of awareness and trust in the changes, however, led to behaviours that threatened to undermine the stated objectives of the changes as staff found ways of working round the changes. The case study provides evidence of how AI is being used in organisations and reveals the substituting and complementing effects of automation technologies (Autor, 2015). The findings also reveal how worker responses can shape the technology use at organisation-level (Bijker, 1995; Manyika et al., 2017), as aspects of the system were developed to increase transparency and assuage employee scepticism.

Breakout Room 2

Dignity at work, decent work and job quality

'Upon the gears and upon the wheels' : terror convergence and total administration in the neoliberal university.

Granter Edward, Mccann Leo, Aroles Jeremy, Hyde Paula
(*University of Birmingham*)

'Upon the gears and upon the wheels' : terror convergence and total administration in the neoliberal university.

University governance is becoming increasingly autocratic as marketization intensifies. Far from the classical ideal of a professional collegium run according to academic norms, today's universities feature corporate cultures and senior leadership teams disconnected from both staff and students, and intolerant of dissenting views. This is not a completely new phenomenon. In 1960s America, senior leaders developed a technocratic and managerialist model of the university, in keeping with theories around the 'convergence' of socio-economic systems towards a pluralist 'industrial society'. This administrative-managerial vision was opposed by radical students, triggering punitive responses that reflected how universities' control measures were at the time mostly aimed at students. Today, their primary target is academics. Informed by Critical Theory and based on an autoethnographic account of a university restructuring programme, we argue that the direction of convergence in universities has not been towards liberal, pluralist, democracy but towards neo-Stalinist organizing principles. Performance measurements – 'targets and terror' – are powerful mechanisms for the expansion of managerial power or, in Marcuse's words, 'total administration'. Total administration in the contemporary university damages teaching, learning, workplace democracy and freedom of speech on campus, suggesting that the critique of university autocracy by 1960s students and scholars remains highly relevant.

[Abstract is from McCann, L. and Granter, E. and Hyde, P. and Aroles, J. (2020) "Upon the gears and upon the wheels': terror convergence and total administration in the neoliberal university.', *Management Learning*, 51 (4). pp. 431-451.]

Submission Note: The authors are continuing to work on the themes from this paper and we would greatly value the opportunity to present it so that we can take questions and viewpoints to inform and strengthen future research/publication. We will be updating it to take account of recent developments in University management, dissent and repression.

The Commercialisation of Knowledge Work: Risk and Implications for Worker Wellbeing in Modern Organisations: The Case of Academia

Halliday Sallyann

(Leeds Beckett University)

We live in uncertain times. Work is changing at a rapid pace. The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic has changed many worker's experience of 'doing' work – both 'how' and 'where'. More than ever perhaps, the ability of workers to perform within their work roles within organisations depends on mental wellbeing, personal resilience and adaptability. Pre-COVID, it was already being argued that new forms of work often demand substantially more from the worker and that workers may find that the level of job demands has increased dramatically (Tausig, 2013, p.440). Managing and coping with stressful roles, decisions and environments is an inherent feature of modern work roles and those workers who can best cope with these stressors stand the best chance of not only surviving, but of succeeding (Hunter and Chaskalson, 2013).

This paper explores the implications of these issues within the context of the UK HE sector.

In these turbulent and economic and social times with increased pressure in all employment contexts to satisfy the 'customer', the nature of the work in academia is of interest. One survey carried out as far back as 2014, showed that 43% of academic staff exhibited symptoms of at least a mild mental disorder – nearly twice the prevalence of mental disorder compared with the general population (Gorczyński, Hill and Rathod, 2014).

The nature of tasks that academic workers are required to carry out has changed, as well as the way that their work activities are organised. There is a need for constant updating and upskilling – arguably, the requirement for workers to become what Castells (1996) termed 'reprogrammable labour'. The COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated such changes. This is of great concern for academic workers, the HE sectors, and of course, society itself. As such, the paper argues for increased mental well-being training/support for these knowledge workers in this new era of work.

Formal complaint as a form of academic activism: An autoethnographic account of an early career academic reclaiming dignity at work

Naik Vani

(Loughborough University)

The aim of this novel and innovative stream 'On the Front Line' is to hear the 'voice of the worker' and their experiences of work and employment. Yet, as illustrated in past 'On the Front Line' articles, there is an underlying assumption that 'the worker' is independent of the academic. However, what happens when an academic researcher dares to reclaim their dignity and a sense of connectedness to their work through activism? While we may be more familiar with collective activism, the efforts of a lone individual in advocating for their dignity and respect at work should not be ignored. What can activism by a junior woman of colour through initiating a formal complaint against three senior white men teach us? How can such actions allow me to regain a sense of connectedness and a sense of citizenship to the academic community? The aim of this presentation is to enrich work sociology by offering a vivid account of the specific gendered and racialised challenges encountered by junior academic researchers.

My PhD research project focuses on gender inequality in academia. Specifically, the focal point of the advertised funded studentship I was awarded was to investigate the lack of women professors in engineering. My interest in this topic was initially a purely theoretical one. However, through a series of interviews with participants, my own personal journey in academia began to unravel, as I started to understand that I was recognising much of what my participants were saying. The juxtaposition of being funded by a university to conduct this research, yet at the same time, exerting the very systemic oppression against women in academia was a dilemma.

Ethically, it felt unconscionable to continue conducting the research on gender inequality in academia at the same time as reaching the conclusion that the very same institutional barriers my participants were revealing were having a deleterious effect on my working life. After pursuing all informal avenues of redress, the last option was a formal complaint. I took this decision to make the formal complaint as I realised that as a student, the Office of Independent Adjudicator was a neutral independent body who could rule on the case. On the other hand, complaints from academic researchers as employees operate within a closed-shop environment with little transparency or accountability. This account will complement the growing field of complaint processes within universities such as Sara Ahmed's upcoming book entitled 'Complaint!'.

If the aim of research is to ultimately create an impact, what better way than for the research to create impact during its course? This presentation will explore what academic activism looks like on the front line when the enemy forces of academia build barricades to block out the 'other'. This presentation will form the basis of a way of regaining dignity through an autoethnographic account of negotiating the complexities in daring to be an #AcademicActivist, both in research and in negotiating the dexterity required in being an early career academic in a precarious era.

Breakout Room 3

Social movements, unions, voice and activism

Advancing workers' rights in the gig economy. The communicative strategies of indie unions

Pero Davide, Downey John

(University of Nottingham)

Despite the growing number of precarious workers being brought about by the interconnected processes of outsourcing, decentralization and destandardization (Kalleberg 2009; Standing 2011; Fleming 2017), the interests of these workers have largely been overlooked by mainstream unions and political parties alike (Standing 2011; Ness 2014; Gumbrell-McCormick 2011; Martinez et al 2017; Alberti and Però 2018). This neglect has been encouraged by the widespread perception that precarious workers, especially if migrant, are 'unorganizable', too hard to represent, politically passive or dysfunctional (Jaing and Korczynski 2016; Però and Solomos 2010; Ramakrishnan and Bloemraad 2008).

Contrary to this perception, and despite a hostile legal and political environment (De Stefano 2017; Virdee and McGeever 2017), precarious (migrant) workers in Britain have in recent years been showing increasing signs of political and industrial vitality. Some of them have self-organized forming new grassroots unions – indie unions – and managed to advance their employment rights and general conditions (Moyers-Lee and Lopez 2017; Però 2019; Cant 2020; Woodcock 2020). They have obtained a long string of successes against much more powerful employers amid a myriad of obstacles, lack of material resources and institutional support (Acciari and Però 2017; Shalmy 2018). Drawing on a combination of multi-sited ethnography and frame and content analysis, this paper addresses a crucial aspect of indie unions' successful strategies, namely, how they frame the conditions of precarious workers through self-mediation practices that find resonance in mainstream media, an approach that we call communicative unionism. Exploring this aspect is important because the indie union phenomenon constitutes a rare instance of effective workers' organizing in the advanced neo-liberal society. It is also important for it provides a strategic vantage point to advance sociological theory on labour mobilization in relation to the significance of symbolic and discursive power and framing in contemporary industrial disputes.

The paper argues that adequate accounting for the effectiveness of precarious workers' initiatives such as those of indie unions, requires encompassing the communicative and framing practices they direct outside the workplace, i.e. to the general public, to consumers and to media professionals. Analytically, this means exploring their societal power in its discursive dimension (Schmalz et al. 2018), that is their ability to assert their interests by articulating appealing messages in the public sphere. In other words, we suggest that in the current age of precarity and outsourcing it is especially important to examine the neglected question in both media studies and the sociology of work and industrial relation of precarious workers organizations' communicative ability to make inroads (both directly through self-mediation and indirectly through mass-mediation) into civil society organizations and groups and among the general public (including employers' client organizations and customers), and media professionals.

#TherapistsConnect: Relational activism through virtual and online communities.

Blundell Peter, Binstead Caz

(#TherapistsConnect)

The global pandemic has changed the nature of many of our relationships, including those needed for collective activism and social change. Whereas the opportunities for creating new types of relationships, including those required for activism, have been transformed through the increasing use of social media, online platforms, and virtual spaces.

This paper describes the authors' use of social media to create and facilitate an international network of therapists called #TherapistsConnect. This platform is underpinned by the values of relational activism (i.e., locating relationships as the locus of change). Further, the authors argue that this form of activism is a viable and potentially powerful form of activism which can often be underused. This paper critically reflects on the authors' experiences of this community, and its ability to influence change within the therapy profession in the UK.

This paper details the authors innovative use of social media to create safe and supportive spaces to foster better relationships between therapists. These spaces have included: support groups; Twitter discussions groups; podcast discussions; book groups; and facilitated online debates on pertinent and challenging topics. Events have also included developing creative spaces, for example a recent poetry event asked participants to turn to their inward world; exploring what connection meant for them and opening this out, in spoken word, to the wider community. Therapists can often work in isolation; therefore, a sense of community can often be lacking. Furthermore, due to an unregulated profession in the UK, there has been much disharmony and disunity for some years. This has stemmed from issues around poverty and unpaid work in the counselling professions, as well as questions around inequality; a stark divide between systems that support what has historically been a white middle-class profession, and the majority of 'on the ground' therapists who desire to be seen and respected. The creation and development of safe spaces have allowed respectful and open debate to take place amongst professionals, thereby promoting activism through conversation. These conversations have encompassed a diverse range of voices, including many international therapists, adding an important intersectional perspective, for a 21st century profession. These safe spaces have also helped counteract dispersion, and cultivated closer relationships between therapists, combatting isolation amongst therapists over vast ranges of cultural groups, as well as promoting positive values around equality and diversity. We argue that open, online communities can be used as a form of relational activism. Offering opportunities for shared spaces, that enable relationship building, networking, information sharing, and critical analysis of important topics through discussion and debate. These communities can also be a formidable force for advocating for, and influencing, social and structural change.

How creative freelancers organised using online occupational communities in the wake of COVID-19

Patrick Holly

(Edinburgh Napier University)

How Creative Freelancers Organised using Online Occupational Communities in the Wake of COVID-19. While increasing academic attention has been paid to the precariousness (Standing, 2011) of contemporary freelance work, less research has examined how workers organise collectively in response. As the platform economy grows and employers seek greater labour flexibility, the issue of how to organise outside of the traditional workplace continues to gain prominence in practitioner communities and in scholarly research. This topic has gained a more immediate relevance due to the global COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic has increased unemployment, pushing more workers into (pseudo) self-employment (a trend fuelled by the growth during lockdown of platforms such as Deliveroo). The issue of how freelance workers collectively organise has arguably never been so important. This paper builds on previous work which shows the importance of online forums to building occupational knowledge, communities and resistance (Sutherland et al, 2020; Patrick and Kranert, 2020). It reports on a research project in progress, on creative freelancers. Like other freelancers, self-employed creatives have experienced considerable hardships due to the pandemic, but have also identified new opportunities to organise. The project seeks to understand how freelance creatives use online employment support networks (particularly Facebook groups) to organise and support one another in the wake of the pandemic. Drawing on a 6 month netnographic (Kozinets, 2010) study of 5 such communities, 9 interviews with network founders/admins, and 6 interviews with creative freelancers, the research focusses on (1) the effects of the pandemic on freelancers (2) the role of online support networks in mitigating these effects and (3) the challenges of establishing and maintaining the communities. The emerging findings show that substantial online communities (10000s of workers in some cases) formed or adapted in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. These communities rapidly formed a system of support for creative freelancers which extended far beyond the traditional function of a Facebook group – with hardship funds, free mental health support and guidance booklets being key examples. The data also shows how quickly the communities' founders became recognised as representatives of members (and of creative freelancers in general) by both the media and politicians (e.g. being given a regular seat on government roundtables). The paper details the conflict that emerges over

representation in these communities, where leaders are commonly unelected, and sometimes even reluctant. These findings will be of interest to those looking to understand how freelance workers collectively organise in response to occupational crisis, and looking to apply this learning to other contexts, for the purposes of improving worker representation.

Breakout Room 4

Insecurity, precarity and peripheralisation

Informalisation in gig food delivery: the case of hyper flexible and precarious work.

Mendonca Pedro, Kougiannou Nadia, Clark Ian

(Napier Edinburgh University)

This article examines the informalisation of work and employment within gig work space governed by platforms and how informalised work is condoned by companies and initiated and reproduced by workers. The contribution to new knowledge made by this study is a focus on the emergence of locally performed sub-contract app-work in the food-delivery sector. Theoretically, a digital platform and associated app intermediates between customers who pay for work performed by a producer, with the platform retaining a percentage of the exchange (De Stefano, 2016). The platform and software intermediates the relation between customer, worker and producer (a restaurant) by programming the required performance of specific tasks. These include setting the cost of orders, optimising the supply and demand relationship between producer and customer and indicating to the worker an optimum travel route from producer to customer (Duggan et al., 2020). The presence of sub-contract platform work prompts two research questions; first, what are the drivers that lead individual workers to engage in informalised sub-contracted gig work within a particular sector? Second, to what extent do gig economy businesses condone this practice if it is known to them? Therefore, the article examines how gig workers and gig economy companies create, both directly and indirectly, alternative and informal regulatory spaces that exploit workers who are prepared to accept sub-contract work in food delivery. The alternative space created by sub-contracting may supersede or operate alongside formalized regulatory spaces, that is, the app and the platform, making these one of several regulatory spaces that govern a sector.

The article is based on fieldwork focused on food couriers' experiences working for one food delivery company in a city in the East Midlands between February 2019 and December 2019. This article draws on qualitative data from 31 semi-structured interviews with food couriers. Ages of the interviewed riders ranged from 19 and 45, and the group was constituted of 29 male and 2 female respondents. Of those interviewed, 22 were British, and 9 were migrants, of which 5 were from outside the European Union. Eight interviewees were at the time of fieldwork university students, and another 23 were not current or former university students and were attempting to work full-time as food delivery couriers or are combining it with other part-time jobs.

Precarity, the pandemic and harms of work: the view from a northern heartland

Thomas Peter, Jeffery Bob, Beresford Ruth

(Sheffield Hallam University)

Low pay and insecure work are on the increase in Sheffield. A combination of deindustrialisation, financialisation and austerity have driven an economy dominated by low pay and precarious working conditions (Beatty and Fothergill, 2016; Thomas et al, 2020; Etherington, 2020). This period has also been marked by a proliferation of and increased stratification by employment types, ranging from employees and workers to (dependent) self-employment (Moore and Newsome, 2018). Combined, this has contributed to the rise of the gig economy, zero-hour contracts and oppressive working practices. Precarity at work often means insecurity about working hours, short-notice cancellation of shifts and worries about pay. But it also comes with a significant loss of rights and the routinisation of a variety of 'harms' at work. These include exposure to bullying, harassments and violence, exploitations and 'thefts' such as having to pay for uniforms, vehicle hire, DBS checks and be subject to arbitrary fines, discouragement of union representation and lack of collective bargaining coverage. Collectively, and taking a zemiological perspective, we would describe these as harms of work (Scott, 2017). Two key mechanisms in operation here are 'recruited acquiescence' (Royle, 2000) and 'flexible despotism' (Wood, 2018), whereby affordances at the legislative level and strategies at the company and workplace levels (managerial prerogative and workplace control) give rise to flexible despotism, variably experienced due to societal and demographic factors. Drawing on a qualitative study involving 65 semi-structured interviews with precarious workers and trade union officials in the city across a range of sectors (from retail and fast-food to health and social care) we explore how harms at work are an everyday occurrence in the context of an increasingly detrimental work environment. Within this context we explore how the situation in Sheffield has been refracted by the Coronavirus pandemic, as revealed through 25 qualitative interviews with low paid and precariously employed workers. These workers have experienced a range of possible consequences associated with the pandemic, from

being disincentivised to self-isolate through a lack of access to sick pay, to being furloughed at sub-minimum wage rates, to redundancy and summary dismissal, and of being brought back into work amidst inadequate provision of health and safety and in some instances on poorer terms and conditions. We argue that the Coronavirus pandemic has shone a light on these injustices, but it did not create them, and are the predictable consequences of a lack of bargaining power (Thomas et al, 2020).

Precarity, worker controls and worker resistance in Brazilian wind power supply chains

Kohn Paula, Dibben Pauline, Meira Juliana
(*Sheffield University Management School*)

Existent literature has drawn attention to the precarity of work in the construction sector. This paper contributes to the existing evidence base on the nature of work in this industry, but develops it through showing how workers are subjected to a range of mechanisms of control across the wind power supply chain. To do this, it draws on literature on precarious work and labour process theory, including forms of worker resistance.

The paper draws on fieldwork conducted in Brazil between 2018 and 2019 which involved 48 interviews with managers and workers in nine companies in addition to stakeholders including union representatives, industry associations and labour inspectors and government officials. The nine companies covered construction sites, operations and maintenance and logistics across different regions in Brazil.

The findings revealed how in the wind power industry in Brazil, due to the remote location of wind power sites and the pervasive use of temporary contracts, workers faced job insecurity and there was little or no infrastructure in place to provide decent working conditions. This situation had been exacerbated by the recent labour law which removed workers' right to redress and weakened the ability of both unions and labour inspectors to protect workers.

In many cases, market controls meant that workers were glad to have any job at all. In terms of how performance management was used, managers used performance indicators that were based on aspects that were not necessarily related to employees' capabilities or skills, leading to a lack of perceived fairness and inequality. Cultural controls were used to discipline workers. Meanwhile, many workers were subjected to poor working and living conditions, in remote locations and away from their families which, in turn, impacted on well-being and homelife. Unions had, so far, failed to represent workers' interests effectively, at least partly due to their lack of coordination across the supply chain. The study's findings helps to extend the literature on how precarity impacts on working conditions and livelihoods while extending labour process theory through revealing how mechanisms of control are operationalised through supply chains and how there has been limited worker resistance. The findings therefore speak to concerns around the nature of work and its implications for broader society.

Breakout Room 5

Conference Doctoral Session

Old-Age Employment and Social Inequalities: A Review of Literature

Lee Kun
(*University of Oxford*)

This study aims to explain the relationship between old-age employment and social inequalities in ageing societies. Tensions have arisen recently between the policy goal of active ageing and of reducing social inequalities, as policies to promote old-age employment tend to affect low-income older adults disproportionately. Nevertheless, country-level longitudinal data suggest that raising old-age employment does not necessarily increase social inequalities. This review paper is an introductory part of my doctoral project that aims to solve the complex puzzles of old-age employment and social inequalities. The paper offers a synthesis of the relevant literature from various disciplines. The first part of this paper presents individual-level explanations for old-age employment. Among diverse theoretical approaches, economic models highlight the role of financial incentives from social security programmes. Other economic and gerontological research identifies declining health and productivity as crucial factors of retirement, despite ambiguities in empirical evidence. Sociological studies emphasise variations in the institutionalised life course formed by cultural and social norms.

The next section brings in the outcomes of employment that shape social inequalities in later life. It aims to explore the differential influence of macro-social institutions across socio-economic groups. The dimensions of inequality involve flexibilisation, destabilisation and stratification of late careers as well as material and subjective well-being. The section also integrates the models of welfare regimes and the recent literature on labour market dualisation to explain the cross-national variations in social inequalities. The paper concludes by summarising what is known and what is to be explored in the whole project."

Workers' Organisations Responses to Crisis: Examining the Case of Domestic Workers during the COVID-19 Pandemic in Mexico

Teixeira Fernanda
(*The University of Manchester*)

Paid domestic workers were disproportionately affected by the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020. Unable to work online or at home, they had their livelihood and economic security threatened by the rapid loss of jobs and income in the wake of pandemic in many regions. Mexico was no different: more than 33% of domestic workers lost their jobs. Among those who remained employed, working conditions deteriorated; many had their incomes and hours of work reduced, while others were forced to work longer hours or perform more tasks for the same salary. In response to this dire situation, domestic workers' organisations (DWOs) - that is, trade unions and community-based labour organisations - were very active during the pandemic, promoting various actions aimed at supporting workers in this female-dominated sector. Providing direct services to workers, lobbying and raising awareness about the plight of domestic workers, these workers' organisations, together with social allies - mainly feminist groups - championed decent work, denounced labour abuses and demanded government action. Drawing on qualitative content analysis of newspaper articles and interviews with representatives of DWOs and social allies, this article sheds light on the importance of cooperation between DWOs and the cross-movement coalitions between the feminist movement and DWOs to advance the domestic workers' collective interests. It argues that, in a context of almost total inaction on the part of the government, DWOs responses to the crisis were the only form of support that domestic workers received during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Occupational Identity and the Post-redundancy Employment of Scottish Heavy Industry Workers

Ferns James Patrick
(*Strathclyde University*)

This paper will explore occupational identity and community in relation to the post-redundancy employment transitions of Scottish steelworkers and shipbuilders. The general lack of archival information which encapsulates the often emotional narratives of redundancy and displacement associated with job loss makes oral history an indispensable tool in understanding the true significance of this transition.

Scottish heavy industry is well-known for its comprehensive occupational identity, defined by trade unionism, camaraderie, masculinity, and a powerful sense of community embeddedness (Walley, 2013; McIvor, 2004). Strangleman (2008) argues that heavy industries exerted a strong cultural influence over the communities in which they were embedded. Indeed, Brown (1985) contends that heavy industry workers report a greater sense of occupational identity than workers employed in other occupations – partly attributed to their long period of service, which allows time to develop strong occupational bonds.

Heavy industry experienced a sharp decline in the face of the rapid deindustrialisation which typified the 1980s and early 1990s, forcing workers into early retirement, unemployment, or the pursuit of alternative employment. Former heavy industry workers generally found their post-redundancy employment inferior to heavy industry workers: conditions were eroded, trade unions were disempowered, occupational communities were underdeveloped, and workers were atomised. Although largely negative, interviewees' employment transitions did engender some positive outcomes, specifically in relation to a healthier working environment, as well as a greater sense of occupational autonomy. This coexistence of both positive and negative narratives not only emphasises workers' often nuanced experience of deindustrialisation, but also highlights workers' often contradictory understanding"

Breakout Room 6**COVID-19 effects on work, employment and power****Trapped in (im)mobility – posting of workers from Poland before and after COVID-19 lockdowns**

Brzozowska Anita, Salamonska Justyna, Matuszczyk Kamil
(*University of Warsaw, Centre of Migration Research*)

The posting of workers in the framework of the provision of services has become a central feature of employment practices in various countries (Wagner 2018), partially used to satisfy some of the identified labour shortages in European Union member states (Fellin, Ferro, Fullin 2007). Studies on posting have focused mainly on the legal framework and interaction between EU rules on posting and national rule enforcement systems (Rasnača and Bernaciak 2020) as well as national industrial relations responds to pressures from European Union market-making and the political economy of free movement (Arnholtz and Andersen 2017; Arnholtz and Lillie 2019; Mussche and Lens 2019). Scholars have also studied union responses to posted work (Dølvik and Eldring 2006; Lillie and Sippola

2011) and abusive and exploitative practices involved in posting in specific market segments (Martin and Prokkola 2017; Meardi et al. 2012).

The proposed paper will contribute to the posting of workers and labour migration debates by analysing posted work and the layers of vulnerability in the construction and care sectors before and during the pandemic. We focus on Poland as one of the EU key countries from which workers are being posted. The paper will provide comparative insight into uncertainty and insecurity born of complicated interactions between national systems, different levels of governance and non-harmonised policies during the COVID-19 pandemic. The empirical material was collected in the framework of ongoing and past research on posting, namely the Con3Post and POW-Bridge projects (funded by the European Commission) carried out in 2019 and 2020. We draw on qualitative data from two focus group interviews and 15 interviews with employers and stakeholders, shedding light on the layers of vulnerability in the care and construction sectors. The second source is a unique set of administrative data of the Social Insurance Institution (ZUS) covering portable documents A1 issued by Poland, enabling us to track how posting numbers changed in time. Issues of workers' vulnerability became even more evident during the COVID-19 pandemic. Many posted workers continued providing essential services, including health care, food service, and transport, when the COVID-19 pandemic has shut down much of the European economy. Mid-March 2020 chaos and lack of information emerged in Europe, employers did not know how national markets would react and whether borders would remain open. Workers were afraid to go abroad when Poland went into lockdown. Quarantined posted workers faced challenges related to salary and insurance entitlements. The collective housing (common in the construction sector) and work in private households (common in the care sector) heightened health exposure risks in work and outside work settings. Delays in issuing portable documents A1 (based on which postings take place) already occurring in the pre-COVID-19 times now could have severe consequences for workers and their families access to health services in Poland and abroad.

