

Jobs and Joblessness in the Crisis

Stream at the International Labour Process Conference, Leeds University, 2011

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The problems created by the global recession of 2008-9 are