Regulatory change in times of crisis: Canadian healthcare professions during COVID-19

Adams Tracey

(The University of Western Ontario)

The COVID-19 pandemic has placed strains on healthcare systems worldwide. Grappling with a surge in demand for health services, stakeholders from state institutions, professions, and hospitals began to rethink healthcare divisions of labour and professional scopes of practice with renewed vigour. In Canada, from the beginning of the pandemic, provincial governments passed by-laws, legislation, and orders to tweak who does what in the healthcare field. While some of these changes may be temporary, others open opportunities for enhanced scope of practice over the long term for certain professionals. There are signs that the pandemic could shift inter-professional relations, as some professions' gain while others do not, or even see some previous benefits rolled back. The pandemic has opened up opportunities for some professions to pursue professional projects, while others are seeing diminished opportunities. Beyond this, in several provinces, more sweeping change is underway, as governments implement legislation altering how professions are regulated. These changes diminish lingering self-regulation, and alter state-profession relations. The rise of telehealth and virtual care during the pandemic is necessitating further regulatory change. The regulation of healthcare professional work post-pandemic could be significantly transformed in a short period of time, in Canada. This paper explores changes in healthcare regulation in several Canadian provinces to understand shifts within the ecology of professions and the changing nature of state-profession relations. Influenced by neo-Weberian, ecological and organizational theories, I examine the factors and forces driving change, and identify pandemic winners and losers. This study is based on multiple sources of data: regulatory orders and by-laws, legislation, public reports and media statements, and interviews with regulators and state actors in 3 provinces. Content analysis and thematic coding are used to analyse the data to understand regulatory change better. Findings suggest that while the processes at work are complex, and vary across province, the pandemic appears to be altering not only the internal dimensions of the ecology of professions, but also the link between the professions and the state ecologies, with significant implications for state-profession relations, and the provision and regulation of health services in the years to come. Implications for theorizing profession-state relations and regulatory change will be discussed.

Perceived well-being and productivity of a senior citizen during the Covid-19 lockdown. An account of collaborative witnessing.

Orel Marko, Tatoun Sarah

(Prague University of Economics and Business)

The 2020 has been stirred by the novel coronavirus that has changed how we live, socialise and interact. While the pandemic has impacted the entire population, the older adults and seniors citizens found themselves in a population group that is at a greater risk of being hospitalised or dying if they are diagnosed with the disease. Governments across the globe have implemented specific measures to protect this vulnerable group and mitigate the effects of the pandemic on the healthcare system, with physical distancing being one of the strategies to control localised outbreaks. While several, mainly large scale studies investigate senior citizens and their response to the pandemic

(e.g., Armitage & Nellums, 2020; Daoust, 2020; Meng et al., 2020; Van Jaarsveld, 2020), the impact on well-being and productivity of those older adults who are working past retirement age and are actively involved in a local work setting is still largely under-researched.

The purpose of the research is to understand how senior citizens' well-being and productivity can be impacted due to the Covid-19 related lockdown and not having the ability to frequent a local shared office space. Moreover, the conducted study has been on the lookout for comprehension on how shared and flexible office environments such as local coworking spaces can remotely support the active older adults with various community-supported and productivity-related tools. To understand these elements and their change through the pandemic, the research revolved around a retired senior ex-pat, permanently living in Prague and actively working as a novel writer. In the pre-pandemic period, the said individual has assiduously frequent a local coworking space with the aim of maintaining a sense of community and belonging to the group of active workers, seeking knowledge-related support and participating in group-related work sessions that had positive impacts on both her well-being and the level of her productivity. The pandemic course has changed how she perceives work and socialisation in a coworking space and her response by transitioning to the home office.

The methodological framework has been built on shared reflexive ethnography or what Ellis & Rawicki (2013) have called collaborative witnessing. This rather novel and somewhat underused qualitative approach can be categorised as a form of relational autoethnography that allows researchers to focus on and evocatively tell the lives of others in shared storytelling and conversation. Collaborative witnessing connects the roles of storyteller and listener who becomes a subject of research. Both come to be narrators together, to know and tell each other in mutual engagement joined in mid-to-long term relationship dialogic exchange. With the storyteller being the said senior citizen, the listener has been a seasoned workplace scholar. Both narrators have engaged in weekly collaborative work sessions through video chat tools between June 2020 and April 2021. The listener conducted several interactive interviews that focused on the transformation of storyteller's well-being, productivity, and the absence of a physical work environment. The conference talk will discuss the findings, selected methodological approach in the context of workplace research and share light on the subject.

Paper Session 6

Thursday, 26 August 2021

13:30 - 15:00

Breakout Room 1

Technology, AI, Big Data, algorithms and new forms of work

Ubertherapy & the Digitalization of Mental Health: The Covid19 factor

Cotton Elizabeth

(Cardiff Metropolitan University)

The proposal explored in this paper is that an 'uberization' is taking place in the UK's mental health sector as a result of the strategic downgrading of services and jobs, through the introduction of the UK's Increased Access for Psychological Therapies (IAPT) programme. The IAPT model is a short term manualized and increasingly digitalised cognitive behavioural model that dominates the UK's mental health sector. This uberization represents an industrialisation of therapeutic work and a move to-wards 'command & control' performance management systems, online surveillance, and the gaming of performance data. With digital providers capitalising on the reorganisation of therapeutic work under Covid-19 online platforms offering therapeutic labour and AI and automation, clustered in diagnosis, monitoring and signposting in services are now mainstream, raising ethical concerns about the use of this data to feed into austerity programmes. Using ideas from the sociology of work, we will explore the impact of 'e-therapy' on relationality and the therapeutic alliance and issues of mental health workforce resistance and solidarity and what the organising challenges are ahead for the progressive self-organised mental health worker and user groups that are now emerging. This presentation will make use of surveys and interviews with mental health workers from 2017-2020 and experiences of mental health activism through surviving-work.org and thefutureoftherapy.org.

Academic Freedom in the Digital University

Kissoon Chavan

(University of Lincoln)

This paper explores the impact of digital governance and increasing electronic surveillance on the nature and form of academic labour in the UK higher education (HE) sector. The focus of the paper is on how the rapidly increasing use of metrics and digital systems of management mediate staff experiences of academic freedom. The paper will present the interim findings from a large-scale study, conducted in partnership with the University and College Union (UCU), and work through some implications for the future of academic work in the age of AI, big data and algorithmic control. The growing use of digital governance systems is considered an important issue in UK HE, as new modes of digitally-enhanced management are beginning to take advantage of the data-led management affordances of digital technologies. These affordances include better surveillance/analytics on what employees do and auto-generated benchmark metrics ranking performance in relation to peers (i.e. digital research analytics, such as citations and social media mentions, but also teaching metrics, gathered and shared digitally). Of particular interest in the paper are the new potentialities for measurement of employee performance and new possibilities of calculative and anticipatory management intervention based around benchmarks and performing to an institutionally defined norm, and how these relate to lived experiences of academic freedom.

Breakout Room 2

Migrant work, employment and racialised identities

The working lives of Windrush Nurses in post-war Britain: An intersectionality perspective

Rauseo Sterling, Emmanuel Myrtle

(University of Greenwich)

Traditional labour control and employment practices centered on deterministic forms of capital have placed much emphasis on the scientific management of capitalist with little attention to racialised and gendered approaches to labour control (e.g. Braverman, 1974). Braverman's work on Labour Monopoly Capital is seen to have some limitations since it does not fully consider the racialised and gendered context of management practices (Brown & Mirsa, 2003; Smith, 2012). For example, the racialisation of labour is often used as a management control tool to marginalise BME workers (Esmail et al; 2010; Virdee 2019). Management therefore continue to exercise their right to engage in institutional racist practices affording black employees less dignity, respect and decision-making power (Sands, et al, 2020). Furthermore, there is little exploration of the wider impact of the feminisation of migration and because previously work often view Caribbean nurses are discussed as a non-gendered phenomenon (Jones et al., 2009). The study therefore adopts an intersectional approach to examine a historical event i.e. the working lives of the Windrush nurses within the NHS in Post-War Britain. The study is particularly important in light of the twin effects of the Black Lives Matter and the adverse effect of the COVID-19 pandemic on BAME female medical employees. The Windrush generation was recently at the centre of the Coalition Government's hostile environment immigration policy to reduce migration targets in the UK. This resulted in the 'Windrush Scandal' where some members of the Windrush generation, who were granted the right to remain in the UK, were threatened with deportation, made unemployed, wrongly detained and denied public services including healthcare, benefits and pensions (Wardle and Obermuller, 2018). The term Windrush generation was given to Caribbean people who arrived in the UK from Commonwealth countries between 1948-1971. The eruption of the 'Windrush Scandal' exemplifies the systemic injustices, instances of discrimination and the shortfall within the area of equality, diversity and inclusion in British workplaces. Against this backdrop, the study adopts an intersectional approach encompassing race, gender, cultural and historical values.

Biographical recorded interviews of twenty-five Windrush nurses were used to capture the working lives of the Windrush nurses within the NHS system. The experiences highlight how management used occupational segregation by virtue of the nurses' race and national origin as a control mechanism to devalue and restrict their career progression and status.

The findings have important implications for diversity researchers, management practice and policy makers in terms of developing interventions based on socio-cultural values in the workplace (Clauss-Ehlers, 2008), particularly for BAME employees. Furthermore, the study has implications for future Windrush generations in terms of how they can develop workplace resilience to combat various manifestations of discrimination and systemic inequalities.

The Good, The Bad and The Dirty: Investigating Migrant Job Quality Across Lower and Upper Market Segments in the UK

Pustelnikovaite Toma, Manolchev Constantine, Foley Stef
(*Abertay University*)

Job quality, broadly understood as good and fair work, is a prominent topic in the agenda of policy makers and academics (Taylor 2017). Despite the on-going quest for 'decent work', however, it is less clear what makes a job better or worse (Felstead et al 2019). Researchers agree that the link between objective and subjective job quality criteria is not automatic (Adamson and Roper 2019). Yet, while research on objective criteria is relatively well-developed, more attention to workers' subjective perceptions is required (Brown et al 2012; Morgan et al 2013). Migrant workers are a particularly interesting group to study in this context. Studies find migrant workers to be satisfied with working conditions that may be considered 'bad' by others (Lene 2019; Axelsson et al 2017). Employers also frequently consider migrants to be 'good workers' because of their qualitatively different attitude to work (Scott 2013). Indeed, in the UK the number of migrant workers in both upper and lower labour market segments continues to grow regardless of their exploitative working conditions, contractual insecurity, occupational taint and heavy workloads, reported in existing research (Anderson 2010; Harney et al 2014; Sang et al 2015; Ashforth et al 2007). Consequently, our paper seeks to understand what constitutes a 'good job' for migrant workers.

Deploying a 'polar type' case study methodology (Eisenhardt 1989), the study compares the working lives of migrants in the agri-food industry and academia. These top and bottom segments of the UK labour market are known to heavily rely on migrant labour. In the agri-food industry, migrant labour is one of the 'Four Cheaps' which enable the industry's competitive functioning and make the provision of cheap food for the UK consumer possible (Moore 2015). As for academia, the UK's higher education and research capability has long been reliant on a significant number of migrant academic staff to sustain its international competitiveness (Marini 2018).

Our data comprises participant observation and interviews with 22 migrant workers within agri-food industry, as well as interviews with 33 migrant academics. Participants were asked about their everyday work experiences such as typical tasks in the working day, nature and conditions of work, access to job resources, relationships with colleagues and managers, reasons for coming to the UK, and long-term plans. Data analysis is ongoing and will be completed by the time of the conference. Preliminary findings highlight that migrant workers in both sectors deploy a number of strategies to extract and delineate the 'good' in jobs that could otherwise be considered 'bad' or 'degrading'. We thus

propose that migrant workers engage in 'quality work' through which they create, mend, sustain or revise a sense of a 'good job'. This suggests that job quality is a way of experiencing and connecting with work rather than a binary framework of 'good' vs 'bad', and points to the significance of studying job quality as a nuanced and continually produced context of work.

The experience of migrants in a risk society: Changing Migration regimes during COVID-19 and the impacts on migrants

Forde Chris, Ciupijus Zyama, Casperz Donella, Casado Renata, Sun Li, Mas Giralt Rosa, Shi Jiachen, Guo Grace, Li Yang, Yan Jiang
(*University of Leeds*)

Coronavirus has had a huge impact on global mobility and migration. Research on the experiences of migrants during COVID-19 has highlighted a range of vulnerabilities and disadvantages faced by migrants during the pandemic in relation to employment, health, education, housing and other areas (OECD, 2020).

In this paper we draw on notions of risk and precarity to understand the experiences of migrants during COVID-19. Beck (1992) has argued that structured social orders around employment patterns and the relationship between capital, class and welfare have broken down, with individuals exposed to more precarious employment, poorer social protection, and with responsibility placed on the individual to navigate risk. Certain risks transcend national borders and expose migrants to a double faceted uncertainty, at both an economic and a socio-economic level. For example, migrants are simultaneously more likely to experience unemployment and are less likely to have access to forms of social protection (ILO, 2018).

Regulatory regimes may expose migrants to greater uncertainties and risks, shaping access to employment, welfare and social protection (MacKenzie and Martinez Lucio, 2019). Whilst crisis may create opportunities to contest regulation and address the double risk faced by migrants (Woolfson and Likic-Brboric, 2008), it also creates new risks, particularly in contexts where regulatory regimes are changing.

This paper examines how existing migration regulation is being affected by COVID-19, and the effects of this on migrant workers. Focusing on migration regimes in three countries, Australia, China and the UK, it will look at how the evolution of regulatory systems in each of these three countries has been impacted by COVID-19, and how this has affected migrants. Changes to each of these systems was already occurring prior to COVID-19. In China, changes in the hukou system have impacted on internal migration to urban areas. In Australia, there has been policy shift over recent years towards temporary labour migration schemes. In the UK, Brexit has ended freedom of movement, and has resulted in a new points-based system of migration.

We explore how migrants, employers and other stakeholders have been impacted by changing regulatory migration regimes. Whilst migration regime and experiences in each of the three countries are quite different, there are also similarities. Using the common shock of COVID-19 as an empirical focus, and the notion of risk as a theoretical lens, we draw on primary interviews, focus groups and survey evidence alongside other data to examine how changing migration regimes impact upon migrants. We examine the experience of precarity for migrants, and find a number of factors that are impacting upon precarity for migrants in the COVID-19 era. Access to social protection is an important aspect in all three cases, and this access is shaped by income instability and unemployment. We find that social support for migrants in some of the contexts can help with managing precarity. We also highlight different experiences across sectors. Overall, we find that changing regulatory regimes during COVID-19 are creating new risks and precarities for migrants, with these risks varying across the three countries.

Intersections of work and mobilities. Studying Polish multiple migrants worldwide

Salamonska Justyna
(*University of Warsaw*)

'Mobilities turn' (Sheller and Urry 2006) has re-shaped the way we think about social processes, paying more attention to movement in space. Creswell et al. (2016) diagnosed a limited extent to which theories of work, on the one hand, and theories of mobilities, on the other, have been put in conversation. Work has been one of the topics of migration research, as labour remains one of the key motivations for individual movement across international borders. Within mobilities research work has not received much attention so far. Hence in this paper, I intend to link the debates on work and mobilities. My interest will be in analysing work across various scales of movement, from long term migrations to short term mobilities, responding to call by Creswell et al. (2016) to extend and deepen the links between the literature on work and movement.

The study will focus on Polish multiple migrants: Poles who have lived in at least two destination countries for three months or more. Their international trajectories of life and work have been followed via three waves of semi-structured interviews since 2018 with a Web-based Qualitative Panel Study (QPS). The QPS employed a purposive sampling strategy including a variety of migrants, in terms of possessed skills and occupational positions, in various points of

their life course. Multiple migrants, because of their high mobility levels, are an excellent case to highlight and analyse the intersection of mobility and work.

In this paper, I intend to focus on various mobilities and migrations and how they link with work experiences. Many multiple migrants moved for work reasons, but their trajectories include a much more comprehensive range of experiences than permanent labour migration only, including circular migration, working holidays of high school and university students, international training spells, business travels of professionals, intra-corporate transfers, cross-border commuting. The longitudinal methodology of the QPS allows capturing how the same individuals took up these various work and mobility experiences at different stages of their migratory careers and how, sometimes, one type of work-related mobility was embedded in another, like in the case of business trips made by expats. The paper will contribute to better understanding of the meaning of mobility in contemporary working lives.

Breakout Room 3

COVID-19 effects on work, employment and power

Family matters more than self: Developing-world migrants' reasons for work during the COVID-19 pandemic

Yang Feifan

(Shanghai University of Finance and Economics)

Developing-world (DW) rural migrants are among the most vulnerable. Unfortunately, the COVID-19 pandemic has greatly threatened their health and wellbeing and work-life. Policy-makers and organizations show growing interest in this question of whether or not they should still work and, if so, why.

To answer this puzzle, we focus on DW migrants' work motivations when COVID-19 threatens their wellbeing and work-life because work can provide important values and meaning during difficult times (McNaughton et al., 2001; Zhu et al., 2021). Drawing on behavioral reasoning theory (BRT; Sahu et al., 2020; Westaby, 2005; Westaby et al., 2005), we posit that the threats imposed by COVID-19 demand developing-world migrants to speculate key reasons to work, resulting in an increase in intrinsic, extrinsic, and family motivations. These motivations further enhance employee intended work effort and actual job performance. We further address the question of which motivation, in the COVID-19 context, works as the most important reason among DW migrant workers.

Importantly, we suggest that work helps developing-world migrants cope with the COVID-19 threats. Findings from a field experiment and a two-source and two-wave field study conducted in China during the recent outbreak of COVID-19 provide consistent support for most of our predictions. In particular, developing-world migrants who perceived more threats from COVID-19 reported stronger family and intrinsic motivations, which further led to increased intended work effort and better objective performance. A series of supplementary analyses reveal that the desire for supporting families was more important than intrinsic and extrinsic reasons.

Our theoretical perspective and empirical findings provide several contributions to the research of work motivation and BRT. First, we answer calls to exam contextual influences on motivation (Kanfer et al., 2017) by connecting off-the-job challenges (i.e., threats of COVID-19) with individuals' work motivations. Second and relatedly, by exploring and highlighting the value and meaning of work among DW migrants, we propose the perceived threat of the pandemic enhance rather than reduce work functioning through work motivations. In particular, we reveal that family motivation serves a more important role for DW migrants during the pandemic than intrinsic and extrinsic motivations. Third, we extend BRT by investigating external threats of COVID-19 and family motivation. In this way, we hope to answer the calls to exam additional antecedents and global motive factors of BRT (Westaby, 2005).

In addition to theoretical implications, our study also entails practical merits. Whereas organizations and practitioners may be concerned with economic recession and challenges to keep their business ongoing, our study shows at the individual level that workers are more resilient such that their performance increased. The reason is that working for the sake of family members and migrant workers themselves has become salient and important work motivations. In this case, we recommend that organizations and professional bodies pay more attention to protecting DW migrants' desire to support families at this difficult time. More broadly, policy-makers should beware of imposing lockdown on the rural migrant workers because the work opportunities have profound meanings for them and their families.

Exploring home-working during crisis, the impact of ICT usage and WLB on a UK University employees during Covid-19 pandemic.

Elmezzaoui Wafaa

(The University of Warwick. The Institute for Employment Research.)

While rapid advances in Information and communication technologies (ICT) were underway prior to the Covid-19 pandemic, homeworking rose in the UK from 5.7% to 43.1% during the first national lockdown in March 2020 (Felstead, 2021).

This paper reports on initial findings from my doctoral research exploring the impact of ICT use and work-life balance (WLB) for staff at one UK higher education institution (HEI) during late 2020 and early 2021, when the UK government imposed a series of restrictions, including compulsory work from home. Drawing on Border (Clark, 2000) and Boundary theory (Ashforth, Kreiner, & Fugate, 2000) and using a mixed-method approach, findings on how workers set up their home office spaces, dealt with family duties and daily interruptions including technological malfunctions are detailed. An assessment of staff ICT use behaviours and strategies adopted to try to balance their WLB are also examined. Furthermore, light is shed on the role of management in mitigating staff feelings of isolation and supporting connectedness with employees. The likelihood of whether homeworking is here to stay is also contemplated. The early findings from this study suggested that the vast majority (90%) of staff at this HEI worked from home during Covid-19, around two-thirds (67.3%) of staff reported an increase in ICT use for work-related activities during this time and more than two-fifth (35%) confirmed that their working hours were extended beyond their normal working hours. Differences according to factors such as gender, age and caring responsibilities were observed as well. Despite the HEI developing a suite of wellbeing support during the pandemic, almost three-quarters of staff (72.1%) were aware of such support, however, only 1.1% of staff actually used these support services. While the full extent of the impact of the pandemic is not yet known, it seems clear from this early evidence that it will result in lasting changes to the working lives of staff at this HEI. For example, only a very small fraction of staff (2.2%) reported a preference to returning to the office after the pandemic. Hence, the imperative of digital transformation has shifted from important to absolutely critical (Savić, 2020). Equally important is the need to ensure that WLB and wellbeing initiatives are well-designed, so the uptake is improved, particularly amongst those experiencing feelings of isolation and social disconnectedness.

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on working conditions and job quality. The case of Austria

Steiber Nadia

(Department of Sociology, University of Vienna)

In this paper, the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on employment trajectories and the widespread use of short-time work in Austria is linked to changes in working conditions and job quality. First, general theories of economic crisis effects on job quality are discussed and the scarce available evidence summarized. Then, the impact of the current pandemic on employment, working conditions and job quality (and social inequality therein) is assessed using individual-level panel data collected in June 2020 and January 2021 (N=2,000). Findings show strong gradients in pandemic labour market risks: the young, manual and migrant workers and those working in certain industries such as tourism and retail were at greatest risk of short-time work; unemployment has risen mostly among low skilled migrant workers in tourism and catering. In Austria, short-time workers generally continue earning 80-90 percent of their previous net wage, yet in terms of changes in working conditions and the quality of jobs (hours, job tasks, work pressure, work autonomy, job insecurity, training, recognition, etc.) a strong polarization can be observed between two groups of short-time workers: while for some work pressure decreased for others work pressure increased together with unpredictable working hours. Polarized job quality trends (again particularly across short-time workers) were also observable regarding work autonomy and discretion. Aspects of perceived injustice at work and societal recognition of jobs are also discussed as are the job quality correlates of working from home during the pandemic.

Breakout Room 4

Open Stream

On your Bike: Exploring the Geography and Sociality of Cycle Couriering

Chivers Wil

(Wales Institute of Social & Economic Research & Data (WISERD), Cardiff University)

This paper presents findings from an ethnographic project undertaken at the Wales Institute of Social & Economic Research & Data (WISERD) exploring the nature of work as a cycle courier in the gig/platform economy.

A theme running through many critical accounts of employment in the gig/platform economy is that of individualised and isolating working conditions. While this is an inherent feature of jobs such as cycle couriering (and may be appealing for some workers) some problems attributed to such kinds of work as a result are a lack of social or professional contact with other workers which can impact on workers' wellbeing, and a loss of community or solidarity that, amongst other things, inhibits the possibility for collective action. Related to this, cycle couriering is a physically demanding job. It requires workers to travel long distances for extended periods of time, and navigate a wide and potentially risky urban infrastructure, while remaining aware that any 'downtime' is unpaid.

Taking a step away from current debates concerning employment rights and status in the gig/platform economy, this paper instead explores the nature of cycle courier employment through the lens of geography and sociality. It is lead

by two related questions: how do couriers experience urban geography in the course of their work, and to how is a 'courier community' created and maintained?

This project employed an ethnographic methodology to explore the daily working experiences of cycle couriers in Cardiff working for food delivery companies Deliveroo, Uber Eats, and Stuart. Primary data collection consisted of accompanying couriers around the city by bicycle during their working hours. Journeys and accompanying statistics (including distance and speed) were mapped via GPS, photos and videos were recorded and fieldnotes were written at the end of each day based on my observations and conversations with the couriers. Follow up interviews probed in greater depth the questions of how couriers perceive the geography of their 'workplace', both in terms of their daily shifts and the social side of couriering.

Drawing on these varied data sources I argue that cycle couriers have an efficiency-based view of urban geography but that these considerations can be impacted by the specific operating logics of the respective platforms they work through. I also suggest that viewing the city streets as a workplace provides a basis for social interaction and community that can be important to wellbeing and continued participation in the gig/platform economy.

The Social Contract of Work: Moving beyond the Psychological Contract

Korczynski Marek

(University of Nottingham)

The paper engages with the concept of the psychological contract – a concept widely used across disciplinary areas of work psychology, organisational behaviour, human resource management, organisation studies and even sociology of work. Rousseau, in her seminal contribution, defines the psychological contract as 'individual beliefs, shaped by the organization, regarding terms of an exchange agreement between the individual and the organization' (1995: 9). There is now a vast and fast-growing literature which uses the concept of the psychological contract (e.g. see recent reviews by Coyle-Shapiro et al., 2019).

A number of authors have written articles criticising aspects of Rousseau's approach to the psychological contract, from both within the psychology discipline (Guest, 1998; Conway and Briner, 2009) and from outside it (Cullinane and Dundon, 2006). Although there have been refinements of the concept of the psychological contract put forward from within the (social) psychology field (Guest, 2004), there has been no attempt to put forward a holistic alternative concept from outside the psychology field. Informed by a sociological perspective, this paper builds on, and adds to, existing criticism of the concept of the psychological contract and the research it informs. It does more than criticise. It puts forward the concept of the social contract of work as an alternative to the concept of the psychological contract. The social contract of work is defined as workers' implicit, collective, and socially embedded understanding of the effort bargain at work. This concept differs from the psychological contract concept along four central dimensions: unit of analysis; form of knowledge held by worker(s); substantive element (to which the belief of the worker relates)); and key context or influence.

This paper's critique of the psychological contract concept and its articulation of the social contract of work as an alternative concept can be placed as a contribution to the emerging wider critique of the psychologisation of the study of the employment relationship (Godard, 2014, 2020; Budd, 2020). Kaufman defines 'psychologisation as 'the drive to reduce explanation of macro-level HRM outcomes to individual-level psychological-behavioural factors and individual differences' (2020: 49).

The paper is structured as follows. The following section outlines the psychological contract approach, outlining its origins, and the main Rousseau approach. Existing critiques of the concept are then outlined. Although some important limitations within the psychological contract literature have been highlighted, there has been a tendency not to use points of criticism as a springboard to put forward a holistic alternative concept. The paper articulates such a holistic alternative concept – the social contract of work – within the following section. The final section argues that the social contract of work moves analysis beyond the limitations of the psychological contract approach, and does so while opening up our sociological imagination in the analysis of the employment relationship.

Habitus across two fields: Making sense of blurred work-life practice in hospitality and volunteering.

Sandiford Peter

(University of Adelaide)

Research into work, employment and society has often used Bourdieu's (1990; 1992; 2014) work to explore organisational phenomena, particularly employee and management practice and the application of capital. This paper suggests that such analyses would be enriched by taking broader approaches to stakeholders. In particular, investigates the often blurred line between work and non-work practice, through a habitus lens. Habitus can be distinguished from simpler habit by its 'generative' nature (Bourdieu, 2014, p.240), representing embodied practice that generates (even regenerates), as well as simply reinforcing, social structures. The idea of social reproduction strategies (2014, p.240) suggest a sort of sociological natural selection, where the fittest practice is more likely to survive and evolve. The paper considers habitus' potential contribution to the analysis of triadic employer-employee-

customer relationships, adding the complexity of a fourth stakeholder – the volunteer. It does this by observing the structuring of practice within work and leisure spaces and the social capital derived from and exercised during participants' interaction there.

The paper draws on two ethnographies in different, yet strangely similar, contexts—UK public houses (pubs) and conservation volunteering in Australia. The pub study involved two phases of fieldwork in English village pubs over six years and the volunteering study was conducted over three years within one Australian NGO. Within these two fields the interactions and practice(s) of diverse individuals/groups present a view of sociological relations that offers insight into the wider societies where they live and work. The pub is seen as a social institution where social relations are structured and reinforced by intersubjective habitus, with study participants recounting the socialising importance of a first job in the local pub or sampling an illicit first beer under the gaze of paternally strict publicans or established customers, tentatively feeling their adolescent way in the adult game. From a different perspective, conservation practice was seen by employees and volunteers as offering alternative practice when reflecting on broader, habitus laden lifestyles away from the symbolic and literal field of environmentally oriented activity. In both cases, it becomes clear that social norms and habitus are difficult to break, but can be challenged, or at least played with by competent actors who have developed an effective 'feel for the game' (Bourdieu, 1990, p.66), beyond superficial knowledge of the game's explicit rules – often apparently in resistance to more overt governmental or managerialist attempts to change those rules in the name of socioeconomic progress. This resonates with Bourdieu's frustration with what he saw as a common Anglo misreading of his work as narrowly determinist, rather than recognising that 'habitus generates inventions and improvisations but within limits' (Bourdieu, 2002, p.32). As well as using habitus to better understand practice observed during the two ethnographies, the paper also considers these limits, also exploring how powerful groups (management and government) seek to manipulate those limits. Participants' habitus often hints at a personal probing of social boundaries within both fields, whether over the long-term (pub worker, regular customer, loyal volunteer) or the short (occasional customer, one-time volunteer).

Breakout Room 6

Dignity at work, decent work and job quality

Decent work, Covid and policy implications for the Midlands

Cao Xuebing
(Keele University)

The sweeping Covid-19 pandemic has had a significant socioeconomic impact on the Midlands that has suffered from high unemployment, precarious work and low pay (Economic Observatory, 2020). Within the region, the structural weakness in providing decent work long predates Covid, and is associated with the country's laissez-faire neo-liberal economic policies, de-industrialisation, austerity, and most recently, Brexit. Although regional actors have created various fair work and good business charters via regional policy devolution (Sissons et al., 2019), the efforts are hindered by the UK 'liberal market oriented' state which has not developed an industrial strategy to remedy the lack of decent work in its regions – indeed, the Government axed the industrial strategy in March 2021. As a result, too many citizens in places like the Midlands have been economically and culturally forgotten, causing loss of self-esteem, and there is an urgent need for addressing the conceptual and policy gaps based on new empirical evidence.

Our research is a timely contribution to knowledge by engaging with ideas about decent work encompassing 'contributive' and 'distributive' justice in a more inclusive 'moral economy' (Sayer, 2009, 2019; Sandel, 2020) – necessary to rebuild individual and regional self-esteem under a new human-centred 'social contract' (Dobbins, 2020). This signifies the importance of wider development of a broad decent work agenda (including a job guarantee, living hours/job security, employee voice) promoting meaningful work of social value and opportunities for quality of work in living wage employment, as a springboard for harnessing human capabilities (Sen, 2013; Yao, et. al., 2017).

An essential component of this is regional and local community experimentation with the 'foundational economy' concept (Foundational Economy collective, 2018; Sayer, 2019), to increase decent work in sectors that sustain human life for the common good. In this respect, the research tries to answer the following questions:

- How has the Covid crisis exposed decent work challenges in the Midlands?
- For regional stakeholders, what are their perspectives on decent work policies nationally and regionally?
- In what ways can decent work policies be refined to help the post-Covid socio-economic recovery in an environmentally sustainable human-centred way?

Addressing policy relevance, the research seeks to create novel opportunities for a better understanding of regional stakeholders' perspectives on decent work policies, and debate and exchange ideas about inclusive recovery policies on jobs and income to affect sustainable growth in the region. The innovative research methodology consists of a policy forum attended by key local stakeholders, a weeklong policy workshop in decent work, examination of policy

documents, and 25 interviews between January-April 2021, to facilitate knowledge exchange between higher education, policy communities, unions, businesses and civil society actors.

Our preliminary findings suggest new policy priorities should be in place to increase decent work in foundational economy and green sectors, and propose a 'Midlands Region Social Partnership Council' to better coordinate policies advancing the decent work agenda in the region.

The UK Living Wage Campaign: Implications for Workers, Employers, and Policymakers

Carson Calum

(Leeds University Business School)

The UK-centred campaign for the Living Wage, established in London in 2001, has attracted over 7,000 employers to date to officially accredit themselves as "Living Wage Employers", with each voluntarily committing to paying their workers hourly rates higher than the legal minimum wage. The voluntary nature of this campaign is a noteworthy example of the "civil regulation" of the employment relationship (Heery, Nash, and Hann, 2017), with the Living Wage movement's establishment of self-imposed labour standards that a remarkable number of organisations have signed up to providing a prime means of exploring the world of work in the twenty first century.

The primary focus of this paper is on presenting findings exploring the reasoning for three UK-based organisations' adoption of Living Wage rates, and the experiences of each since accreditation. In order to provide a framework for understanding the decision of each employer in adopting the Living Wage, a qualitative case study approach has been applied to help examine the ways in which Living Wage implementation has impacted on three organisations in the higher education, hospitality, and construction sectors.

Each case has been chosen owing to their own unique circumstances that can help to contribute to a fuller understanding of the impact of implementation of the Living Wage, and contribute to the existing research gap surrounding the experiences of Living Wage employers in Britain today. Empirical research of this kind can help provide some important insights into a number of areas that merit further empirical and theoretical exploration, including the Living Wage's ability to bring about organisational change within a workplace, and what this can tell us in a broader sense about the links between higher wages and employee performance.

The research places a great emphasis on contrasting the symbolic existence of the Living Wage movement and its supporters in the public, private, and third sectors with the continued global trajectory towards ever-more precarious forms of work, with the continued proliferation of new and varied non-standard forms of employment challenging the traditional employment relationship (Prassl, 2015; ILO, 2016). It finds that adoption of the Living Wage can have a host of wide-ranging organisational consequences for an employer, particularly in terms of recruitment and retention, sickness and absence rates, and corporate reputation.

This paper will also explore the Living Wage movement's transition in recent years towards campaigning more widely on the Decent Work Agenda, as they have moved from a solitary focus on higher hourly rates of pay to tackling the wider roots of insecure and precarious work. Consideration has been given to the likely impact on the UK Living Wage and in-work poverty within Britain in a post COVID-19 landscape, and how the movement has continued to campaign throughout the pandemic and beyond.

Breakout Room 7

Bodies and work - emotions, aesthetics, health and bodily functions at work

The face of welfare reform: Emotional labour in benefit advisory roles in a 'digital by default' era

Hickman Laura Anne

(The University of Nottingham)

This paper explores the experiences of current and former Department for Work and Pensions, Local Authority and third sector staff in the UK who work in face-to-face or voice-to-voice advisory roles with benefit claimants. Emotional labour, defined as work requiring staff to evoke or suppress emotions in accordance with organizational expectations (Hochschild 1983) is a useful framework for understanding the experiences of these benefit advisors, who must maintain a professional demeanour when interacting with claimants who are often angry or upset.

Interview and diary data is drawn upon to explore the emotional labour necessary in these roles in which staff are required to advise on legislation that has escalated hardship for claimants and increased demands on staff. Existing research has documented the myriad negative effects changes since the Welfare Reform Act 2012 have had for claimants (Stafford et al 2012, Beatty and Fothergill 2014, Gibb 2015, National Housing Federation 2015, Hodgkinson et al 2016), but the implications of these changes for staff involved in supporting these claimants have not been as fully explored.

This paper argues that increases in benefit conditionality and claimant hardship have led to intensified interactions between benefit advisory staff and claimants. At the same time, opportunities for community and connection between staff members – a recognised source of support for staff engaged in emotional labour (Korczyński 2003) – have also been eroded by workplace changes. The ways in which staff manage their emotions and attempt to alleviate the strain of constant performance, including the role colleagues play in supporting each other, are explored here to build a full picture of the nature of this work.

This paper applies the influential concept of emotional labour to a context of substantial workplace upheaval where challenging interactions with claimants can be frequent and emotionally draining for staff. Exploring the day-to-day challenges these staff face in their workplaces and the support that is available to them offers insights into the effects of emotional labour in benefit advisory work as well as adding commentary on how staff navigate periods of workplace upheaval.

Emotional labour in medicine

Vedi Priyanka

(University of Nottingham)

The emotional workplace has been explored through several perspectives (e.g. Hochschild, 1983; Bolton, 2005) and within several different contexts (e.g. James, 1992; Ashforth and Humphrey, 1993; Morris and Feldman, 1996; Fineman, 1993; Ward and McMurray, 2016). Although several contributions exist on emotions within organisations, missing from these debates is the exploration of how institutional logics shape the performance and management of emotional labour on the frontline. There is also limited knowledge on how workers navigate their emotional labour process in light of heterogeneous logics. In this light, Hochschild's (1983) and Bolton's (2005) analyses have been considered and extended in order to re-ignite debates of the emotional workplace. This paper examines whether a lens provided by the institutional logics perspective develops our understanding of emotional labour by showing how competing institutional forces can be considered as shaping emotional aspects of work.

The empirical focus of this paper is on the context of British medicine. Despite research evidence pointing towards the importance of health/wellbeing for healthcare professionals, emotional aspects of the medical labour process are worryingly overlooked for junior doctors (Boorman, 2009; Vijendren et al, 2015). A fundamental aspect of medicine is too often neglected by both academics and practitioners: the emotional labour in medicine. Accordingly, this paper explores the emotional context of medical/surgical work as a means of extending theoretical debates and addressing an important empirical focus.

An ethnographic exploration into the work experiences of junior doctors offers a promising case study to explore theorising of emotional labour. An ethnographic case study approach, through an interpretivist philosophy, provides important insights into the medical labour process, allowing for immersion within the institutional context and the gathering of junior doctor narratives. I conducted 40 semi-structured interviews with junior doctors across the training grade spectrum practicing within both medical/surgical services – including a handful of consultants to help contextualise the junior doctor data. I also undertook ethnographic observations – within ward areas, training sessions/breakout rooms, specialist clinics and operation theatres. This allowed the space and scope to explore the institutional context, associated workloads, and pace of work processes in medicine.

I aimed to uncover how institutional logics can be understood as shaping the performance of emotional labour. Changes to the political economy of the UK and associated public service reforms have brought conflicting institutional logics into the frontline of public service work. Given the shift towards neoliberalism and the political focus on the efficiency of services (e.g. Bolton, 2002), I found that multiple, competing institutional logics shape important aspects of a junior doctors' labour process, and thus the texture of their emotional labour with patients and related others. Logics of bureaucratic rationality, professionalism, consumerism, and an orientation towards the community were navigated by the doctors routinely in this study – doctors were found to choose, resist, and negotiate these influences depending on work contexts and situational demands. Understanding the significance of the institutional logics perspective for exploring emotional labour processes therefore offers an exciting contribution to knowledge.

Mental health and well-being programmes and work: a multi-organisational quantitative analysis of the effect on employee health

Fleming William

(University of Cambridge)

Health and well-being programmes have become increasingly common in British workplaces. Employers adopt them with the aim of improving worker well-being and productivity or for more indirect reasons such as corporate culture or staff retention and recruitment. Mental health promotional programmes have also been advocated in government policy reviews, particularly as a response to growing concern with mental health at work (Stevenson & Farmer, 2018). Existing empirical research on the efficacy of such activities lacks methodological quality (Goldberg et al, 2021), adequate sample size, or is more concerned with economic outcomes than employee health. Further, few existing

studies focus on British workplaces. Recently, a critical scholarship has emerged in the sociology of work that has sought to question the labour and health politics of workplace 'wellness' programmes, suggesting that conversely they may be harmful for workers (Foster, 2018; Hull & Pasquale, 2018; Frayne, 2019). These critical arguments have thus far not been quantitatively substantiated.

This presentation will detail quantitative research addressing these gaps in the literature by estimating the 'treatment effect' of mental health and well-being programmes. Clustered Bayesian propensity score analysis was performed on the 'Britain's Healthiest Workplace' dataset – a multi-organisational sample of British 128 workplaces and 28,000 workers. The analysis estimates the effect of a range of common mental health and well-being programmes at work. Interventions include mindfulness, resilience training, relaxation programmes, time management and digital well-being apps. The key finding is that participation produces no effect across multiple measure of employee mental health and well-being. This result suggests that the recent critical literature is right to be concerned with the prevalence of such programmes and that less financial and institutional support should be directed at convenient wellness strategies. Instead, issues of job quality which contribute to poor mental health ought to be the focus.

Challenged Bodies: Police officers' embodied construction of relationships through traumatic work experiences

Schaefer Anja, Smolovic Jones Owain

(The Open University)

From a phenomenological perspective, knowledge of the world stems from embodied engagement (Merleau-Ponty, 2012 [1945]). In this paper, we provide an embodied perspective on how traumatic experiences at work mediate the way in which police officers construct their relationships with those inside and outside the organisation.

The paper is based on a qualitative study in one European police force in a post-conflict context, where officers were regularly exposed to physical danger. The level of threat remained present, albeit at a reduced level, after a peace agreement several years before our study. Police work in this area retained a partially militarised character, with much focus on public order policing, but community policing and a focus on de-escalation of tension were also very much present. Two researchers conducted 37 semi-structured interviews with police officers and staff in a single week and on the premises of one police station. We conducted a narrative analysis of full interview transcripts through NVivo. The theme of embodied experiences of trauma at work and its mediation of relations with others arose inductively from the data.

Our findings show that officers experienced an ever-present challenge to the integrity of their and their co-workers' bodies (cf. van den Broek, 2017), with many narratives of injury and death, experienced or witnessed by our participants. Many also told us how repeated exposure to bodily danger had had an impact on their own or fellow officers' mental health and emotional state (Violanti et al., 2017). In this sense, bodies made themselves felt in disruptive fashion (cf. Leder, 1990), requiring regular evaluation of relationships at and beyond work (Yates et al., 2018). A relationship of solidarity in a dangerous occupation (O'Toole and Calvert, 2020) was constructed through embodied experiences of being physically saved or emotionally supported by fellow officers. Yet, bodily experiences also had the potential to disrupt relationships at work, with officers leaving or even committing suicide due to post-traumatic stress. By contrast, antagonistic relationships with hostile outsiders – 'terrorists' – were constructed through the personal and collective experience of bodily violence directed at police officers, necessitating embodied virtues such as calmness and bravery. Family relationships were also partially constructed through the experience of violence and physical tension at work, affected by officers letting out negative emotions caused by trauma (Alexander and Walker, 1994) or needing to follow constraining measures to keep themselves and their families safe.

Our paper makes a contribution to the emerging literature on bodies at work. Using an extreme context (Hällgren et al., 2018) allows us to show how bodies are not so much absent and 'dys-appearing' occasionally in a disruptive fashion (Leder, 1990) but can be ever, intrusively and disruptively, present. They are thus constitutive of a – mostly male – ordering of solidarious (Beck and Brook, 2020) and antagonistic social relationships in and around work.

Breakout Room 8

Professions, occupations, skills, careers and self-employment

Institutional Complementarities and Technological Transformation: Analysing VET Responsiveness in the Context of Industry 4.0 Skills Needs and Workforce Development

Antonazzo Luca, Stroud Dean, Weinel Martin

(Cardiff University)

Production and the way work is organized are progressively being transformed by digital technologies and the use of ICT, Internet of Things, Cloud Computing, Big Data, Artificial Intelligence and so on. What was labelled as 'Industry 4.0' has taken on a wider resonance across Europe and its features might be argued to constitute a technological "paradigm shift".

This contribution addresses the issue of change in work and employment adopting an institutionalist perspective. We aim to analyse how different institutional architectures influence responses to change and support adaptation to new societal challenges. In particular, we explore the implications of Industry 4.0 through the lens of skill and the skill needs that develop out of a 'shift' in the technologies that are now being employed within manufacturing. As industry adapts to the digitalisation of operations, national education and skills formation systems will need to adapt too, to tackle skills needs and the risk of unemployment that comes with major transitions. But the capacity of the education and training systems to respond to economic challenges depends strongly on the joint relationship between the different institutions and their integrated functioning. As the 'shift' gradually plays out within different settings, the distinctiveness of context raises questions about how skill needs will be addressed.

Based on the findings of a large European steel industry project, we address in a comparative way the response of different national VET systems to new skills requirements and training arrangements arising from industry transition to 4.0. Specifically, our analysis is of VET systems in Germany, Italy and the United Kingdom and how they have responded to the skills challenges posed by Industry 4.0. We do so from the point of view of institutional analysis, drawing on the institutional complementarities literature (Amable, 2000; Amable and Petit, 2001; Hall and Soskice, 2001).

We introduce an analytical distinction between adaptive responses and impulsive responses, and we draw on the institutional complementarities hypothesis to assess how different institutional models influence the type of response that countries are more likely to put in place in the face of external pressures (i.e. technological transformation and resulting skills needs), and the effectiveness of such responses.

We argue that specific institutional models are more likely to produce specific types of responses (in our framework, adaptive or impulsive) and that different types of responses are, in turn, characterised by a different degree of institutional hybridisation (e.g. policy borrowing). The latter opens to a higher risk of institutional inconsistencies, which might undermine the effects of the reforms introduced to respond to new skills needs.

We maintain that an institutionally-grounded response model has potentiality for generating relevant research hypotheses on the future development of national VET systems and their capacity to meet current and upcoming socio-economic challenges. In this respect, we eventually aim to offer a contribution to the debate on the opportunities and challenges for workers brought in by Industry 4.0, showing how different types of VET responses address the transition to a new work scenario.

Unlearning and Consent in the UK Fire and Rescue Service

Grugulis Irena, Brooks James, Cook Hugh

(University of Leeds)

Why does so much literature on unlearning ignore the people who do the unlearning? What would we understand differently if we focused on those people? Much of the existing literature argues that unlearning can only be achieved, and new knowledge acquired, if old knowledge is discarded: the clean slate approach. This might be a reasonable way of organising stock in a warehouse, where room needs to be created for new deliveries, but it is not an accurate description of a human system. This paper draws on a detailed qualitative study of learning in the UK Fire and Rescue Services to challenge the clean slate approach and demonstrate that, not only did firefighters retain their old knowledge, they used it as a benchmark to assess new routines and practices. This meant that firefighters' trust in, and consent to, innovation was key to successful implementation. In order to understand the social aspects of unlearning, this research focuses on the people involved as active agents, rather than passive recipients or discarders of knowledge.

Countervailing powers, the professions and development: A healthcare perspective

Fisher Nicola

(University of Nottingham)

The field of sociology of the professions has a long and rich history of considering what makes a profession, and, what processes a profession goes through to ascertain such a status. The work of Friedson, Larson and Abbott have established much of the foundations of critique and subsequent research. One criticism however placed at the foot of this body of literature is the static nature of analysis, and often blind consideration to the ever-changing political economic environment that professionals work within. This has arguably resulted in a lack of recognition given to how political economic decisions and changes have altered working practices, and as a result, changed the landscape of professional development.

Political economy has arguably had a great impact on the NHS, and, the subsequent working environment and practices that are placed upon health professionals. The result has been an equally long history of professional requirements undergoing remodelling and adaptation including professional regulation and development.

The nursing profession in particular has been a central, albeit a hidden mechanism through which NHS policies and governance have been sought to be achieved and developed by the State. The shift and arguable hybrid that the NHS finds itself between Fordist and post-Fordist working practices, has resulted in nursing being placed in a push-pull situation between itself, organisations and the State. It is argued here that this has led to the fragmented and poorly developed post-registration career frameworks for nurses that are needed to meet the demands on the NHS and the patients it seeks to care for. A more in-depth understanding of how political economy impacts nursing professional development post-registration is currently a research gap.

This paper seeks to explore and explain how research by Light provides the foundations for a conceptual framework of countervailing powers, through which to consider political economic developments and climate in relation to nursing professional development. This framework has the potential to provide a greater account of the 'supply' impact upon the development of the nursing profession, and how actors like the State and NHS organisations influence the professional project of nursing and the development of its market shelter.

Nursing has long been removed from direct analysis of professional development in historical theories, often as a result of the gendered nature of the profession. This has meant that subsequent debates about its professional development have often been overlooked. The countervailing powers framework enables a consideration of professional characteristics alongside countervailing powers such as the State, and how their interaction could, or has impacted upon nursing career development

Reforming problem populations: an archaic anthropology of NEETS and the youth guarantee

Griffin Ray, Boland Tom

(Waterford Institute of Technology)

The paper aspires to explore the policy ambition for labour market participation by young people through the assemblage of the problem of NEETS, the 'at-risk' problem population of 'not in employment, education or training'. The problem of NEETS foreshadows the solution of active labour market policies associated with conditional welfare, workfare schemes, and in policy discourses such as Global Jobs Pact and the European level the Youth Guarantee, which all entail curious social actions.

By way of data, we develop an archaic anthropology of such policy ambitions, complementing the existing rich line of work that explores NEETS from policy, economic, political and social perspectives. We go back, tracing the way NEETS are posed as a problem, manifest and rationalised in speculative economics papers, political marketing, policy initiatives and the micro-social practices of simulating and stimulating the labour market in unemployment. In turn, we look to older ossified but now repurposed formulations of the current problem. From this, we return to the present, through interviews with young unemployed people subject to the appellation NEET, and through an ethnographic exploration of NEET specific social policies. In this way, using a novel methodological approach, we aspire to understand a history of the present— what are the deep cultural codes which inform how the state governs young and problematic individuals and the faith policymakers place in the labour market to offer salvation through engagement with work and jobseeking activities. Specifically, we argue that there are unrecognised theological models which animate these contemporary problematisations — explored through an approach that combines cultural sociology and governmentality studies, a historicisation of the present which we term 'Archaic Anthropology'. Such an analysis of NEETS, the Global Jobs Pact and the European Youth Guarantee, offers an 'economic theology' of the welfare state. In this, we draw together Nietzsche's genealogy of the revaluation of suffering, Weber's thesis on the Protestant work-ethic, Foucault's analysis of pastoral power and Agamben's work on how the economy is given a providential meaning in modernity. Effectively, the state is dedicated to 'reform' young people through almost endless and Sisyphean attempts to transform people through purifying suffering.

The practical implications of these empirical and theoretical investigations are clear- the problem of NEETS is the problem, it foreshadows a misguided political aspiration rendered durable in policy measures, elaborate globally imitated rituals perhaps only understood theologically — as faith in work. Such faith is ever more curious as the implications of the necessity of getting to grips with a post-work society become evermore clearer.

Paper Session 7

Thursday, 26 August 2021

15:30 - 17:00

Breakout Room 1

Professions, occupations, skills, careers and self-employment

Who's going to save the bees? Naturecultural labour and the future of work

Maclean Gavin, Briken Kendra, Carabelli Giulia
(*Edinburgh Napier University*)

The climate crisis and the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic have laid bare the effects of human exploitation of nature and have pointed to the need to take better care of our planet (Shakil et al 2020). The ongoing escalation of the climate crisis increases the likelihood of more attempts at technological fixes to the crisis rather than a focus on reappraising our extractive relationship with nature (see Buck, 2019). We argue that an important part of our response to the crisis should be a reappraisal of our relationship with work/labour. Debates on the future of work are often held as a future involving robots, automation and the 'end of work' as we know it. Despite 'restoring' nature being linked to ideas of a zero carbon future, reforestation, and new awareness of the importance of urban Green for example, there is little discussion around what our relationship with nature will look like in this future of work or what work is involved in responding to the climate crisis and mass extinction. Yet, if as many writers assert that our current ecological epoch is defined by humanity or capital's exploitation of nature - whether the anthropocene or 'the capitalocene' - then any future epoch involving human society will necessarily be defined by the work of 'restoration' (Salvage Editorial Collective, 2020).

Following 'more than human' social and cultural theories that argue for the inseparability of nature and culture (Haraway, 2016; Latimer and Miele, 2013; Puig de la Bellacasa, 2017), this paper introduces the concept of 'naturecultural labour/work' to understand the interconnections between human manipulations of 'nature', systems of culture and processes of (de)commodification. Drawing on three ongoing research projects - one exploring the work of crofters in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland and two visual ethnographic studies exploring care and plants conducted during the pandemic in 2020, we explore how multispecies practices of care may represent a potential future of work.

In this paper we argue that our ideas of the future of work need to be reconfigured towards human/non-human relations. Firstly, the inseparability of nature and culture means that any manipulation of nature to mitigate or restore in response to crisis needs to consider the cultural economy of these practices. Secondly, based on these insights we argue that the distinction between work/labour is crucial to examining the processes of accumulation and (de)commodification that are inherent to the work of mitigation or recovery. Finally, we will show how a 'more than human' approach to the future of work can overcome binaries between nature/culture, work/labour and individual/collective work ethics. The ultimate aim of this paper is to challenge anthropocentric narratives of worldmaking and reinsert non-human beings as central to the future of work. Overall, we argue that rethinking our relationship with nature through the lens of work is both a necessary part of fighting ecological crises. In a more speculative perspective, we contribute to the emancipatory project of 're-enchantment' (Federici, 2019) to rethink our relationship with work in terms of care.

'Growing' Connectedness through Peer Support and Passion: The work of flower farmer-florists in an era of Climate Emergency and 'Woke Capitalism'

Timms Jill, Bek David, Coutlon Angela
(*Coventry University*)

Claims of responsible, ethical, sustainable, good and philanthropic business behaviour pervade ever more areas of our everyday life. We can: support the provision of clean water in far off countries through our choice of bottled water; sponsor child immunisation through the nappies we buy; support sustainable fishing via the carrier bags we use; or reduce landfill by using a reusable cup for our coffee. We ask how this expanded understanding of corporate social responsibility (CSR) addresses inequality and exploitation at work. Can it? Should it? We considered horticultural supply chains, and demand for 'sustainable flowers' that could promote good environmental practice, worker

conditions and community development through private certifications. However, in exposing the ecological challenges of flying this non-essential product thousands of miles, we also investigate the rise of 'slow flowers' and the different challenges posed for the work of the growing number of UK flower farmer-florists.

Approximately 90% of cut-flowers bought in the UK are imported – The Netherlands retains historical importance as a hub, but a rising proportion are supplied from East Africa (Timms and Bek, 2019). Although there are potential developmental opportunities, such as through Fair Trade and similar certifications, negative impacts can be great. These include water insecurity, land rights issues, chemical impact on land and workers, and the high carbon footprint of transportation. In this era of Covid, climate emergency and 'woke capitalism' where businesses appeal to ethical consumers by claiming to promote social justice (Rechtenwald 2019) and present themselves as a 'vanguard for social change' (Douthat, 2018), alternative supply chains emerge.

In the cut-flower industry, one response has been to promote the 'better' flower farms through the proliferation of soft regulations and ethical logos – often driven by supermarket procurement policies. Although still in the early stages compared to other supply chains, our research shows these certification schemes often only support corporate-dominated CSR agendas (Timms 2016), and can distract attention from worker conditions and reinforce neo-colonial power relations.

A second response has been a rise in 'slow flowers', which promote local, seasonal, 'seed to bouquet' approaches. An exponential growth in entrepreneurs growing seasonal flowers throughout the UK, to use in their own floristry or to supply others locally, has been experienced in the last decade. This comes at a time of ecological crisis, with many growers trialling sustainable methods, and a time of uncertainty in all agricultural supply chains in the Covid disruptions and post-Brexit.

What is work in the creative industries?

Nandi Roopa

(Leeds University Business School)

Work in the creative industries is different in form, structure, and content to work elsewhere. Creative professionals are more likely to be self-employed or engaged in project based work (Pulignano et al., 2021; Umney and Kretsos, 2014). They may need to practice their craft or network actively to secure contracts, so the boundaries between work and non-work are less clear than elsewhere.

Freelance creative workers' work and non-work descriptions are strikingly different from the generally accepted traditional view of work and non-work (Nogues and Tremblay, 2019). In contrast to the conventional understanding of work, where activities are placed in the predefined domain (Nippert-Eng, 1996), creative workers' boundaries are blurred. This research demonstrates that they are also dynamic. So similar activities can be work, non-work, or both - which challenges the traditional understanding of both work and non-work. Barley and Kunda (2001) argue the need to examine work with a fresh perspective and not compare them with traditional patterns. This paper contributes to that discussion. It draws on qualitative research, uses forty semi-structured interviews and 20 diaries to collect data from musicians in England. Coulson's (2012) description of a musician is referred to as "making a living from music, for a large part of their working life" (2012: 249). The initial findings in this paper are identified using qualitative data coding. These findings present three explanations for the difference - The absence of a steady employer, membership of the professional community, and career aspiration.

References available on request."

Managers' and Male Employees' Perceptions of work-family and family-work conflict in a Canadian Law Enforcement Organization

Pettigrew Rachael, Dobson Rylie

(Mount Royal University)

All employees face demands and expectations from both their work and family roles and navigating these demands can be a struggle. When demands compete for time and energy conflict results and research has explored the bidirectional work to family (WFC) and family to work (FWC) conflicts that can result. The implications of experiencing WFC and FWC can be significant and detrimental to both employees, their families, and employers. Some careers, such as law enforcement, are more stressful and demanding, which makes employees more prone to conflict. Working in law enforcement exposes employees to heightened physical risk, psychological stress, the physical and familial challenges of shift work (Zhao et al., 2020), and gender role constraints due to the paramilitary style, masculine culture (Chappell, 2010). Recent research has shown that male law enforcement officers face high levels of WFC (Duxbury, Bardoel, & Halinski, 2020); therefore, further exploring the characteristics that influence perceived WFC and FWC of managers and law enforcement officers is important. This research sampled a single Canadian law enforcement organization in the province of Manitoba, as part of a larger study, and explored the WFC and FWC experienced by both managers and male employees. The sample included 94 managers (male and female) and 234

male employees who completed electronic self-administered surveys. We investigate the influence of personal, work, and organizational characteristics on the perception of WFC and FWC scales using four multiple (OLS) regression models (Managers WFC & FWC and Male employees WFC & FWC). The results showed that weekly work hours and family supportive organizational perception (FSOP) influenced the perception of WFC for both managers and male employees. However, for employees having a spouse that worked full-time increased and reporting to a family-supportive supervisor decreased their report of WFC; whereas, having children increased WFC for managers. The models for WFC performed better than did the models for FWC, with the variables included in the FWC models explaining less of the variance in the dependent FWC variable. For male employees, FSOP was the only variable that significantly influenced their FWC, but for managers age, FSOP, and having children significantly influenced the perception of FWC. Given that managers were male and female in the manager sample, we feel the significance of having children in the manager WFC and FWC models was likely due to the women in the manager sample, since having children is not significant in the two employee models. The influence of spousal employment on the WFC of male employees is an interesting finding. The coefficients indicate that male employees whose partners work full time, compared to those whose partners who work part-time, the report of WFC increased, perhaps due to the need for an increase in time investment in the family sphere. Personal, work, and organizational level characteristics all seem to influence the perception of WFC, but the role of family-supportive organization and managers have a clear influence on both managers' and employees' experience of conflict. The implications for both managers, employees and law enforcement will be discussed.

Breakout Room 2

Dignity at work, decent work and job quality

They would not make it: Career of overeducated customer support workers in Romania

Gonzague Isirabahenda

(Babes-Bolyai University)

Global competitiveness requires highly educated and skilled people. With this in mind, policymakers assume that a stable and knowledge-based economy attracts investors and creates beneficial employment. This assumption raises numerous discussions on graduate employability and education-job mismatch. Still, developing governments are busy with the employability agenda, while on the flip side, developed nations continue to outsource service jobs to cost-effective locations. Romania is currently home to a growing outsourced customer-support industry that hires numerous Young Romanian University Graduates in their entry-level positions. By far, outsourced jobs are a typical example of precarious works. Studies on the lived experience of workers in outsourced companies are scarce. We know relatively little about causal mechanisms and effects of being overeducated customer support agents of call centres in Romania. This ethnographic case-study aimed to explore the lived work-experience of young Romanian graduates in entry-level jobs within a Shared Service Center. The researcher used participatory observation and unstructured interviews to capture and analyze young graduate employees' daily work-related activities. The main findings reveal education-job mismatch (overeducated), de-skilled employees with weakened dignity at work. Similarly, the study finds high work pressure, unattainable targets, and an uncertain career in line with this.

Trust, connectedness and dignity at work in a low pay culture: the case of hairdressing and childcare apprentices

Drew Hilary, Ritchie Felix

(University of the West of England)

Apprentices are the lowest paid workers in the legitimate UK labour market (Bell and Machin, 2018). As well as having the lowest minimum wage, they have the highest rates of non-compliance; that is, being paid below their legal minimum wage (Ritchie et al., 2017). On some estimates, non-compliance rates for certain groups of apprentices can be over 50% and amongst the lowest paid apprentices are those enrolled on child-care and hairdressing apprenticeships (Drew et al., 2016).

Responses to this non-compliance from the UK government and other bodies such as the TUC have attempted to directly target apprentices, in order to raise their levels of awareness around pay. The government's key response to the lack of awareness has been the creation of an online minimum wage calculator. However, our research shows that, amongst childcare and hairdressing apprentices, there is little or no awareness of online support for checking pay rates by the Government. We argue that this is partly because the tool is poorly designed for this target group of (typically) very young, poorly educated workers.

However we argue that a more important reason for the high rates of non-compliance in child-care and hairdressing lies in the existence of a deeply entrenched low pay culture. This acts as a vehicle by which all actors – apprentices,

trainers and employers – accept poor pay levels and, therefore, do not question non-compliance. Apprentices are baptised into the culture, which is perpetuated by colleges and, therefore, develop high levels of trust in their employers to pay them a fair – and correct – wage. In addition, this leads to apprentices having expectations about their treatment by their employer, especially around dignity at work.

There is a strong level of connectedness between the actors, as trainers and employers identify with apprentices and share their own experiences of apprenticeships and use this narrative to reinforce the existence of the low pay culture. We find that the perpetuation of the low pay culture also feeding into to employers in these sectors building business models on cheap labour. Our research indicates that strong relationships between the actors, as well as issues of trust and acceptance, are problematic in the light of the extent to which these apprentices experience dignity at work.

This research used a mixed method approach; we augmented our quantitative analysis with a targeted qualitative analysis. The aim was to identify the underlying drivers for the statistical outcomes, and thence provide useful policy guidance. The mixed-methods approach provided strong evidence for drivers of non-compliance and a culture of low-wage working which ensured there was no mechanism for correcting errors.

These findings were used by the TUC to develop a wage-checking app for apprentices targeted specifically at this group. The findings also led to new advice to college lecturers on the way they discussed wages with apprentices, especially in the guidance on how to hold conversations with an underpaying employer.

How young adults experience working life today: a threefold quest for meaning, person-environment fit and work-life balance

Arends Iris, Veldman Karin, Haan Marieke, Buttmann Ute

(Department of Health Sciences, Community and Occupational Medicine, University Medical Center Groningen, University of Groningen, Groningen, the Netherlands)

Young adults' working lives take place in changing labour markets characterized by increasing flexible work arrangements and associated employment precariousness, international competition for jobs and a weakening nexus between education and employment (Chung, Bekker and Houwing, 2012; Cuervo and Wyn, 2016; Gervais et al., 2016; Canivet et al., 2017; Thorley and Cook, 2017). These challenges have been linked to increased risks of mental health problems (Virtanen, Hammarström and Janlert, 2016; Canivet et al., 2017; Thorley and Cook, 2017; Winefield et al., 2017; Rönblad et al., 2019). Indeed, young adults more frequently report work-related mental health problems, like burnout, compared to older age groups (Thorley and Cook, 2017; Houtman, Kraan and Venema, 2019). Given these developments, it is important to understand young adults' own perspective on working life: what do they need and value? The present study investigated how young adults experience and deal with present-day working life, to provide directions for sustainable, mentally healthy working lives for this workforce of the future.

In-depth, open interviews were conducted with 15 young adults, aged 21-35 years, purposively sampled with different educational backgrounds (vocational education, university degree), work conditions (temporary versus permanent employment, self-employed, part-time versus full-time employment) and job types (e.g. a consultant professional, shoe seller and artist, beautician, social worker). First, interviews were transcribed verbatim and open-coded line-by-line in Atlas.ti. Subsequently, codes were assigned to subthemes and main themes. Finally, the data was interpreted by connecting the subthemes and main themes and identifying the common storyline among all interviews.

The results revealed that young adults' working lives can be characterised as a quest for work that fulfils important needs. Three needs are central in this quest: finding (a) meaningful work (especially, work in which one can develop oneself, become adult/independent, be of importance, receive appreciation and develop meaningful connections with others), (b) person-environment fit and (c) good work-life balance. This quest could be depicted as a learning cycle consisting of five phases: (1) entering a new work context; (2) gaining experience; (3) (re-)identifying what one needs/values in work; (4) evaluating the match between needs/values and the current work context; (5) trying to change the work context or finding ways to cope with a mismatch. When participants experienced a mismatch between their needs/values in work and the current work context, they described how this was accompanied by feelings of reduced mental wellbeing. The social context (e.g. parental norms, peers as confidants and comparators, coaches and perceived societal expectations) influenced the working life quest by directing young adults' needs, values and choices.

To conclude, young adults may be supported at the start of their working life by guiding them in their quest for fulfilling important needs through work, e.g. by discussing what is needed to be able to realise important needs and to set realistic expectations. Furthermore, the role of the social context in facilitating (or debilitating) the realisation of needs in work is important to take into account when supporting young adults at the start of their working life.

Breakout Room 3

COVID-19 effects on work, employment and power

Precarious academic work, blended teaching, and 'virtual presenteeism' in the UK higher education during the Covid-19 pandemic

Hadjisolomou Anastasios, Mitsakis Fotios
(*University of Strathclyde*)

Presenteeism, and its negative impact on individuals and organizations, has received increasing academic attention (Lohaus and Habermann 2019; Hadjisolomou, 2016; Taylor et al., 2010). This behaviour, however, became particularly important during the Covid-19 pandemic, particularly for precarious workers who, are likely to attend work while ill in general, but also while having the COVID-19 virus (Shoos et al., 2020). This 'On The Front Line' article presents the story of Steven, a relatively new academic who works as an hourly paid associate lecturer in a UK university, and his decision to work from home while being infected with Covid-19. Steven has decided to share his story with us to outline the tremendous changes the pandemic had on the work organization in the UK HE sector and his experience of work.

Steven's story shows that Covid -19 has generated major disruptions and has introduced significant changes in the UK higher education (HE) sector. His University, similarly to other institutions, has adopted a blended learning and teaching approach which included both face-to-face and online teaching. This, worryingly, has led to Steven becoming infected with Covid-19. Alarmingly, however, his line manager expected, and requested, Steven to continue working virtually as this was facilitated by the new blended teaching approach adopted by the institution. In his story he explains the reasons that drove this, one-way, decision, and the significant impact this had on his physical and mental health. He describes the experience of being isolated in one room, feeling weak and exhausted, physically, and mentally, while expected to deliver online sessions. He states that his consent to management's expectation to prioritize work over health was against his personal morale and a violation of his employment rights. Yet, as he concludes the precarious employment regime of the sector and the casualization of academic work have driven his decision. Steven calls for a change in the sector, so workers will not be afraid to claim their employment rights. Evidently, Steven's 'virtual sickness presence' is the outcome of the embedded job insecurity (Kinman and Wray, 2018) and the presenteeism culture found in academia, within which the individual is expected to be loyal to the organization and is responsible for its success (Ruhle and Süß, 2019), even if the 'greedy [HE] institution' (Bone et al., 2018: 227) does not provide job security, decent work or adequate health and safety measures.

Overall, this paper provides an important insight into the casualization of academic work and reveals precarious academic workers' fear to go off sick, as they feel pressured to fit within the presenteeism culture they observe to secure their income and employment (Bone et al., 2018). This is particularly important in a period of crisis. As Steven's testimony shows, the socioeconomic impact of the pandemic, the precarity in the neoliberal UK HE sector, and the managerial expectations to continue working while unwell, make presenteeism a significant occupational risk that needs to be prevented (Kinman and Grant, 2020), as it threatens the health of workers', students', and the public.

The COVID-19 crisis: a lever or constraint for progress of parenthood and work-life balance rights in French workplaces?

Guillaume Cecile, Pochic Sophie
(*University of Surrey*)

During the 2000s, parenthood and work-life balance (WLB) issues have gained more visibility in French workplaces through the development of new policies embedded in collective agreements (gender equality, health and well-being, remote working) or supported by 'soft tools' such as labels, guides or charters. The extension of the paternity leave legislation in 2020 (for application in July 2021) is a further indication of the evolution of norms and representations associated with parenthood, particularly for fathers. This study investigates how employers and trade unions have translated the evolution of legal norms into specific 'rights practices', embedded in HR policies and collective agreements, and the impact of the pandemic on the framing and content of parenthood and WLB policies in different industries.

It is based on 45 interviews in 18 large private French and international companies (operating in France), considered as good examples of progressive collective bargaining and that made little use of furlough schemes during lockdowns. The sample aimed to contrast organizational and economic settings, notably in terms of levels of feminization, types of jobs, levels of internationalization and economic context. In each company, staff representatives (usually 2 different trade unions) and HR directors (unless refused) were interviewed by zoom between November 2020 and February 2021.

The findings reveal three different framings associated with contrasted employment relations contexts. First, a 'managerial' framing stands out in internationalized companies in good economic shape, where numerous progressive and 'above the law' measures (extended paternity and carers leave, systematic remote working...) are part of diversity management policies and engagement HR policies. Often initiated by HR managers but partly negotiated with union reps, these measures are supported by strong business case arguments. In this case, the covid-19 crisis has obviously provided additional justifications to maintain and further develop some these initiatives, including extended

access to remote and flexible working. Second, a 'social' framing of parenthood and WLB policies continues to prevail in industries with a legacy of substantial social provisions. These traditional French companies have developed numerous 'paternalistic', measures designed to protect mothers (sick children leaves, extended maternity leaves, return to work measures), recently supplemented by measures in favour of fathers (fully paid paternity leave). While most of these measures are part of collective agreements, trade unions often describe new WLB measures as inexpensive benefits or as means to increase productivity in a context of reduced staffing levels and economic restructuring that has worsened during the pandemic (closures of bank branches or sales outlets, for example). Third, a 'legal' framing of parenthood and WLB policies can be found in French companies in low-paid (under-valued) industries, with measures that are slightly more favourable than the law but focused on mothers (sick days, 100% paid maternity leave, part-time work, parental leave). Parenthood and WLB issues - and more broadly gender equality - do not appear to be a priority in relation to other issues such as low wages, health and safety issues and economic restructuring, which have been aggravated by the pandemic.

All together now? The live performance labour process during/after COVID-19 lockdown

Hancock Philip, Tyler Melissa

(University of Essex)

While the COVID-19 pandemic has challenged the UK's performance and entertainment industries as a whole, for self-employed live performers it has been particularly devastating. The impact of social distancing on the nature of performance (Youngs, 2020), closed venues (Sweeny, 2020), changing government policies (McCormick, 2020), and what the general secretary of Equity has described as 'grossly inadequate' support by the government (Snow, 2020), have created a worst-case scenario for those working in this already precarious part of the sector.

Some live performers have, however, responded to this hostile landscape by finding new ways of entertaining the public and re-establishing an income stream from their work. While the concept of performance has traditionally rested on engagement with live audiences many performers have found ways to re-work their acts in accordance with the demands of their changing circumstances, adapting their material as well as their mode and style of delivery. In doing so they have produced entertainment for the public that can be broadcast usually from home, via social media, in the form of live-stream and recorded performances, virtual singalongs, couch-cabarets and the like.

In order to succeed in this virtual environment as well as to continue utilising their talents as performers they have also, however, had to draw on more operational skills they have developed from being part of what is a traditionally precarious, and often under-valued, labour force (Butler and Russell, 2018). These skills have included networking and negotiation, personal branding and merchandising, and the use of social media now not only as a marketing tool, but as the primary means through which their performances can reach a paying audience.

In this paper, we report on our initial findings from an ongoing British Academy-funded research project into the impact of the pandemic on the working lives of self-employed performers, considering how many have adapted to an on-line environment. Drawing on data collected through a mass-distribution survey, and a series of up to twenty-five semi-structured qualitative interviews, it explores both the continuities and changes in their day-to-day working lives, particularly the additional emotional, spatial and technical challenges they faced. As well as providing first-hand insight into the impact of COVID-19 on this particular workforce and how they have responded to it, the research identifies the support they, and the industry, will require in order to sustain recovery in a post-pandemic world.

Breakout Room 5

Gender, work and social reproduction

Title- Pride and Violence: A generational study of tradeswomen's stories of work and discrimination in male-dominated Naval Dockyards.

Ackers George

(University of Portsmouth)

This paper is developed from an ongoing BA/Leverhulme sociological study of the working lives of generations of tradeswomen in a Naval Dockyard in the South of England. Trade workers in Naval Dockyards construct and maintain military vessels for the British Navy. In the city where the study is based, the Dockyard has been a major employer for generations of men over its 400-year history, dating back to the reign of Henry IIV. Except for women being mobilized as a reserve army of labour during the Second World War, trades work in the Dockyard was an exclusively male domain until the late 1960s (Day, 1998). Women were first allowed to take the Dockyard exam and start training as trade apprentices in 1969. However, 60 years on, women still only account for around 5-10% of trade workers in the yard.

To provide a generational map of women's trade work in the Dockyard and how this work impacted their wider lives and sense of self, this paper explores the life-narrative accounts of 13 women who started their apprenticeships in each decade since the 1960s. These women found 'pride and pleasure' (Smith, 2013) in performing their trades. Their motivation to work also resembled the 'craft outlook' that Ackers (2019) found when interviewing dockyard tradesman. In fact, all women discussed the wish to solely be identified as trade workers, rather than as women. However, like in Powell and Sang (2015) study of women entering male-dominated professions, the Dockyard as a working environment and occupational community continued to other these workers based on their gender. Kanter's (1977) research suggests that it is the scarcity of the token group that motivates discrimination instead of the wider social meaning ascribed to an identity such as gender, but as Whittock 2000, Powell and Sang 2015, Smith, 2013 suggest, Kanter's (1977) framework provides a largely 'gender neutral' understanding of women's experiences of working in male-dominated employment. Although at a preliminary stage, my data analysis suggests that Kanter's approach is insufficient for framing the women's experiences in my study. Instead, women's accounts of their working lives in the Dockyard seemed affected by the prevailing gender discourses of their historical period. The women who entered the Dockyard between the 1960s and 1980s seemed to experience the most unwelcoming gendered environment, but these women also seemed to collectively understand this as a product of structural discrimination and found solidarity in their relationship with other tradeswomen and the women's movement more generally. In comparison, for the women from the 1990s up to the present, the protective force of this structural understanding and sense of female solidarity seemed to have broken down, despite the progress achieved by feminism in previous generations, which, on the surface, had produced a more accepting environment. Thus, these younger women seem more likely to 'misrecognise' (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992) forms of symbolic and physical violence as the consequence of their personal deficiencies rather than as a consequence of structural inequality and patriarchy.

'When I work with other women, I gain my individual freedom': Rural Women Working Together in Agricultural Collectives in Northern Benin, West Africa

Grover Rijak

(University of Cambridge)

There is a gap in the existing literature on women's working lives in Africa. A recent review by Bosch and Booyen (2020) found only 12 articles on African women's working lives were published over a 40 year period from 1979 to 2020. The authors conclude the contribution to the literature "constitutes a negligible slice of the global women at work research agenda" and that more research is needed on "mind-shift changes regarding gender stereotypes, gendered work and workplaces" (pp.1). An examination of women's working lives in the rural African context uncovers how women conceive of the balance between their reproductive and productive roles.

This presentation will argue for the expansion of existing theoretical frameworks of social reproduction theory (such as Ferguson, 2019) and Black Feminist theory (Carby, 1985; Olufemi, 2020) to account for the lived reality of women's status and situation in rural Africa. By taking the region of Atakora in northern Benin as a case study, this research addresses the dire need to develop indigenous theories and understandings of women at work in the rural African context. Qualitative evidence is drawn from focus group discussions (FGDs) conducted over multi-year fieldwork (2017-2019) with women in four communes of Atakora. Rounds of interviews were conducted with samples of respondents (n=250) speaking a mix of French and local languages in multiple waves: (i) the general population of women in Atakora; (ii) women economically active in the horticulture value chain; (iii) women economically active in the shea butter value chain.

By conceiving of the rural women's agricultural cooperative as a site of "gendered work", or as a "gendered workplace", this presentation will juxtapose such sites with the economic household where women report doing "travaux domestiques" (housework) and care work to support the household. Findings reveal that women are performing both productive and reproductive roles, in addition to covering for the reputation of economically inactive husbands. Such findings go in the face of existing theories of the sexual division of labour by feminist scholars (Federici, 2004; Oakley, 2005; Hochschild and Machung, 2012; Orgad, 2019) who conceive of a male breadwinner in the western context (Becker 1973). The reality of women's lived experience in Atakora reveals what it really means to "do it all" and "work together" in precarious poverty and calls into question existing notions of empowerment from individual work. Women's lived realities connect to larger systemic oppression, which calls for a new conceptualisation of a collectivist form of African's women's work in the rural context.

Transnational labour mobility and gendered provisioning in Europe through COVID-19

Schwartz Gregory, Plomien Ania

(University of Bristol)

The onset of the COVID-19 pandemic has exposed and disrupted the fragile fabric on which societies depend to satisfy their basic needs of securing care, food and shelter. Uneven and combined Europe, strained by decades of neoliberalism, has come to rely on gendered transnational labour mobility to secure societal wellbeing. Such

contributions, unrecognised and undervalued, have gained public recognition during the pandemic as 'essential' to life, compelling a wider discussion of their value to society. This paper, based on interviews with migrants from Ukraine in Poland and from Poland in the UK employed in the care provision, food production and housing construction sectors conducted before and during the pandemic, presents an analysis of the problem of waged labour in these sectors as part of a growing crisis of social reproduction. We demonstrate that societal care needs, when not (fully) met for free, are addressed through the wage economy by driving costs down and leveraging gender and other social inequalities to push cheap and mobile labour into the caring and provisioning sectors. The fragility and injustices of this arrangement have been doubly exposed by the pandemic, simultaneously intensifying provisioning needs and destabilising labour mobility. The centrality of social reproduction to the sustainability of capitalist production relations is, therefore, shown to be more than about unpaid care work. The paper traces and highlights how the category of care within social reproduction exists on a wage labour continuum, intersecting with migration and crises in specifically gendered ways.

Breakout Room 6

Social movements, unions, voice and activism

Subjective outcomes of labor mobilisations: emergence, progress and regression of worker activism

Birelma Alpan

(Ozyegin University)

The most important source of class consciousness and activism seems to be workers' collective struggles against elites (Fantasia 1988; Marshall 1983; Thompson 1968). During mobilisations against their employers, workers can experience collective explosions of consciousness and act differently than they imagined previously (Fantasia, 1988). How long and to what extent these subjective transformations keep having an impact on workers' actions after the heyday of the mobilisation? How long and in what forms worker activism survive the mobilisation, which gave birth to it in the first place? Subjective transformation is a vital question, because the labour movement needs more than just another unionized workplace, whose worker leaders turn into bureaucrats, while the rank and file become concerned only with their own future rights and benefits. For a real success, at least some of the newly mobilized workers should embrace some form of class-struggle subjectivity and practice it for a considerable time.

Outcomes of labour mobilisations is a relatively understudied topic (Martin 2008; Simms, 2014) and this is even more valid for the subjective outcomes (Markowitz 2000; Meyer 2008). There are few field studies on the latter. Mann (1973) and Langford (1994) draw sceptical conclusions from the strikes they examine. Gall (2003) finds that strikes radicalize only a small minority among workplace union activists. Comparing two successful unionization campaigns, Markowitz (2000) finds that if union leaders encourage worker participation in the decision-making process, workers tend to exhibit a greater level of activism after the mobilisation. Meyer (2008, 2012) compares a living wage campaign with a strike. She argues that the former led participants to adopt an activist identity and to believe that the struggle was perpetual, because a political logic of collective action was applied. With an economic logic, the strike did not lead these outcomes. Rooks and Penney (2015) find that many workers of two successful organizing campaigns reported that they transformed from uninformed, fearful followers to knowledgeable, confident workplace leaders.

Building on this scholarship this paper investigates the subjective transformations of a group of knitting workers in Istanbul, who engaged in a long lasting collective struggle. After a years-long unionization struggle, they succeed to unionize. After the recognition and the first collective contract, they experienced alienating and authoritative attitudes of union leadership. As a reaction, they mobilized once again, broke away from the union and built an independent one. Both as a supporter and an ethnographer, I observed the ups and downs of this long-lasting mobilisation, which involved unexpected twists and developments. I observed both mobilisation and demobilisation, resistance and compliance, revolutionizing and regressing of subjectivities. The case reveals the extraordinary and the ordinary together, and more importantly, oscillations between the two. Most of the above-mentioned literature rest on interviews, in other words, on workers' own declarations about the level and form of their activism. Based on a long-lasting ethnography, this paper will mainly rest on observations, instead of workers self-reporting on their activism.

"A floor that nobody can fall beneath": Universal Basic Income activism in the COVID19 era

Mackenzie Ewan, Lloyd Toby Phips

(Newcastle University)

This paper examines the social and political dimensions of Universal Basic Income (UBI) activism in the context of the politics of austerity and the COVID19 pandemic. We address the UBI Lab network (Necessity, 2020) as a heterogeneous grassroots social movement (Jasper, 1997) that seeks to reframe work and life on egalitarian and emancipatory terms (Graeber, 2018), while advocating for an alternative to the normalisation of precarity (Lorey, 2015). Drawing from ongoing participatory research involving in-depth interviews with UBI activists and campaigners

throughout the UK, we report on the nature of their political engagement and participation. Our findings illustrate how activists construct a culture of connectedness and community framed in response to the politics of austerity, often in reference to their own experiences and proximity to its disempowering effects. Moreover, within the COVID19 era, we illustrate how alternative responses to the effects of austerity policies are further legitimised among activists as their identities are affirmed through public discourses that query and reconstitute values on work and livelihoods. The paper contributes to our understanding of social movements as vehicles for social change that are both constrained and enabled by particular historical conditions, while at the same time illustrating the potential for collective movements that challenge the politics of austerity in the COVID19 era.

Unionizing as ‘truth-telling’: A Foucauldian analysis of unionism in the Indian IT sector

Banday Muneeb Ul Lateef, Noronha Ernesto, D’Cruz Premilla

(Goa Institute of Management)

Unionising has witnessed a global decline particularly in the face of the dominance of neoliberalism, which seeks to forestall any collective action among employees. While Foucauldian scholarship has gained considerable traction in both sociology of work as well as organizational scholarship; however, it is often critiqued for missing (or inadequate) theorization of unionism. In this paper, we seek to address this lacuna. Drawing from Foucault’s notion of governmentality and counter conduct, we study the recent wave of unionism in the Indian IT industry.

The data for the study was generated through semi-structured interviews with unionized IT employees and the offline and online documents produced by these unions. The analysis followed Jackson & Mazzei’s ‘thinking with theory’ approach, which involved a constant back and forth between literature and data. Guided by governmentality framework, we analysed how unions problematized the employment relations and what kinds of subject positions do unionizing practices produce. The findings revealed that unions problematized employment relations as the production of a ‘submissive mindset’ among employees. Instead, the unions, through interlinking of Marxist discourse and rights discourse, sought to install a ‘fighting mindset’ among them. The production of this mindset is produced through three practices viz. raising of awareness, fostering of unity and providing guidance. Within this problematization, the unionized employees positioned themselves (and other employees) as ‘embodied, social, right bearing individuals/collective. Unions emphasize collective solidarity in the constant struggle to negotiate and secure rights as workers. Unionizing practices instilled the union members with a sense of being parrhesiastic subjects, who are engaged in the practices of truth-telling or doing right for the good of self and others. This becoming of truth-telling subjects is characterized as entailing its own costs, where it produces senses of being foolish. Ironically, this process of becoming is contingent on inhabiting neoliberal discourses of performance and service and on subjecting oneself to the regulative governance of law.

The article has significant implications for studying and theorizing contemporary unionism. Primarily the analysis reveals that unionizing remains the only means of gaining a (collective) viable subjecthood for employees to voice their concerns and participating in setting the terms of employment. In the face of neoliberalism, rights-based unionising provides employees with the capacities to act or increase the possible field of action. The article illustrates how unionising discourse is implicated in the employee subjectivation process much like any other organizational discourses. Finally, we demonstrate how unionizing in itself doesn’t mean a challenge to the governing norms rather unionising, inscribed within neoliberal governmentality, is better understood as the site of government as well as a site of (potential) radical political actions.

Breakout Room 7

Conference Doctoral Session

Striving to thrive: An exploratory qualitative study of the lived experiences, career trajectories and adaptive strategies of Indian professional/managerial women

Pasumarthy Aparna

(Queen Mary, University of London)

Over the last few decades, enduring organisational inequalities and the need to alleviate them has been recognised globally. India has the lowest female labour workforce among Asian countries (WEF, 2021). Even within relatively elite professions, for instance in multinational organisations, women remain concentrated at lower levels of the hierarchy, with little known about their careers. My research examines the experiences of women in the corporate pipeline, and explores how they navigate through myriad socio-cultural, personal and professional constraints, adapt and strategise as they build their careers. I study the intricate relationships between structures and individual agency, and examine factors – career orientations, defining moments, organisational interventions, support systems, networks – influencing professional women’s career trajectories in MNCs. Theoretically, the notions which serve as ‘sensitising devices’

underpinning my study include Jenkins' conceptualisation of identity, and Giddens' duality of structure. The implications of the stated theorisations is that I take the view that gender identity is socially constructed, intersecting, based on assumptions which are internalised by individuals and can be ascribed to interactions and experiences (Young, 1997). Additionally, I recognise that women are not merely passive individuals who bear the consequences of corporate decisions and their social contexts, but exercise their agency to influence them and effect change through intended or routine actions. I adopted a qualitative research strategy to gain rich insights, employing semi-structured interviews as the mode of data collection. I'm half-way through field work (35 interviews currently), and would appreciate feedback on my theoretical background, and preliminary data analysis.

Design and Delivery: A comparative study of employment support programmes between Scotland and England

Brierley Lynne

(University of Stirling)

The purpose of the study is to analyse and compare how Government-funded employment support programmes design and deliver personalised support to job seekers receiving Universal Credit. Evidence demonstrates employment promotes health, wellbeing, purpose (Roex and Rozer 2017; CIPD 2018) and contributes to long-term economic growth. The research aims to generate findings that will contribute to existing knowledge and influence policy discourse relating to employment support programmes.

The literature primarily focused on three relevant areas: personalisation, procurement and provision. Personalised support is multi-interpretable (Needham 2011) and works on two levels: the interaction between those providing and those receiving personalised support and the tangible resources available (Newton et al. 2012; Toerien 2013). Procurement of public services considered New Public Management, supply chains and payment by results finding that groups with complex needs were less successful in job outcomes than others (Rees et al 2014)., Street-Level Bureaucracy (Lipsky 2010) explored how discretion was practiced by frontline actors providing public services and found this was influenced by personal or organisational factors leading to an inconsistent approach across client groups.

Semi-structured interviews will be conducted online with frontline actors in contracted out organisations in Scotland and England to understand the underlying themes of what factors influence the design of personalised employment support and how discretion is applied by street level bureaucrats. Thematic analysis will be used to analyse the data gathered using the systematic six-phase approach introduced by Braun and Clarke (2006) to code and draw out key themes identified.

Frontline workers researching frontline workers: playing the insider-outsider game

Fisher Nicola

(University of Nottingham)

As part of my PhD, I am required to gain access to, and maintain individuals within NHS organisations as gatekeepers so that I may reach potential participants for my research. Workforce related research, such as my own, will often require access to a place of work, and the negotiation with managers and directors of that organisation. As an 'insider', being a registered nurse myself, I have an occupational advantage in gaining access as I have an inside understanding of the language, culture and attitudes that will influence the willingness and cooperation of stakeholders. However, as a PhD researcher, I also need to be aware that I am now perceived as being an outsider and removed from that environment, which subsequently may impact the nature of the knowledge that I gain access to.

This paper seeks to explore and explain my experiences of navigating working with a non-academic stakeholder, in this case an NHS Trust, as both an insider and an outsider. It will focus on having to switch in and out of identities and charter my development and learning as a result. The debates surrounding a researcher having to negotiate insider and outsider identities are often only spoken about in singular terms. There are times however, when both of these identities will be in play, which requires a flexibility and adaptability on the part of the researcher to move between them.

The Embodied Labour Process of Paid Aged Care Support Work in the Marketised Context of Aged Care

Martain Sandra

(University of Western Australia)

This study provides an empirical understanding of the centrality of the physical materiality of the worker body (Fracchia, 2005, 2008, Rioux, 2015) for labour process analysis of exploitation in the capitalist labour process (Burawoy, 1978, Cohen, 1987, Holmstrom, 1977, 1983, Rowlinson and Hassard, 2000). Utilising an original conceptualisation of an 'embodied labour process', based on Merleau-Ponty's (2014 [1945]) phenomenological view of the body and Hamington's (2004) concept of 'embodied care', this study shows how the physical materiality of the

worker body is commodified and exploited in paid aged care support work performed in the marketised context of aged care in Australia (Brennan et al., 2012, Fine and Davidson, 2018). This conceptualisation builds upon the concepts of emotional labour (Bolton, 2005, Hochschild, 1983), aesthetic labour (Warhurst et al., 2000, Warhurst and Nickson, 2007, 2009, Witz et al., 2003) and body work (Cohen, 2011, Cohen et al., 2013, Cohen and Wolkowitz, 2018, Twigg, 2000, Twigg et al., 2011, Wolkowitz, 2006). A qualitative research design, incorporating naturalistic inquiry (Lincoln and Guba, 1985) and the Extended Case Method (Burawoy, 1998, 2009), was chosen to explore the rich experiences of workers (n=20) of performing the 'embodied labour process' of paid aged care support work in the marketised context of residential and home aged care in Western Australia. The findings show that the bodies of paid aged care support workers bear the brunt of the marketisation of aged care.

Paper Session 8

Friday, 27 August 2021

09:00 - 10:30

Breakout Room 1

Technology, AI, Big Data, algorithms and new forms of work

Resolving role conflict through fictional separation: the case of developing a gig work trade association

Weidenstedt Linda, Ingram Bogusz Claire, Geissinger Andrea

(Ratio och SU)

Platform organisations sometimes face a conflict between their financial goals, in which matchmaking at any cost is the goal, and emerging norms not captured in market information. In this case of gig work platforms, we explore how the creation of a trade association as a form of meta organisation allows platforms to resolve a role conflict between matchmaking at any cost and larger responsibility issues captured by emerging norms.

Digital platforms enable interactions and match-making within a societal or organisational context. Many of them start off in nascent fields in which they are not only newcomers facing a liability of newness, but where they have limited resources and have to focus on financial outcomes. This is particularly the case with gig work platforms. Globally, platforms like Amazon Mechanical Turk, Fiverr, and Upwork, are used to connect workers to those who would purchase their labour. As an emerging field, gig work has seen evolving norms and controversy, particularly in the developed work. The most significant of these is concern that workers face precarious employment. This is particularly the case in Sweden, known for its decent wages and good working conditions. Gig work platforms not only have to navigate these evolving norms (and associated regulations), but also build a financially viable business based on multi-sided matching.

While gig work platforms have been pressured to take on the role of employer for its gig workers, the role of employer is a completely different one to that of the neutral matchmaker; not only are there different activities involved, the two approaches are not always consistent. What emerges is a role conflict, in which the platforms have to “wear two hats”: one in which worker protections are paramount, and one in which maximising the number of matches, no matter the conditions, are the priority. Here, we ask the question: How do gig work platforms manage the role conflict between worker protection and maximising matchmaking?

We unpack this role conflict through an exploratory study of gig work platforms and emerging norms around gig work in Sweden through following the development of a platform trade association. We capture its emergence through a) targeted interviews, and b) the emergence of new norms through a series of workshops with 1) gig workers, 2) platforms, and 3) state agencies. Nine semi-structured in-depth interviews with gig platforms that already are members of (or consider joining) the emerging meta organisation were conducted from October to December 2020. The workshops were conducted from August to December 2020, and included approximately 75 actors, with significant overlap over the three workshops conducted digitally.

Our preliminary analysis shows that individual platforms have been able to continue with their main role as businesses: The creation of the trade association has allowed them to create a fictional separation through which they can explore a separate set of tasks, without clear responsibilities or commitment for the platform as a labour-market organisation.

Governance Practices on Online Labour Platforms: A Comparative Case Study of Upwork and Fiverr

Klausing Susanne, Windwehr Svea

(University of Oxford (2020 graduate))

During the past decades, non-standard employment relations have proliferated with the recent rise of online labour platforms (OLPs) signifying a new chapter of this trend. OLPs are marketplaces that connect workers and clients for remunerative tasks performed online. As these platforms set the rules according to which platform participants can access, succeed on, and get removed from their marketplaces, OLP providers govern their users.

Nevertheless, most literature studying governance functions of online intermediaries has been focusing on social media platforms. Considering the trend towards labour facilitated by online intermediaries, this gap in the literature is

relevant: platform workers are not covered by labour regulations, rarely organized in trade unions, and faced with significant hurdles to access the court system to pursue their interests. Therefore, they are dependent on OLPs to provide fair and equitable marketplaces. Thus, the ways in which OLPs govern matter greatly to the conditions under which online labour is performed.

To tackle the gap in literature, this study sets out to analyse the governance mechanisms of two leading OLPs. To this end, the study follows Suzor (2018) who applies the procedural principles of the rule of law (RoL), a core concept of Western jurisprudence, to guide the analysis of social media platforms' governance. Understanding the RoL as the basic principles that limit the power of a governing authority, Suzor puts forward a broad framework that scrutinizes the extent that platform governance is limited by clear rules. This study transfers the RoL framework to the realm of OLPs to understand the governance of two remote labour platforms. Our goal is twofold: 1) to test the suitability of the proposed framework for theorizing governance mechanism on OLPs to contribute to the growing discussion of how OLPs shape work and related institutions; 2) to offer a detailed empirical account of the nature and effects of governance mechanisms on two OLPs.

To this end, governance mechanisms of two leading OLPs, Upwork and Fiverr, are analysed by applying the procedural RoL principles 'equality and predictability' and 'due process'. By conducting a content analysis and interviews (N=16) with platform workers, the study shows how the framework can help to understand governance mechanisms of OLPs.

The analysis shows that the application of the principles of the RoL helps to uncover that governance power is limited to different degrees depending on the governance mechanism. The framework reveals practices such as the unfettered discretion the platforms grant themselves, for instance to change terms of services, raising concerns regarding the platforms' exercise of power. Besides, the framework proves useful in carving out nuances in the restriction of governance power, for instance when it comes to differences in dispute resolution across the platforms. Despite these insights gained, the paper argues that applying Suzor's theoretical framework to OLPs also demonstrates its limited explanatory power in the context of algorithmic management typical for these platforms. The study argues for the addition of an analysis of algorithmic management practices to a theoretical framework guiding the investigation of platform governance of OLPs.

Breakout Room 2

Dignity at work, decent work and job quality

Can domestic care workers find decent work through digital platforms?

Khan Maria Hameed, Williams Jannine, Williams Penny, Mayes Robyn

(Queensland University of Technology)

There has been a rapid increase in digital platform-mediated work across a number of informal sectors, particularly in ride-hailing, food delivery, maintenance and cleaning (Rossotto et al., 2018; Watson et al., 2021). While platform-mediated work arrangements are often criticized for subverting basic rights and conditions of work traditionally available in conventional employment (Reid-Musson et al., 2020) they continue to gain popularity in informal sectors with workers who have historically been excluded from protection under existing regulatory frameworks, like care workers (ILO, 2018). Recently, there has been an influx of digital platforms providing domestic care services across the world (Flanagan, 2019; Trojansky, 2020), yet this remains a relatively underexplored segment of the platform economy. This is important as care work has traditionally been marred by exploitative work conditions, and in general been dismissed as a real occupation due to the private and feminized nature of care work (Charlesworth et al., 2015; England et al., 2002). However, some researchers argue that digital platforms create visibility for care workers and could help mitigate problematic work conditions prevalent in the sector (Ticona and Mateescu, 2018; Trojansky, 2020). To address the gaps in knowledge, research investigating the experience and perceptions of care workers organizing platform-mediated work is required which centres worker voices for the forms of work made available through platforms.

This paper argues the concept of decent work (ILO) is an appropriate analytical lens to understand how digital platforms are impacting the interests of care workers. The dimensions of decent work extend beyond regulatory protections and encompass social justice, responsible governance, fair and decent work conditions (Somavia, 2008; Webster et al., 2016). This paper therefore aims to explore the extent to which digital platforms facilitate or constrain decent work in the domestic care sector by drawing insights from semi-structured interviews with 38 care workers using digital platforms to organize care work.

Initial analysis illuminates a complex interplay of extrinsic and intrinsic factors which shape whether care workers find opportunities for, and experience decent work outcomes. These factors are organized into three overarching categories, namely Decent Work Opportunities; encompassing experiences of accessing jobs, finding work and

perceptions of wage standards; Decent Work Vulnerabilities, relating to poor conditions such as constant availability, minimal social protections or benefits; and Decent Work Deficits, highlighting substantive risks including lack of safety, security, right to collective action or legal recourse. These insights offer a nuanced platform worker-centric perspective of decent work in the domestic care sector. Further development of the analysis will explore how care workers balance protection (from platform structures and mechanisms) and empowerment (through agency and choice) in organizing work through digital platforms. In doing so, this study will contribute a pragmatic understanding of the decent work agenda as it applies to platform-mediated care work by centring the experiences of care workers themselves, an often overlooked and marginalized group of workers. More broadly, this study will set in motion policy considerations to shape future work practices, income earning opportunities and work conditions in the domestic care sector.

Migrants' (In)decent Work in Visegrad Group countries - analysis based on new immigrant destinations theoretical framework. The case of Poland.

Magdziarz Wiktor, Chwat Olivia

(London School of Economics and Political Science, Department of Social Policy)

This paper is devoted to the issues regarding migrants' work in the country framed as a new immigrant destination (hereafter: NID) - Poland. The authors outline how migrants' work in Poland does (not) comply with the guidelines of the Decent Work framework proposed by the International Labour Organization. The problem is linked to characteristics of Poland understood specifically as NID. The cultural, political, economic, demographic and historical specificity of the state is emphasized and highlighted against the background of common characteristics of Visegrad Group countries (hereafter: V4).

The methods adopted for this study involve extensive, multi-level policy research supported with secondary data analysis. The results have been then juxtaposed with the outcomes of qualitative field research conducted by the authors. The interdisciplinary approach has been implemented: the legal background for foreigners' work, institutional support for migrants, the practice of their participation in the labour market, and issues concerning social adaptation are scrutinised.

According to Jamie Winders, NIDs are identified by a number of specific features, e.g. dynamic increase of immigrant settlement, lack of institutional infrastructure for migrants and rooted ethnic networks, as well as migrants' residential and occupational segregation from the native-born residents. All those apply to both Poland and, to various extent, to other V4 countries. While the theoretical framework of NIDs is not so well established in the European studies on migrations, the authors aim at contributing to the development of this concept.

The opening of the borders after the fall of the Socialist Bloc and joining the EU had been landmarks that caused the turnabout in the migrational profile of the region, while the recent major inflow of Ukrainian migrants shaped the new social landscape of Central Europe. For example, since 2015 the number of foreigners registered in the Polish Social Insurance Institution rose sixfold. Consequently, Poland, as well as other Central European, former-socialist countries, are currently adapting to the new reality responding to previously unseen challenges and opportunities.

The accurate description of the circumstances shaping transition of V4 states to immigration countries is the key factor for the development of sustainable migration policies emphasizing the protection of migrant workers. UNDP in its social inclusion-driven 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, set the Goal 8th - promoting decent work for all. The Decent Work strategy is ambitious, yet necessary - particularly in the times of the COVID-19 pandemic. The long underestimated struggles of migrant workers, often experiencing precarious employment, became more visible over that period. The realisation of the Decent Work, strategy, the authors argue, is dependent upon the multidimensional, regional specificity of particular countries. In Poland, similarly to other states of the region, both labour and migration policies are determined by, among other factors, the stage of transition to the immigration country the state is at.

Breakout Room 3

Insecurity, precarity and peripheralisation

Employment trajectories and mental health-related disability in Belgium

Balogh Rebeka, Gadeyne Sylvie, Jonsson Johanna, Sarkar Sudipa, Van Aerden Karen, Warhurst Chris, Vanroelen Christophe

(Interface Demography, Vrije Universiteit Brussel & Institute for Employment Research, University of Warwick)

Background: Renewed focus on the quality of jobs (Holman, 2013; Warhurst et al., 2017), and of employment in particular (Vanroelen, 2019) has helped highlight that not only does a health gap exist between the unemployed and those in work but that a clear gradient can also be observed along the distribution of employment quality within the employee population regarding mental health. Cross-sectional research demonstrates that workers at the bottom of the employment quality scale – those in precarious employment - tend to have worse outcomes than those in more favourable and stable employment arrangements (Van Aerden et al., 2016; Vives et al., 2011). Longitudinal studies are needed, however, that enable analysis of the movements of workers across the labour market and how aspects of

their trajectories are related to subsequent mental health outcomes. Our study provides this missing analysis, tracking workers over an 11-year period.

Methods: We draw on administrative data derived from the Belgian Crossroads Bank for Social Security and information pertaining to individuals' employment status and, if employed, to their employment arrangements. This information is then used to construct typologies of employment trajectories over a period of 4 years/16 quarters. We do so using Multichannel Sequence Analysis (Gauthier et al., 2010) and Hidden Markov Models (Helske et al., 2018), looking at aspects of the employment such as stability, working hours, multiple job-holding, as well as relative income levels. The various trajectory clusters generating from this method are then used to assess whether those workers with a more precarious employment path have a higher risk of developing mental health issues in the following 7 years, and if those with more stable and higher-quality employment over the time under study have better outcomes in this regard. Experiencing disability due to mental health disorders is drawn on as a (binary) diagnostic measure to evaluate mental health outcomes.

Results: The Sequence and Cluster Analyses delineate several clusters with favourable employment arrangements, as well as a group of workers in the Belgian labour force among both men and women whose trajectories are characterised by lower relative income, higher incidence of certain non-standard and subsidised employment forms, coupled with longer time spent in unemployment over the four years. Another group is characterised by nearly constant unemployment. Preliminary analyses reveal a higher incidence of subsequent mental health-related disability among these two vulnerable labour market groups than among employees with stable trajectories and higher relative incomes among both genders.

Conclusion: Our study demonstrates that analytically separating those in and out of work at a certain time point does not necessarily reflect the accumulated mental health disadvantage through precarious careers. There is, therefore, urgent need for longitudinal research to paint a more accurate and dynamic picture of vulnerable groups in the labour market and to uncover the mental health implications of (precarious) employment over time.

Conditional Citizens: A Case Study of Disability Ghettoization in Employment in a Changing China

Shi Cunqiang

(Cardiff University)

The Chinese economy has continued to boom over the past few decades, which has brought a significant number of employment opportunities. However, during this transition from totalitarian state socialist regime to marketisation, urbanisation and industrialization, Chinese disabled people's employment rights have been relatively overlooked in the field of Chinese social studies. It is little known to what extent the state and society have done to support disabled people during this critical transition to a market economy. Being employed is considered to be a crucial factor for disabled people to be included in mainstream society, yet the employment gap between disabled and non-disabled people in China is estimated to be 30%. This raises a significant question, which is how disabled people's employment experiences are different in terms of the nature of the work and their geographical locations.

This conference paper reports the findings of a PhD project, which investigates the employment experience of disabled people in China from a historical materialist perspective. There are three emerging findings that this research can contribute to the existing knowledge base. First, this study finds that there are invisible systematic barriers that disadvantage disabled people to pursue equal employment opportunities, which this paper coins "disability Ghettoization". Such segregation is evident socially and economically. Second, the employment experiences are geographically distinctive, namely there are significant differences between rural and urban areas, as well as across different geographical regions of China. Finally, the current research finds that the types of work influence disabled workers' employment experiences.

Can entrepreneurship solve the youth unemployment conundrum? Evidence from Egypt

Youssef Sherif

(University of Leeds)

Since its inception, entrepreneurship has been considered a pathway for development, job creation, poverty alleviation and economic growth (Sutter et al., 2019; Johnson & Schaltegger, 2019). This was supported by palpable evidence from western economies where entrepreneurship and enterprise creation are the cornerstone for their competitiveness on the global stage (Mason & Brown, 2014). The most prominent example is Silicon Valley in the USA, where this model was hailed by practitioners and policy makers with the desire to replicate such ecosystems due to the ample evidence of effective partnerships between private companies, the US government, key universities and private capital to support patient-led innovation and entrepreneurship (Audretsch, 2019).

Accordingly, entrepreneurship has gained significant attraction in developing countries, such as Egypt, where the country has faced tumultuous political and socioeconomic challenges in the last decade at the forefront of the Arab spring uprising in 2011 (Bayat, 2017). One of the key challenges facing Egypt as a country is youth unemployment, which is currently at 32 percent (ILO, 2019), while the poverty rate is at 33 percent (The Economist, 2019).

Consequently, there are several policies and extensive international funding directed towards establishing new

businesses and promoting entrepreneurship as a way to solve Egyptian youth unemployment. The paper aims to investigate the nature of youth unemployment within Cairo, Egypt and empirically unfold the challenges of having such policies in addressing this issue.

This paper aims to contribute empirically to the ongoing debates regarding self-employment, youth precarity and post-work debates (Alberti et al., 2018) from a non-western lens. To answer these research questions and create the desired methodological fit (Edmondson & Mcmanus, 2007), I used exploratory qualitative methodology (Mason, 2002) through a triangulation of methods (semi-structured interviews, secondary data and non-participant observations).

Thus, I conducted 43 semi-structured interviews using a purposive sampling strategy (Miles & Huberman, 1994) with local entrepreneurs working in different sector (agriculture and energy) , investors, university and private incubators, along with civil society representatives to uncover the parameters of the Egyptian entrepreneurial ecosystems and to what extent such policies can be a workable solution for such a prominent challenge.

This was supplemented with 200 hours of non-participant observations, such as meetings with local entrepreneurs, civil society representatives, and local business and think tank conferences. Additionally, I relied on 50 secondary data to help shape my understanding of the context in which these data were published by the government, international agencies such as the World Bank (WB) and International Monetary fund (IMF), along with local and international think tanks. Preliminary results suggested that entrepreneurship as a policy for employment in the Egyptian context is not sustainable in the long run. This is due to several factors, such as complex regulatory frameworks, which are considered to be barriers for entrepreneurship and innovation. Second, the Egyptian entrepreneurial ecosystem is facing massive amounts of challenges in terms of education, access to the necessary skills and the required public and private investment for nascent micro, small and medium enterprises operating in a very informal economy.

Breakout Room 4

Open Stream – Special Event

Meet the Editors

Cotton Elizabeth

(Work Employment & Society)

This would be an extended WES Meet the Editors session aimed to open up a discussion about the journal, the issues for publishing and for the sociology of work including open access, theoretical debates and the internationalisation of the journal. This will be an opportunity to meet the new Editorial Team and talk about the future direction of the journal.

Breakout Room 5

Conference Doctoral Session

What Women Veterans Want: Women's Working Lives After Service in the UK Armed Forces (UKAF)

Glendinning Andreana

(University of Warwick)

This study aims to explore UK Armed Forces (UKAF) women veterans' experience of transition from military to civilian worlds with emphasis on barriers and problems women veterans may encounter on entering the civilian world of work. This might include gender bias, lack of understanding of the military skill set, assumptions regarding social background and status. The study will also examine women veterans' experiences of work 2 to 10 years after leaving the UKAF.

There is little UK research, academic and statistical monitoring, regarding transition from military to civilian life particularly regarding women veterans. Similarly, there is little research into the longer-term working lives of UKAF women veterans. As the proportion of women serving in the UKAF grows, there will be an increase in numbers of women veterans in the future. It therefore makes sense to explore women veterans' experiences of transition from military to civilian life and how they integrate, or otherwise, into the civilian world of work.

The study will be qualitative and will involve qualitative interviewing of women who have served in the UKAF i.e., Royal Navy, Army and Royal Air Force. All ranks/rates will be included in the study, apart from very senior officers as there are insufficient of these to maintain anonymity.

The work contributes to the body of evidence about UKAF women veterans and could inform future policy on transition from military to civilian worlds, providing insight into the support required by women veterans in civilian life.

Digital Labour Relations in Gig Economy: Food Delivery Services in Global North and Global South

Sharma Padmini

(Universita Degli Studi di Milano)

Platform capitalist models are radically altering traditional hierarchical structures, labour relations and their micro-political interactions. These digital models, built on the liberalised principles of the 1990s, are seen to be acting as the new governance and norm making sites to rewrite the rules of the game. Significant studies consider these platforms to be working in tandem with other non-standardised employment relations arrangements that runs on the logic of the 'just-in-time inventory system; through hiring workers to undertake one-off tasks. The research is expected to address the nexus between growing vulnerabilities in altered social relations in digital platforms and the simultaneous strengthening in normative relations that empower the emerging gig working class.

The research intends to assess whether platforms lead to the democratisation of labour through (re)mediating traditional hierarchies and rigidities in labour relations; and whether emerging worker-led organising serves as a more democratic and inclusive governance mechanism to address the growing discontent among workers in platform capitalist models. The research specifically analyses the food-delivery platform services as this sector is seen to be witnessing increasing regulatory attention and significant worker-led mobilisations across the globe. The approach is to construct a regional comparative analytical framework to explore cross-national variations and similarities across distinct tech hubs in Global North and Global South. It is expected to bridge the gap between the challenges encountered in digitalised labour relations and valorise the potentials encompassed in these digitally mediated relations; and thereby, promote economic and social well-being among digital labour.

The Ethos of Tech Workers: Culture and White-Collar Subjectivity in Digital Capitalism

Dorschel Robert

(University of Cambridge)

The Ethos of Tech Workers: Contours of an Entrepreneurial and Political Subjectivity

The digital labour debate has produced manifold insights into new forms of work emerging within digital capitalism. So far, though, research has focused on gig and crowd workers, neglecting the growing ranks of 'tech workers'. Members of this occupational segment attain high economic and symbolic capital for generating and managing the digital technologies that permeate social life. In my doctoral research (which I began in 2019), I explore the subjectivation of tech workers. In recurrence to Foucault and Bourdieu, I reconstruct the schemas of perception, recognition and action of tech workers and trace the relations to changing economic, organisational and cultural structures. Methodologically, my research is based on interviews with tech workers in the USA and Germany as well as a discourse analysis of study programs, job ads and media articles.

In the talk, I will present my two central findings: 1) Tech workers resemble the Post-Fordist subject type of the 'entrepreneurial self' in many ways. They are oriented towards flexibility, autonomy, self-control and creativity. 2) Tech workers also embody elements of a new white-collar subjectivity. They consider themselves as 'workers' and are involved in symbolic boundary-making vis-à-vis the tech industry and its business models and organisational culture. Tech workers critique precarity, are open to unions and have engaged in walkouts. The rise of tech workers and their entrepreneurial technopolitical subjectivity thus points to the formation of a white-collar class in-itself and for-itself.

Collective action in a digitised workplace

Hopkins Cate

(Data Justice Lab, Cardiff University School of Journalism, Media, and Culture)

As workplaces consolidate themselves around digital technology, the ways and means by which workers can be monitored are coming under increasing scrutiny. The trade union movement developed in response to the worst excesses of industrial capitalism (Hobsbawm 1968), excesses which were largely visible and collectively shared. However, our digital lives are highly individualised, and experiences of oppression are not necessarily experienced mutually but instead linked to our individual identities as gendered, racialised, embodied persons (Dubrovsky 2014). Citizen responses to state and corporate surveillance have been subdued in a reaction that has been termed 'surveillance realism,' (Dencik and Cable 2017). While trade unions have acknowledged that the digitised workplace can present challenges to workers (TUC 2018), thus far there has been little support for a cohesive response from the movement or a cogent campaign strategy. This paper draws on interviews conducted with trade union officials and workplace representatives of the Public and Commercial Services Union to explore current challenges presented by the digitised workplace to worker voice and influence at work, the form that collective action is taking in different workplaces, and the opportunities being presented to resist employee surveillance. Have employers consulted with trade unions about the introduction and expansion of digital technology? What impact has digital technology had on worker experience? Has this been exacerbated by the culture of working from home necessitated by the COVID-19

pandemic? Can workers build solidarity around issues surrounding workplace surveillance that are often highly individualised?

Breakout Room 6

COVID-19 effects on work, employment and power

COVID-19 crisis and work-family balance in the MENA region

Mehdizadeh Narjes
(Researcher)

Many firms in Europe have found that flexibility is cost-efficient and have introduced programs that offer such benefits to parents. However, in MENA regions, the issue of work-family balance and employment flexibility has arisen in recent times. COVID-19 has further increased unpaid care provided by women as well working from home. Closures of education and care services require parents, particularly women, to spend more time on child care, supervising home schooling, looking after the sick and elderly as well as other family responsibilities. At the same time, restriction measures have increased men's contributions to the household including childcare, and has created the opportunity for a more equal distribution of domestic work between parents.

Almost all governments around the globe have now taken targeted action for women who work, such as paid leave, flexible working arrangements and job security. The aim of this paper is to examine the MENA governmental policies during the COVID-19. The paper argues that the pandemic at the same time as having a negative impact on the economy and livelihood of individuals highlighted by the gaps in socio-economic systems, may also give a window of opportunity for governments to do things differently and implement measures that create a more equitable economical and societal structure in the long run. If such efforts are sustained after the imminent crisis, an opportunity for increased participation of women in the labour market arises, as across the region there is a realization of the benefit of flexibility and teleworking in the workforce.

Domestic Workers, Precarious Labour and Amplified Risks under COVID-19: Biopolitics of Contamination, Caste and Control in India

Mishra Paro
(Indraprastha Institute of Information Technology, Delhi (IIITD))

This paper is an ethnographic account of the linkages between risk and precarity in the lives of Indian domestic workers under COVID-19. Domestic workers constitute a precarious workforce as their work is marked by uncertainty, irregularity, asymmetrical power relations and largely non-regulated and private conditions of work bypassing the guidelines established by government, labour unions and employment agencies. Engaging with the theoretical frames of risk (Giddens 1991, Beck 2009), biopolitics (Foucault 2007), bioavailability (Rajan 2006) and contamination (Douglas 1966) and based on qualitative research conducted with domestic workers, their employers and resident welfare associations (RWAs) in Urban areas of National Capital Region, this paper illustrates how the precarity of domestic workers is further intensified under the conditions of the global pandemic. It argues that shifting biopolitics of the government and new disciplinary techniques of the state and RWAs aimed at managing certain "disordered" populations combine with existing social hierarchies and inequalities of caste and class to exacerbate the precarity of domestic workers and their families. In this process the body of the domestic workers comes to be marked as a site of contagion even as they bear the disproportionate load of managing risk and keeping contagion at bay within the employer's home. The individual and collective strategies that domestic workers employ to navigate through these oppressive biopolitical measures are also discussed.

Understanding how Covid-19 has affected Nigerian street vendors: A fine line between poverty and crime

Ogbonnaya Chidiebere
(University of Sussex)

Since the Covid-19 pandemic was declared a public health emergency, strict lockdown and social distancing measures were imposed on communities around the world. Low- and middle-income economies such as Nigeria have largely copied these measures, despite possible risks to the lives and livelihoods of street vendors.

Street vending is the foremost manifestation of the informal labor market, characterized by precarious jobs and undocumented workers. It covers over 70% of the urban employment in contemporary cities and represents a dominant, if not singular, source of income for the poorest and most vulnerable groups in society. The vendors offer a wide range of goods and services for sale in public spaces and earn a living either through daily monetary transactions or the exchange of services through bartering. Many battle poor hygiene, poverty, and social exploitation, all of which have worsened since Covid-19.

Our research draws needed attention to the most pressing socioeconomic challenges facing street vendors, including income loss, economic hardship, social inequality, and harassment by law enforcement officers. Compared to workers in the formal sector, street vendors have no defined wages, working hours, healthcare benefits, or societal status; yet, their plights are seldom considered in socioeconomic research. We focus on the range of coping strategies employed by street vendors as a response to Covid-19, and consider whether their precarious working conditions have made them more susceptible to crime (e.g., burglary, prostitution and illegal drugs trade).

Our theoretical frame is based on Agnew's (1992) general strain theory, a prominent framework in the fields of labor economics, sociology and criminology. Accordingly, members of society who find themselves in disadvantaged social and economic positions more likely to respond by displaying unpleasant emotions (e.g., feeling frustrated, angry and depressed), or by resorting to crime. A crime-based response is particularly plausible when individuals lack proper coping capabilities, and are therefore unable to achieve socially desirable goals in a legal manner.

We conducted sixty in-depth interviews with men and women street vendors residing in Abuja and Lagos, the political and commercial capitals of Nigeria, respectively. Both cities have reported high crime rates (National Bureau of Statistics Nigeria, 2019) and deployed strict enforcement of Covid-19 lockdown and social distancing rules. We utilized a cluster sampling technique to divide both cities into multiple clusters, each cluster representing a different urban space where street vending activities are prominent. Equal numbers of participants were randomly selected and interviewed from each cluster.

The results provide new insights on the lived experiences of Nigerian street vendors during Covid-19, particularly how the pandemic has forced several informal workers into extreme poverty, without decent jobs, source of income, or access to food. The results also provide critical data to encourage a more careful response towards Covid-19 and wider concerns around job creation, crime prevention and social protection for the poor and most vulnerable in society.

Breakout Room 7

Inequalities and their intersections

Intersecting inequalities and later-life employment: exploring lifecourse influences of class, gendered social roles and health upon men and women's experiences of work after the age of fifty.

Airey Laura, Jandric Jakov, Loretto Wendy, Vickerstaff Sarah
(*University of Edinburgh Business School*)

This paper aims to contribute to a better understanding of older workers' employment experiences in later life. The UK's ageing population has led to concerns about the rising cost of funding State Pensions, and skills shortages in the labour market. In response, successive UK governments have introduced a range of policy measures (such as raising the State Pension age and abolishing mandatory retirement) that are designed to extend working life beyond traditional retirement ages (DWP, 2017; Vickerstaff & Loretto, 2017). The impacts of such policies upon older workers themselves remain poorly understood. In particular, the implications of gendered patterns of employment and unpaid caring work at earlier lifecourse stages for women's and men's employment experiences in later life require further investigation.

We present preliminary findings from an on-going, mixed-methods study entitled 'Dynamics of Accumulated Inequalities for Seniors in Employment (DAISIE). The aim of DAISIE is to investigate the gendered impacts of Extended Working Life (EWL) policies in the UK, the Czech Republic, Ireland, Sweden and Switzerland. We present UK data derived from in-depth, biographical interviews with 90 male and female employees aged 50+, employed in three case-study organisations (financial services, healthcare and transport). Interviews explored participants' employment histories, health trajectories, family circumstances, and unpaid caring responsibilities across the lifecourse. Interviews also focused on employees' views about their current jobs and their aspirations regarding future work and retirement.

This paper adopts an intersectional, lifecourse approach to consider various ways in which age interacts with other dimensions of social location, such as class, gender and health status, to shape the nature of older workers' employment experiences. Our comparative analysis of employees' experiences within the three case-study organisations also illuminates the influence of occupation-based constraints and resources upon the gendered experiences of male and female older workers. We argue that in order to achieve a fine-grained understanding of older workers' employment experiences, it is necessary to take account of social conditions and processes operating over time and at different scales: the individual household context, the meso-context of organisational policies and practices, and the overarching structural context of employment legislation, national pension regulations, and welfare policies.

Migrant Workers' Perceptions of Inequality at Work during the Crisis: A Study on Relative Deprivation and Occupational Mobility in Greece and the United Kingdom

Galata Paraskevi - Viviane
(*Panteion University*)

The research seeks to investigate migrants' perceptions of inequality at work to understand how the social environment changes during crisis and what does this mean for life prospects. Exploring migrants' understanding of relative deprivation can provide in-depth explanations about their social attitudes towards job inequalities and their significance for occupational mobility in the receiving country. The research attempts to explain how structural changes and work values influence migrants' perceptions and decisions for mobility in reference to others. The focus of the study on relative deprivation, as a key theoretical concept, is more relevant in the current period of rapid change than ever to understand the structural changes a society is undergoing and their impact on people's expectations. The study also analyses the intersection of class and ethnicity and how this sets the boundaries of stratification and reproduces inequalities.

The research uses the comparative method to investigate the impact of crisis in social attitudes and prospects of occupational mobility in two groups of migrant workers in two different cities, both presenting elements of change: the Albanians in Athens, Greece and the Irish in Newcastle, United Kingdom. Two Case-Studies are conducted as an appropriate method to explore perceptions of inequality, expectations for mobility and their causal link with reference groups. The case-studies are based on the socio-historical context of analysis of the receiving countries and in-depth Work History Interviews in 20 families of migrants. Responding to a call from scholars to produce more qualitative data to understand what drives people's feelings of injustice, the study draws on a diverse range of narratives about work inequalities and demonstrates an innovative contribution to academic and policy debate on fair social protection systems and effective social policies.

Paper Session 9

Friday, 27 August 2021

12:00 - 13:30

Breakout Room 1

Technology, AI, Big Data, algorithms and new forms of work

Discovering Dataset Provenance: Social Sustainability in the AI Supply Chain

Newlands Gemma

(University of Amsterdam and BI Norwegian Business School)

To maintain a competitive advantage, organisations currently face intense pressures to either augment or replace internal workers with artificial intelligence (AI). AI models must be trained with accurate, relevant, and high quality training datasets. However, such datasets do not emerge from thin air, nor from a vacuum untouched by power asymmetries and commercial interests.

Researchers have identified the often haphazard methods of generating and using datasets for AI training, referring to a 'laissez-faire' attitude towards data collection which trades rigour for speed and accessibility. Indeed, as with global outsourcing elsewhere, the labour-intensive activity of cleaning, curating, and annotating datasets is outsourced to lower labour cost countries and thus outside of the organisation's boundaries. Because of this, the exact provenance of training datasets often remains unknown, both to the organisation and its external stakeholders. This problem is only exacerbated if organisations are not training their own AI, but using AI-as-a-Service (AlaaS).

For any organisation utilising AI tools (and especially for organisations heavily reliant on AI), discovering dataset provenance is important for a number of key reasons. Firstly, since no dataset is ever neutral, provenance information would identify where human subjectivity enters into datasets. Secondly, dataset provenance can limit dataset shift, where datasets produced for one purpose are re-used in a less relevant context. Thirdly, understanding provenance is essential for control. Fourthly, and what constitutes the focus of this paper, dataset provenance information would detail whether AI tools are developed in a socially sustainable manner. Specifically, by detailing as much as possible the working conditions of the dataset workers, organisations can begin to critically assess whether the development of their AI tools aligns with their overall strategy for corporate sustainability.

AI dataset supply chains can be conceptualised as the chain of collection, curation, and custody of data from source to model, passing through the hands of potentially infinite numbers of data workers, data brokers, and data scientists on the way. Taking a supply-chain perspective thus broadens our understanding of AI production as occurring not only in the exclusive labs of highly paid computer scientists, but as a global production network reliant on low-paid workers predominantly situated in the Global South.

Supply chains are increasingly globally 'disaggregated', with few organizations able to identify and engage with sub-suppliers. Yet, as ongoing research into sustainable supply chains has demonstrated, sub-suppliers are subject to least oversight, while simultaneously being responsible for the most egregious environmental and social impacts. We can identify a similar supply chain disaggregation in dataset creation. Based on the limited empirical research currently conducted, data preparation work is usually performed in low income countries and is poorly compensated. Social sustainability focuses on ensuring that suppliers and sub-suppliers provide equitable opportunities, improving employee quality of life and well-being. In this paper I propose and explore four mechanisms by which organisations can try to discover dataset provenance and to discover whether AI is being developed in a socially sustainable manner: Dataset Documentation, Multi-Stakeholder Initiatives, Informal Governance, and Market Incentives.

'Digitally-based' Self-employed Work: A Systematic Literature Review

Sauer Petra, Derndorfer Judith, Hofbauer Johanna

(Vienna University of Economics and Business)

Digital technologies have been changing the nature of products and services, affected management strategies, and transformed the organisation of work across time and space. They have further facilitated to split jobs into tasks and outsource them to a (global) workforce. In that sense, technology has played an important role enabling and accelerating broader developments such as economic globalization, the liberalization of financial markets, organizational restructuring and employment flexibilization (Boreham et al., 2007). Outsourced tasks range from high-

skilled programming or proof-reading activities to cleaning and food delivery. They can be allocated via online platforms and performed by crowdworkers. But they can also be executed by freelancers or independent contractors who directly interact with their clients but whose physical appearance at the site of the company becomes redundant in the digital economy. What unites these work arrangements is that they are different (new) manifestations of self-employment which have been substantially facilitated by the digitalisation of the workplace.

This paper aims to understand and capture the relevance, changing nature and diversity of the independent segment of the digital labour market. Since the 1990s, different terms such as freelancer, independent contractor or gig worker have been used in the scientific literature to describe and define the increasingly heterogeneous manifestations of self-employment. In these works the role of technology might be in the fore- or in the background. Moreover, different disciplines and sub-disciplines approach the topic from different perspectives, using different methodologies. The aim of this article is to systematize and critically evaluate an expanding and evolving yet fragmented research area, thereby contributing to conceptual clarification and classification of 'digitally-based' self-employed work.

To this end we conduct a systematic review of the scientific literature since the 1990s, and analyse the material following a mixed-methods approach. As a first step, we provide a general overview of the broader relevant literature by conducting a quantitative analysis of relevant key terms using text mining. This part enables to reveal the relevance of particular terms related to self-employment and technology over time, and to provide insights into the development of the academic discussion as well as the role of technology. Moreover, the quantitative analysis builds a general (descriptive) framework for and filters into the second step consisting of a qualitative analysis based on a reduced set of journal articles combined with the most relevant grey literature items (i.e. working papers, books, chapters and reports from international institutions). Doing so enables us to obtain deeper insights into the structural dimensions used to categorise variants of 'digitally-based' self-employed work, and to infer about the motives, risks and potentials that have been identified in the literature to accrue to different groups of workers.

Breakout Room 2

Professions, occupations, skills, careers and self-employment

Examining the Impact That Support Programs Have on Repatriates Turnover Intentions

Richardson Liam, Cook Christian

(Mount Royal University)

The number of employees that multinational organizations are sending on international assignments continues to grow (SHRM, 2013). Research has found that international assignments can lead to substantial benefits for both organizations and employees. First, they provide employees with extensive knowledge regarding specific technical, cross-cultural, and leadership skills. Secondly, once the employee returns home, they have the opportunity to transfer this newfound knowledge and expertise to other organizational leaders and employees. As the number of international assignments continues to increase, organizations expect to reap larger rewards from these benefits. However, despite these well-documented benefits that include increased employee knowledge, and technical skills (SHRM, 2013) that international assignments can provide, many companies still struggle with significant repatriate turnover (Brookfield Relocation Services, 2015). This high turnover not only costs organizations a substantial amount of money and time that was dedicated to preparing and sending the employee abroad, but it also eliminates any potential transfer of knowledge from the employee post-repatriation. It has been documented that a large amount of this turnover stems from a perceived lack of organizational support for the repatriate, difficulty with repatriation adjustment, and the breaking of the psychological contract between the organization and repatriate (Lazarova & Caligiuri, 2001). This information leads to the question that many organizations need to reconcile: what organizational support strategies do repatriates find most effective in reducing their intentions to leave their organization? This study aimed to increase awareness of organizational policies and practices that repatriates felt increased as well as decreased their turnover intentions after returning home from abroad. In order to answer this question, qualitative semi-structured interviews were conducted to better understand perceptions of the policies and practices organizations offered repatriates during pre-assignment, assignment, and post-assignment (repatriation). Interview participants consisted of Canadian repatriates from multiple industries who returned to Canada from an international assignment within the last five years. To analyze the data a two-cycle coding process was used. The first cycle used a descriptive coding method and the second used a pattern coding method. The findings from these interviews presented a number of common themes that impacted participants' turnover intentions once returning home. The themes that had the largest influence on participant turnover intentions were the levels of perceived organizational support they received, the ease of adjusting back to life in their home country, and their perceived belief that the organization delivered on all their promises or,

fulfilling their psychological contract with their organization. In addition, analysis indicated that organizations' need to look at global assignments more holistically as several participants, despite having positive repatriation experiences, still noted having turnover intentions due to differing assignment expectations and an overall poor assignment experience. Regarding specific organizational policies and practices, participants noted that while logistical support programs such as immigration and tax guidance is a necessity, programs that put greater emphasis on repatriation, cultural integration, career development, planning and recognition are needed. The implications for employees and employers will be discussed.

Anomie, Autonomy, and Equity: Professionalism in Career Counselling between Neoliberal Selfhood and Social Justice

Varul Matthias

(University of Applied Labour Studies, Mannheim)

While lacking some of the trappings of recognised professions, career guidance and counselling operates in field that, in the Parsonsian concept, suggests a professional approach. In career choice the individual anomie of potentially life-defining decisions under conditions of indeterminacy and insecurity coincides with the collective anomie of having to rely on autonomous individual decisions to reproduce a specialised labour force. In Georg Simmel's essay on the possibility of society, the choice of vocation hence features as the miraculous pivot in which individuality and socialisation are joint in a contradictory way.

Against this background career counsellors have not only understood themselves as a profession early on, but in many countries professionalisation has been driven by government agencies, e.g. through the education system or the public employment services. Facing an ever more dynamic demand for qualified, stress-resistant and flexible workers (i.e. labour power with "exponentiated" value), both individual and systemic anomie is increased. There now also is wide agreement (e.g. announced by the OECD) that this situation merits career guidance not only at the beginning of but throughout working life.

Newer approaches to career counselling aim at empowering the individual to self-create a meaningful biography that will enable them to steer through the fast-changing and fractured labour market of the digital age, adapting to accelerated paces of change. Strongly emphasising individual autonomy, approaches now dominant in career counselling such as "life design" advocate empowering individuals to take authorship of their own biographies, drawing on resources outside paid work to make autonomous decisions in adapting to the demands of fragmented careers. We can read the new approaches as professional adaptation from a role in (relatively) simple reproduction to an extended reproduction, which feeds on original exploitation of resources outside the employment contract.

As a reaction to what they see as exacerbated exploitation and inequality under neoliberal conditions, critical scholars and practitioners of career guidance and counselling have begun formulating ideas and guidelines for a praxis that in various ways tries to support clients in understanding intersecting experiences and conditions of exclusion, marginalisation and discrimination. Based broadly Marxist analysis of neoliberal labour markets and often inspired by Paolo Freire's pedagogy of the oppressed, they try find various ways for a "career counselling for social justice" to support clients challenging the status quo as individuals and as collectives.

While in Parsons (and his Marxist alter ego Althusser), professional work unfailingly succeeds in systemic reproduction, I will suggest to understand this emerging movement as a dialectical outflow of the inner tension of professional action around the double-edged notion of "autonomy". I will suggest that professionalism can tilt to advocacy for social reform and systemic change where conditions are such that the anomic situation is no longer surmountable for their clients, with or without professional help. However, as both counsellors and their clients remain entangled in the institutional settings, socio-economic conditions and also cultural expectations, these attempts are not without their own contradictions, particularly regarding the positioning the counsellors themselves – which will also be discussed.

Curriculum Vitae: The interminable work of self-transformation in the labour market

Boland Tom

(University College Cork)

While the Curriculum Vitae may appear initially as a pragmatic and strategic document, conversely it is arguable that the CV shapes the subjectivity and behaviour of job-seekers and workers, converting individual lives and identities to careers. Today, labour market transitions are increasingly numerous, whether through spells of unemployment and precarious work, frequent job-changing in short contracts of project-oriented portfolio careers, and even through internal marketisation in large organisations. Thus, composing, updating and strategically re-writing a CV is an interminable requirement – from early education unto retirement, 'it'll look good on my CV' is a rationale for any activity. Of course, the visible form of the CV is very diverse, depending on sector and jurisdiction, and the CV straddles older forms of job-application forms and letters of application; however, contemporary education, HR-firms,

welfare offices and digital interfaces have institutionalised the CV as the hegemonic document of the labour market, which 'fastens' or 'fixes' individuals to their details (Koopman, 2019)

Beyond research on the experience of work and unemployment, contemporary scholarship increasingly attends to the practices and culture of jobseeking, both off and on-line (Vallas, Sharone, Gershon). Interviews with jobseekers, ethnographies of Jobs-clubs and studies of street-level bureaucracy help us to understand the how ideologies of the competitive labour market and individual self-development shape the lives of job-seekers – and are resisted in important ways. This paper presents a discourse analysis of popular CV-writing guides, web-based advice and digital ethnographies of LinkedIn and other popular Jobsearch platforms. Specifically, the practices of CV-writing, how individuals are enticed to represent their individual lives to the labour market, are analysed as modes of interpellation – with due attention to both on-line and IRL sites, following Sarah Pink's digital ethnographic methods and David Beer's attention to 'digital quirks'.

Following, Foucauldian inspired governmentality studies and Bachi's post-structuralist problematisation, composing a CV requires self-disciplining, examining one's own life and character in line with institutional norms, and adopting the viewpoint of potential employers. Implicitly, to pursue success, the individual must scrutinise themselves through the lens of a competitive labour market. Thus, education becomes 'human capital', society becomes 'networks', personal qualities are rendered as 'soft-skills' and ideals are translated into 'career goals'.

While CVs are a soft target for popular critique because of its vapid jargon and aggrandising claims, what matters here is how individuals are rendered responsible for their unemployment, and enticed to commodify their own labour and life for the labour market. Furthermore, this work is implicitly interminable, as the cycle of re-writing CVs goes on for the duration of the job-search of the unemployed, despite a short-term contract and throughout even a successful career. Most importantly, the CV requires individuals to narrate their lives in terms of personal development and self-transformation, explaining away 'gaps in the CV', and shaping a 'career trajectory': this dynamic of 'confessing' faults to welfare offices and 'professing' career skills to the labour market as a distinctive operation of 'pastoral power' as described by Foucault.

Breakout Room 3

Social movements, unions, voice and activism

Labouring for Love (Not Money): A paradox of voice through employee-ownership

Watson Judith, Monroe Julie

(Newcastle University)

Employee voice is imagined as a fragile plant which needs care and attention for it to flourish (Wilkinson and Fay 2011). Such imagining resonates with a view of voice as a fundamental right (e.g. Budd 2004), encompassing notions of free speech, social well-being and human dignity (Gollan 2013; Wilkinson and Dundon 2010). However, this tends not to be the reality for employees in conventional businesses. Whilst managers are central in helping voice flourish, they can also hinder voice (Ravenswood and Markey 2018). The choices they make tend towards mechanisms considered to be low-level (Croucher et al 2010; Dundon et al 2017) as they confer limited ability for employees to have any influence; information is provided to employees who are not involved with, or have influence over, that information (Watson 2019). As a result, a growing body of work suggests voice can go unheard (Brooks 2018; Gunawardana 2014; Syed 2014; Soltani et al 2018; Wilkinson et al 2018). This paper contributes to this debate by imagining how employee voice could be.

We draw on Wright's (2010) theoretical framework, elaborated in the Real Utopias Project (Wright 2010), and respond to his call to diagnose obstructions in 'the world of the actual' to create the context in which to explore 'the world of the possible'. In this case, the world of the actual means voice through conventional businesses. Therefore, to explore the world of the possible, we examine voice through an unconventional business model, employee-ownership. A key factor which can enable employee voice in this model is through its 'embeddedness' in the governance structure (Bernstein 1976). In this context, employee voice is regarded as part of the 'organisational infrastructure' (Dundon et al 2017) thus having greater 'strength' (Gollan et al 2015).

A qualitative case study was undertaken with Care-Co, an employee-owned social care organisation. As there was no tool available that would allow the researchers to collect and organise the data vis-à-vis embeddedness, a novel '6-S' configuration was developed to aid understanding of how, where and with what effect employee voice was channelled into, within and outwith Care-Co. This was achieved by separating out the following aspects of the organisation: sovereignty, structure, strategy, systems, shape and spirit. Employee voice was examined using this configuration as a framework to conduct primary research including observations and interviews and secondary research such as the company's website.

Contradictory findings have been revealed. Employee-ownership certainly provided the possibility to embed employee voice and did enable social care workers' voice to be expressed. However, their voice was regularly obstructed by senior management. The paper concludes that a reason for this obstruction was a mistaken view of social care employees as calculative and financially motivated. Paradoxically, had social care workers been heard, management would understand that what drives them is a love of the job and a desire to make a difference to the lives of service users.

Work time reduction and collective action

Arntsen Alexandra, Chapple Wendy
(*Nottingham Trent University*)

Improvements in working conditions and workers rights have traditionally been driven by collective action through unions. However, with trends of increasing working time and blurred boundaries between work and leisure unions are receiving critique for underinvestment in these issues (Brochard and Letablier, 2017). A main driver of work-life issues are long working hours (Rigby and O'Brien-Smith, 2010). The topic of work-time reduction has received increased interest in recent academic publications (such as Gunderson, 2019; Fremstad et al., 2019; Arntsen et al., 2018) public media (see the Guardian; NEF) and political movements such as the UK Labour Party, The Trades Union Congress (TUC) and the notion of 'kurzarbeid' (short work) in Germany to combat the effects of Covid on the labour market. This interest is in connection to social justice, combating unemployment, increases in stress related illness, mental health, and stalling leisure time (Harper, 2019a/b). More recent literature further argues that there are additional environmental benefits to shorter working time (Cieplinski et al., 2021; Gerold and Nocker, 2017; Pullinger, 2014). These benefits are mainly gained from reduced income and consumption, but also through behaviour changes (see Arntsen et al., 2018). Neoclassical economic theory assumes that worktime naturally decreases as countries experience development and growth. However, analysis of historical work-time developments has found the main determinant of reductions in working-time to be collective action through unions (Hermann, 2015). Research has demonstrated that only a minority of workers would be willing to accept an immediate reduction in working hours, especially if it is associated with a reduction in pay. However, the majority would like a lowering of the concept of "full-time" work (Sanne, 2002). Working time is therefore not likely to be changed by individuals on voluntary basis, but through a social movement (Gunderson, 2018). A recent publication by TUC (2018) have indicated that this trend may be changing, with a report calling for a shorter work week. This could be important step towards a successful work-time reduction.. It is somewhat unclear what the positioning of unions are in the work-time debate in their increasingly politicised environment. Previous research has identified the need to investigate this topic on a broad occupational base (Rigby& O'Brien-Smith, 2010). This paper explores the positioning of unions to working hours using qualitative interviews with union representatives from the largest unions in the UK (based on member figures). It investigates how unions are engaging with the concept of work time reduction and how they perceive their role in the development of working-time. The paper pays attention to how union actions differ over industry and in the larger setting of the political climate. This paper contributes to the literature by provide an alternative angle on the voice of employees in the work-time debate.

Breakout Room 5

Open Stream – Special Event

China and the Internationalisation of the Sociology of Contemporary Work and Employment

Kofman Eleonore, Lee Maggy, Tse Tommy
(*Middlesex University*)

This presentation examines the differential impacts of marketisation and economic development on gender earnings inequality in reform-era urban China. Based on data from the 2005 population mini-census with prefecture-level statistics, we distinguish the effect of economic development from that of marketisation on the gender earnings gap. Multi-level analyses reveal that marketisation and economic development have affected gender inequality in different ways: whereas market forces have exacerbated gender earnings inequality, economic development has reduced it. Overall, marketisation appears to be the main driver of the increase in gender earnings inequality in urban China. Implications for policies promoting gender equality in China are discussed.

China and the Internationalisation of the Sociology of Contemporary Work and Employment

Kofman Eleonore
(*Middlesex University*)

The presentation examines how male rural-to-urban migrant taxi drivers' experience of a loss of control over their working conditions and increasing financial insecurity are driven by state regulation and market reorganization of the taxi industry, and their status as second class citizens in urban China. Precarity, as explored in this article, speaks to feelings of disempowerment, a profound sense of livelihood insecurity and a crisis of social reproduction that has resulted from workplace reorganization that marginalizes workers. The findings contribute to the study of precarity and masculinity by first unpacking how masculine identities are built around men's access to masculine service niches and their control over working conditions in these niches. It then shows how precariousness negates these male workers' sense of self by simultaneously taking away the control that distinguishes their work from factory employment and female-dominated service jobs; and undermining their capacity to meet the provider norm.

China and the Internationalisation of the Sociology of Contemporary Work and Employment

Kofman Eleonore
(Middlesex University)

The special session reflects a growing internationalisation of Work, Employment and Society in its collaboration with partners in East Asia. A co-organised conference with the University of Hong Kong in September 2019 led to the decision to publish selected papers (11) on China in the past two decades that represent the diversity, complexity and plurality of work and employment in China.

As Beck et al. (2016) argued, engaging with the Global South involves more than geographical extension but connecting with ongoing debates which merit more attention since they play 'a crucial role against flattening accounts of globalizing capitalism, both conceptually as well as in practice'. Such scholarship is not simply relevant on its own terms but because 'it has become increasingly difficult and undesirable to assume a standard model and to specify its "centre"'. Furthermore, we should bear in mind there is no single Global South, just as there is no single Global North, with certain states and regions developing their own dynamic.

The key foci of debates include issues around the changing fault lines of work and employment; the changing relationships of state, employers and workers; the impact of rural to urban migration and urbanisation on the labour process and employment configurations; the interrelations between production and social reproduction and its gendered dimensions; and the need to develop established methodologies further given the changing nature of the research object.

China exemplifies many of these ongoing debates and highlights a number of important questions for the sociology of work, employment and society. China does not fit neatly into the traditional binary model of a North-South divide. While the country has its unique political, economic, cultural and social trajectories, its configurations of work and employment have been continuously shaped and reshaped by specific implementations of employment laws and policies leading to significant enterprise reforms and changing state-employer-employee relations, and by the subsequent responses from the workers in searching, maintaining and leaving jobs across different historical periods. It is therefore inadequate to simply adopt the Western analytical approach in comprehending work and employment in China. Without the knowledge of such historical contexts one cannot fully understand what led to the country's seemingly recent phenomena in the context of work – from mega-urbanisation to mass rural-to-urban migration, from the decline of state-owned enterprises to the rise of market economy, and from hybrid management style to collective worker protests.

A number of empirical studies included in the special issue have revealed and theorised these changing configurations of the state and production politics, formal/informal employment, labour process including recruitment, and the multi-faceted nature of labour control. The papers engage with long-standing sociological concerns of power, inequalities, social networks, reproduction, and relations in the workplace, and examine their changing manifestations and significance in China.

The three editors of the e-special will present the key themes raised by the selected articles and invite three of the authors to discuss their articles in the context of ongoing research on the sociology of work and employment in China.

Breakout Room 6

Gender, work and social reproduction

Is the social origin pay gap bigger than we thought? Understanding and mitigating missing class data in social surveys

Vallely Michael, Findlay Jeanette, Hermannsson Kristinn
(University of Glasgow)

A recent wave of empirical work has identified the existence of social origin pay gaps using a variety of datasets for the UK, US and other high-income countries. These are so-called unexplained pay gaps, i.e. they persist even when

observable characteristics such as education and a range of labour market observables have been controlled for (Britton et al., 2019; Crawford and Vignoles, 2014; Friedman and Laurison, 2019; Hallsten, 2013; Laurison and Friedman, 2016; Mastekaasa, 2011). Social origin is identified using survey questions, where respondents are asked to recall the occupational status of their parents when they were young. This rests on an established tradition in social mobility research, but until relatively recently had not been used to analyse wage outcomes.

A crucial difference between social origin compared to gender, ethnicity and sexual orientation is that the latter are all features of the respondent as a person, whereas social origin is derived from information about a previous generation. However, the way the instrument is designed is problematic for two reasons. Firstly, it omits individuals who did not live with their family when they were 14, i.e. those from non-traditional households or those living in care. Secondly, much of the post-industrial working class has faced insecure, fragmented, “random” jobs, lacking a clear occupational identity. For such respondents, a question about the job of the main household earner when 14 is likely to lack a clear answer, which is likely to drive higher item non-response in social surveys.

We re-examine how researchers have applied the social origin variable (SMSOC101) in the UK Quarterly Labour Force Survey to examine wages and argue that for social origin, item non-response is non-random, which has resulted in an under-estimation of the social origin pay gap. Whilst item non-response may occur for many reasons, we argue that the way the social origin question is derived is particularly problematic as it does not apply to individuals from non-traditional or fragmented households and those from households with less structured occupational profiles. We explore this possibility through descriptive analyses and by estimating wage equations.

We disaggregate the non-item response groups as far as possible and show that overall, these groups report less favourable outcomes in relation to education, occupational attainment and pay in comparison to those who do report social origin. We then estimate wage equations for the non-item response groups and observe that the wage coefficients for respondents coded as ‘does not apply’ are significantly lower i.e. the wage gap is larger. We also observe that the wage coefficients for this group is lower than whose parents were employed in elementary occupations. Therefore, we argue that failing to account for non-item response to the social origin question has underestimated the social origin pay gap and the number of individuals affected. Overall, our results reinforce the urgency to “level-up” the labour market outcomes of those living in the UK.

‘It is about compliance, not social justice’: Exploring compliance and liability in context of sexual harassment at workplaces

Dixit Anukriti

(Indian Institute of Management Ahmedabad)

Policies for anti-sexual harassment at workplaces (SHW) have seen a focus on corporate compliance and liability as well as neoliberal co-opted versions of diversity and inclusion. This paper discusses the implications of producing ‘compliance, liability, inclusion and diversity (CLID)’ through the frameworks of gendered organizational logics and hierarchical neoliberal workplaces. I argue that positing sexual harassment as ‘solved’ by increasing diversity and decreasing discrimination, produces superficial changes without reflecting on organizational culture or socio-legal discourses of ‘justice’. In this context I ask, “what role do concerns within employment relations play with regard to projects of social justice?” This paper aims to study the extent to which, neoliberal resignifications of CLID, produce ‘sexual harassment at workplaces’ through logics of individuality and enterprise. Consequently, what kinds of subjects are produced in the process of governing through technologies such as CLID?

In this study, I conducted interviews with 15 corporate consultants and 5 lawyers and legal consultants on the subjects of training and compliance within India’s anti-SHW laws. Additionally, I attended webinars and training sessions conducted by these consultants on the issues of inquiry and arbitration in cases of SHW. Finally, this data was supplemented by a poststructuralist analysis of policy documents produced by the Ministry of Women and Child development, National commission for women and the International Labour Organization.

Findings reveal that a shift is required in the manner in which we view both ‘work’ and ‘workers’. It is essential that organizational and public policies regard social phenomena such as SHW, as structurally produced and not as individualised ‘problems’ of “one person’s discrimination vs. another person’s civil rights”. I further find that treating SHW through the technologies of CLID, makes ‘justice’ a difficult prospect, especially for the subjects labelled as ‘non-enterprising’, ‘unmeritorious’ or simply ‘undeserving’. This has two important implications for the study of social (specifically gender) inequality and SHW. For one, organizational conceptualizations of SHW, ignore the historicity of oppression in local contexts. For the Indian context, this implies neglecting the co-constitutiveness of caste, gender identity (more specifically the social treatment of transgender persons) and sexual orientation. Secondly, as subjects of ‘work’, socially marginalised employees are cast as organizational ‘liabilities’ and organizations themselves are cast as compliant and rationally produced units of economic facilitation. Neoliberal governmentality, I contend, is not just a production or invocation of such technologies as CLID, but also a system of ‘work’ necessarily predicated upon violence and neglect. In such a system, the ideas of diversity and inclusion are reshaped as technologies for reproducing dominant discourses. Subjects within these discourses are evaluated as either deserving or not-

deserving, of equality and justice, through the hegemonic rules of enterprise and self-sufficiency. Among the contributions of this study lies a potential resignification of 'compliance and liability', to incorporate concerns of situated social contexts (such as caste and sexual orientation) within anti-sexual harassment discourses.

Women and Men in HR: The Gendered Nature of Legitimacy

Berrington Catherine

(Warwick Business School, University of Warwick)

This research explores perceptions of legitimacy and professionalisation within HR and the extent to which these may be underpinned by gendered assumptions. Acker's (1990) theory of gendered organisations is used as a framework to explore how ideals of success and value in the workplace inherently hold ideologies of hegemonic masculinity. With notions of legitimacy and professionalisation inextricably interlinked, this research also utilises Witz's (1992) work on professions and patriarchy to further understand the ways female-dominated occupations comparatively struggle with professionalisation. In understanding legitimacy and professionalisation as gendered concepts, consideration can be given as to how this may impact the HR occupation. The HR occupation is of particular value to study due to the female concentration and the extensive debates in academic and practitioner literature with regards to the value, credibility, and professionalisation. (Caldwell, 2003; Ulrich and Dulebohn, 2015).

This research seeks to understand:

How do the concepts of 'legitimacy' and 'gender' shape understanding of the HR occupation?

- In what ways are the perceptions and lived experiences of HR practitioners shaped by 'legitimacy' and 'gender'?

This research utilises empirical semi-structured interviews with UK HR practitioners. Interviews are ongoing, with 55 HR practitioners interviewed to date. Participants range from entry-level to HR director; working within the public, private and voluntary sector and were sourced primarily through snowball sampling.

The findings of this research support the position that the HR occupation remains in search of commercial and professional legitimacy and the historical feminisation of HR is perceived to have hindered this pursuit. Over half of the participants made direct reference to the idea that HR's legitimacy is questioned, at least in part, due to the female concentration in the occupation. A number of participants perceived ideals of commerciality and strategy to be associated more so with their male colleagues and viewed this as a hindrance to HR's credibility.

Linked to this, vertical segregation - the prevalence of males in senior HR roles - was referred to by over half of the participants. This issue caused annoyance and/or confusion among many female participants due to the female concentration in HR until senior levels. Participants referred to male senior HR practitioners having transitioned from other functions. For many participants, this indicated that both women and the HR function are perceived as illegitimate at senior levels of the organisation.

These findings contribute to a relatively small stream of academic literature exploring gender in HR and how this may play into longstanding issues around legitimacy and professionalisation. Much of this extant research adopts a quantitative approach and focuses on identifying the factors that influence women's participation in senior HR roles. This study offers a different perspective by providing an insight into the microlevel perceptions of gender in HR and how these reflect in the day to day work of practitioners. In studying a female concentrated occupation, based within inherently masculine organisations, this research helps further understanding of the gendered tensions HR practitioners experience with regards to the perceived credibility of the function.

Paper Session 10

Friday, 27 August 2021

14:30 - 16:00

Breakout Room 1

Professions, occupations, skills, careers and self-employment

A Just Transition for UK oil and gas workers? The human side of the net zero transition

Denyer Kirsty, Rowson Tatiana, Kalyuzhnova Yelena

(Henley Business School)

The cyclical nature of the UK's oil and gas industry has long resulted in low job security for many members of its workforce. But the UK's net zero transition towards a greener energy mix, combined with impact of Covid-19, has precipitated a steep rise in job losses in the declining North Sea oil and gas industry (OGUK, 2020).

The concept of a Just Transition, dating from 1980s US trade union movements, has been revived in the context of the net zero transition (Healy & Barry, 2017). The goal of the Just Transition is to ensure that nobody is 'left behind' as the net zero transition progresses – involving continued access to decent work for fossil fuel workers (UNFCCC, 2015; Scottish Government, 2020). The mere existence of a replacement job is not enough to constitute a Just Transition: work must also be good quality (Healy & Barry, 2017). Yet, despite targeted government and industry body action in aid of a Just Transition (e.g. Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy & OGUK, 2021; Scottish Government, 2020, TUC, 2019), the reality of continued quality work for oil and gas professionals is far from clear. While there is a growing body of academic work on the Just Transition, and its implications for the labour markets, papers are largely conceptual (e.g. Healy & Barry, 2017); or at industry and policy level, not directly relevant to individual workers (e.g. Galgóczi, 2020; Tomassetti, 2020).

A Just Transition impacts individual lives and careers. The onus is on energy workers to reorient their work identities, skills and career paths in a rapidly changing industry. Yet, to the researchers' knowledge, there is no research giving voice to the UK oil and gas workforce in relation to the Just Transition - a gap this paper aims to address. This paper reports research findings of a qualitative study exploring the personal and contextual factors that influence access to quality reemployment for North Sea oil and gas workers after job loss. The study draws on data collected via semi-structured interviews with individual workers and industry stakeholders; then transcribed and analysed using template analysis, integrating critical realist principles. Findings will be used to assess the reality of a Just Transition for UK energy workers; and to explore how individuals navigate this unique kind of precarious work, in a declining part of an evolving industry. In doing so, it puts a much-needed spotlight on the human side of the net zero transition.

This paper presentation aims to create awareness of this important, and previously overlooked, topic within the net-zero energy transition agenda; and to share the findings of this qualitative research for the first time, seeking feedback to help prepare this paper for publication.

References available on request.

“It was extremely demanding and stressful, absolutely exhausted me to the point I'd cry” – Young Women and the Career in Fashion Public Relations in the UK

Topic Martina

(Leeds Beckett University)

This paper explores public relations within a niche environment of fashion public relations and addresses career perceptions and issues among PR practitioners working in fashion PR and compares it with other forms of PR (corporate communications, media relations, digital, tech, crisis management). Drawing from studies conducted in Australia, this study developed a qualitative research design of 10 semi-structured practitioner interviews drawing upon the perceptions and experiences the practitioners have experienced to explore the recognition of fashion PR in comparison to other forms of PR. Results show that women practitioners report high work demands across public relations roles, with fashion PR practitioners reporting additional work burdens along with lack of recognition and work-related stress. The paper contributes towards extending the knowledge of fashion PR from a UK perspective and challenges the lack of recognition of PR in general, and fashion PR in particular. The discussion on fashion PR is

situated both within the debate on the position of women in public relations and fashion industries and the paper contrasts and compares the situation in the fashion industry and links this with the situation in fashion PR. The paper calls for feminist theory of fashion and abandoning of traditional feminist hostility towards the fashion industry.

Prisoners of oath: junior doctors' professional identities during and after the 2015-2016 NHS strikes.

Jephson Nicholas, Charlwood Andy, Cook Hugh

(Cardiff Metropolitan University)

The work of junior doctors in the NHS is characterised by long hours at work (Rich et al, 2016), low levels of morale (Bessa et al, 2016), high levels of occupational stress (Swanson et al, 1998, Zhou et al, 2019) and persistent agitation from non-clinical managers (Doolin, 2002; Bessa et al, 2016). These features of junior doctor work have been alleged to have provoked threats of an exodus of junior doctors leaving the NHS (Merrick, 2016; Teo, 2018), particularly post-imposition of the controversial new junior doctors' employment contract which prompted industrial action in 2016. Despite this, many junior doctors remain resolutely committed to medical careers in the NHS. This raises an important question: how did the strikes, and the junior doctors' subsequent return to work, affect their professional identities? The Junior Doctors' dispute of 2015-2016 represented a watershed moment in public sector and professional employment relations in the UK. Public and practitioner opinion was polarised by the actions of the junior doctors and the British Medical Association (BMA) representing them (Park and Murray, 2014, Toynbee et al, 2016, Chima, 2020). Retrospective analyses of the strikes have thus far focused on patient outcomes, primarily due to the far-reaching effects of the industrial action on the general public of England (Furnivall et al, 2018; Rimmer, 2018). Framed in the literature on identity work (Alvesson et al, 2008; Brown and Coupland, 2015; Brown, 2021), this paper examines how the occupational identity of junior doctors, which is heavily rooted in patient care, diluted and ultimately thwarted the effectiveness of the strike action, both through doctors' own commitments to patients and as used as a tool by government to sway public opinion against their action. In turn, it was a reworking of junior doctors' professional identities that helped them accept defeat in the strike and refocus on their NHS careers. Findings show that the junior doctor's strikes represented a significant and unprecedented threat to junior doctors' professional identities and that the strike action instigated significant identity (re)work within the doctors themselves. We illustrate this identity work and its outcomes as consisting of three overlapping identity threats and three corresponding alleviation strategies that were used by striking doctors to author reworked identities in light of the new landscape of their work: a reluctant acceptance of their weak bargaining position due in significant part to their professional identities, a subsequent re-attachment to their normative professional values and a focus on their future careers. We show this through a longitudinal qualitative study, which provides nuanced insights into the tensions that challenge junior doctors' working lives and professional identities. This analysis uncovers how underlying values of patient care embedded within medical practitioners and the medical profession, in this situation facilitated the financial logic of the NHS. Now, as the world relies more than ever on the labour of early career medics to treat the victims of the COVID-19 pandemic, novel insights into their working lives, occupational tensions and subsequent identity (re)work are of renewed value.

From Closure to Expansion: Stratification and Skill Segregation of Turkish Lawyers

Koytak Elyesa

(Istanbul Medeniyet University)

My thesis aims to show to that the occupational social closure (Collins, 1990; Murphy, 1988; Rogowski, 1995; Saks & Adams, 2019), is not a stable and irreversible phase of development even if it is strictly sponsored by the state. With the late-but-massive expansion of higher education, the gates of the elite professions in Turkey have recently opened to young generations from middle and lower socio-economic statuses. In this context, on the one hand, the established returns and symbolic value of law degree are eroded, and on the other hand, the corporate law offices rise as monopolies in the legal sector. As a result, the professional skills and positions of lawyers are now in a state of segmentation according to the sophisticated and competitive demands of market forces. To explore this change, I use three types of empirical sources: First, national statistics of law education, legal market and professional jobs, in order to discover how and when the occupational closure is dissolving. Second, a dataset of 1319 lawyers who work at 106 Turkish law firms featured in the Legal 500, to see the emerging elite skills and capitals within the profession. Third, to trace how the change is experienced, twenty in-depth interviews I conducted with lawyers from different cohorts and work-types. My preliminary findings suggest that while the new higher stratum of corporate lawyers lacks the authority and autonomy of the traditional solo lawyer; the new lower stratum of unskilled masses is not only overpopulated but also prone to increasing precarity.

Breakout Room 2

Dignity at work, decent work and job quality

“Our Time” and “Their Time”: The struggle over the working day in a hybrid distribution centre.

Morris Joe

(University of Sheffield)

The growth in online retailing has been made possible by the mastering of logistics. The Covid pandemic has led to the acceleration of online purchasing, leading to the expanded capacity of the logistics function connected to the labour of sortation, distribution and delivery. This has fuelled a race to capture the last mile market (Alimahomed-Wilson, 2020). The increasing competitiveness of the logistics sector and the third party's contractual commitments to the hybrid retailer places pressure on increasing its production rates and keeping labour costs low. Unpaid labour time, therefore, remains a critical yet under-researched category. Consequently, it is necessary to understand how the labour process is structured and the resultant effects upon the nature of work for those on the last mile.

The article draws on fieldwork conducted in one hybrid distribution centre in the UK. In total, the interviews comprised 20 semi-structured interviews. The interviewees included 20 non-managerial workers. The job roles of these worker informants were: warehouse operatives, employed by the hybrid retailer (10); and delivery drivers, employed by the delivery firm (10).

The article explores the struggle over the working day and working time in a hybrid distribution centre. It reveals that the outsourcing of the delivery function coerces delivery drivers to perform unpaid labour. The article finds that this inadvertently strengthens shopfloor relations between two sets of workers; the 'middle mile', sortation workers employed by the lead hybrid retailer and the 'last mile', delivery drivers, outsourced and operated by a third-party delivery firm.

The key focal points are the labour process, particularly the organisation of working time and the effect on strengthening workers' solidarity across a strategic node in the supply chain. The article shows how the organisation of the labour process extends the unpaid labour time of delivery drivers beyond their contractual commitments. This has the unintended consequence of establishing embryonic notions of solidarity, defined as a condition where workers develop a sense of collective identity distinct from management (Fantasia, 1988). This forms on the basis of an awareness of shared interests and purpose regarding the organisation of working time.

In theoretical terms, the article provides an empirical understanding of keeping value in motion (Newsome, 2015). It does this by examining the battle over working time and the extension of the working day. It shows how the retail firm captures value by maintaining high productivity rates beyond the warehouse operative's ability to complete their set targets. In line with insights by Atzeni (2010), the article shows that the emergence of solidarity is linked to the inherent contradictions of the labour process. The article reveals that the process of value capture led to the development of inter-worker cooperation (Atzeni, 2010) around a strategic node in the supply chain. By examining this process, the article considers the broader implications of the race to capture the last mile for logistics workers. It suggests coordination of supply chain solidarity can be developed around the process of valorisation manifest in the contradictions of working time and unpaid labour.

An evaluation of the work-life balance framework: insights from Denmark, a world-leading WLB-society

Warren Tracey

(University of Nottingham)

The call for papers for WES2020 invited discussion about 'how work and employment affects people's lives, health, relationships and sense of citizenship'. This paper responds to that call by evaluating the pervasive work-life balance (WLB) framework.

The paper is inspired by the OECD Better Life Index (2020) that states on WLB: 'The ability to successfully combine work, family commitments and personal life is important for the well-being of all members in a household'. The UK routinely sits in an abysmal place (28th out of 38 countries) for its performance on WLB in that Index. It performs better on the other indicators of better lives (e.g. personal security, environmental quality, civic engagement, income and wealth, education and skills) and so this very weak international ranking raises perplexing concerns about work-lives in the contemporary UK.

At the other end of the OECD's scale sits Denmark, commonly lauded as among the world leaders in WLB. Yet there is a notable absence, at an international level, of dedicated academic attention to WLB in Denmark, meaning that we lack both theoretical input and experiential insight from Danish work-lives. This paper draws upon ongoing research, funded by the BA/Leverhulme, that is interrogating and evaluating what WLB means as a concept, and identifying if/how it can be achieved in practice, via gaining insights from the Danish experience.

WLB is a ubiquitous concept in the UK, popular among many academics, campaigners for improved working lives, national and local government, organisations, and workers and job seekers too. Nonetheless, there are reservations over the value of WLB as a broad conceptual framework, with questions too among those who use it concerning its precise meaning and measurement. WLB is often understood to be largely about time and, further, about avoiding a 'time-squeeze' in which paid work squeezes out time for the rest of life. The OECD index, for example, measures WLB via the percentage of employees working very long hours, the time spent on 'leisure and personal care' and the employment rate for women with children. This understanding of WLB as essentially about time, and more narrowly still as not spending 'too many' hours in a job, is a partial account. It is incomplete because it problematically

disregards forms of work-life imbalance that arise if someone is work-time underemployed, for example, or works unsocial hours, has unpredictable shifts and/or is experiencing financial insecurity. These forms of work-life imbalance are more common among working than middle class families, deepening since the 'great recession' in the UK. In this context, the paper returns to the conceptualisation of WLB to add insights from a global leader in WLB-rankings. Are there lessons for the UK and the wider international research community about WLB, its meanings and matters, from a society that regularly tops league tables in measured WLB

Pedagogy and symbolic violence in leadership: When the modes and tools of neoliberal capitalism met the Nordic model of work and welfare

Ernst Jette, Koll Henrik
(Roskilde University)

Abstract

In this paper, we explore the idea of managerial struggle and pedagogy as modes of manoeuvring in our examination of prolonged organizational transition and change inertia in the wake of privatisation of a Scandinavian telecommunications company (Telco).

There is a lack of studies that, from the perspective of (middle) managers, attempt to understand seemingly inefficient leadership and how managers manoeuvre the complexities of change inertia, including how managers seek to gain control when they face difficult and complex and paradoxical conditions of leadership (Denis et al., 2010; Lüscher and Lewis, 2008; Filstad et al., 2020; Gatenby et al., 2015; McCabe, 2014; Alvesson and Sveningsson, 2003).

We suggest a Bourdieusian conceptualisation of manoeuvring using Bourdieu's (1990) concepts of field, habitus, symbolic violence and pedagogy, where we see pedagogy as an overlooked part of managers manoeuvring practices that emphasises the use of power and relations of power in managerial practice (Kamoche and Pinnington, 2012; Tomlinson et al., 2013).

We develop our arguments through empirical studies of seemingly inefficient leadership by a team of frontline managers in the operations department of Telco. Comprising 185 hours of participant observation studies and 25 interviews with the regional director, frontline managers, and technicians, our study examines how the frontline managers struggle to manage during prolonged attempts at organisational transition from state-owned monopoly to shareholder-owned corporation. The capitalist visions and ideas of the American owners contrast sharply with the so-called Nordic Model of work and welfare according to which the company had been run and whose central features are a high rate of unionization among employees, a national hierarchical system of collective bargaining, and the powerful presence of trade unions at workplace and national policy making levels (Ervasti et al., 2008; Kettunen, 2012).

The shift to a more active and intervening role has placed the frontline managers in the eye of a storm. We show how the frontline managers perceive themselves as tasked with supplying the technicians with the understandings, beliefs and dispositions for action that will enable them to meet demands associated with corporate neoliberal capitalism (Visser, 2020; Arturo, 1994) and how they must respond to outspoken yet subtle contradictions in their manoeuvring space (Filstad et al., 2020) or their possibilities for 'playing the game'(Bourdieu, 1990).

The idea of managerial pedagogy as practices of inculcation of beliefs and dispositions, in particular, and its connection to relations of power and symbolic violence (Lakomski, 1984; Tomlinson et al., 2013; Kerr and Robinson, 2009; Kamoche and Pinnington, 2012), allows us to extend the use of Bourdieu in studies of management and organization when we provide new insights into prolonged organizational change inertia and managerial struggle. We argue that pedagogy, as part of middle managerial manoeuvring, enables a vision of the multitude of power relations at play in organizational change, and beyond, including the fastening of these power relations in structural and historical conditions of the field in which the organization is embedded.

Breakout Room 3

Migrant work, employment and racialised identities

Understanding the role of social capital in skilled migrants' careers: Bringing structure and agency together

Kozhevnikov Andrew
(Bradford University)

Social capital can boost individual careers, including careers of skilled migrants. However, the existing research illuminates what social resources are beneficial and how, but pays less attention to why they play more or less important role in careers. For migrants, contacts with foreign workers are often associated with precarious employment, whereas bonds with the indigenes are more advantageous. In relation to how, it has been found that social capital can provide career counselling and support, supply information about job openings or offer more instrumental help in obtaining desired career opportunities. However, little is known about why not all careers benefit

from social resources. Many of the existing studies seem to assume that some people simply have more or better social capital and this is why its role is more prominent in their careers. Yet, this assumption appears overly simplistic. This paper seeks to contribute to this lacuna by analysing 82 semi-structured qualitative interviews with skilled migrants in the UK. Seeking to develop a balanced explanatory account of the role of social capital in skilled migrants' careers, it takes into account both agency and structure. Agency is explored through the prism of Margaret Archer's Realist Social Theory (RST) and modes of reflexivity (MoRs): autonomous, communicative and meta. Structure is examined through idiosyncratic factors operating in global (London) and secondary (Newcastle-upon-Tyne) cities. The preliminary findings have identified three dimensions that explain why some careers benefit from social careers more than others: (1) need; (2) presence; and (3) costs. All three appear to be influenced by both agential and structural factors. The need for social resources was considered higher in London, where foreign skills were not unique. In Newcastle, it was suggested that "if the right job comes up, it is easy to get it". Communicative reflexives expressed the "natural desire" for social resources, mainly in form of career counselling and advice. Autonomous reflexives saw social capital as a useful instrument to advance their careers. Meta-reflexives tended to ascribe less value to social capital, since their concerns were more internal.

The presence was more apparent in London, with its plentiful and resources-rich migrants, but also professional networks. Communicative reflexives regarded social resources as potentially more plentiful than other groups – anyone trustworthy and knowledgeable can be a dialogical partner. Autonomous reflexives made the best of the situation and strategically sought access to resources required. Meta-reflexives doubted that social resources needed to realise their concerns existed.

In London, costs of networking were often material and time-related: socialising is expensive and often requires long travelling. In homogenous Newcastle, the respondents experienced more pressure to accept dominant cultural norms to gain access to the networks of the indigenes. Communicative reflexives were not particularly concerned about these costs. Autonomous reflexives were concerned about mutual obligations and reputational risks. Meta-reflexives considered moral and ethical costs of using social capital.

This study will offer a balanced explanatory of the role social capital plays in individual careers, with implications for career agents, scholars and policy makers.

Mobile employees in UK: Spanish, Italian and Greek expatriate communities as "bubbles"

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To address the duality of expatriate communities as both sheltered contexts and manufactured communities, scholars have suggested that expatriate life could be characterized as the emergence and maintenance of "bubbles" (Cohen, 1977; Van Bochove & Engbersen, 2015; Spiegel, Mense-Petermann & Bredenkötter, 2017; Zaban, 2015). "Bubble" is seen as a rich metaphor that succeeds in capturing the two dimensions of the expatriate communities: Bubbles are fragile, as they can burst at any moment. And yet, when they are intact, bubbles shelter those inside from the influences of the outside world. This metaphor epitomises both the ephemeral nature of expatriate communities as temporary contexts of a set of mobile individuals, as well as the ostensibly robust boundaries providing shelter and relief from the surrounding strangeness and uncertainty.

The particular shapes of the "bubble" that the actual expatriate communities adopt vary from individual case to another. Cohen (1977) suggests that the relative closure or openness of the community reflects the cultural distance between the home and the host country as well as the level of the status of the expatriates in the local society. Higher the cultural distance, or the hierarchical status of the expatriates in the host society, more insulated and detached the communities will become. As to the internal cohesion of the groupings, Cohen (1977) claims that the artificial nature of the expatriate communities contributes to relatively modest degrees of cohesion and solidarity. Analytically, he argues that unity within the community depends on the heterogeneity of the national group in terms of age, gender, occupation and experience, with the more heterogeneous communities often being divided into sub-groups or cliques on the basis of emergent friendship networks or shared interests.

This paper, drawing upon the analysis of 35 in-depth, semi-structured interviews with Spanish, Italian and Greek engineers expatriates, explores how these expatriates adopt a particular bubble shape when defining themselves. Main findings of the research signpost the protective nature of the bubble in the form of networking practices, its endogamy, fragility, openness and its capacity to protect against stereotyping and stigma.

Weapons of the weak: everyday resistance of migrant food delivery workers

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Migrants are often excluded from decent work opportunities. As a result, many turn to the platform economy which is promoted for its flexibility and low barriers to entry. However, recent research highlights the exploitative nature and power imbalance associated with such 'gigs' including control of workers through algorithmic management. These experiences are compounded for migrant workers due to unfamiliarity with local systems, reduced social capital, limited support networks, and lower levels of English. Negative experiences for physically present 'local' platform

workers are further amplified by the COVID-19 pandemic. While some studies include migrant platform workers, more knowledge is required which presents in-depth experiences of said workers. The purpose of this study was to understand and present the day-to-day experiences of migrants who conduct food delivery in the platform economy. An extensive online and offline ethnography – utilising participant-observation, shadowing (by bicycle, e-bike, & car), and semi-structured interviews - was undertaken with delivery workers over 12 months in Brisbane, Australia. Although workers are mistreated, excluded, and controlled in various ways, many have developed strategies for everyday and algorithmic resistance as both individuals and in collaboration with others. This research is important as it highlights the development of elaborate support networks, forms of resistance, and agency of migrant workers. By understanding the actions implemented by food delivery workers, we gain further insight into strategies used by workers to regain semblances of control that they often lack as independent contractors in the platform economy.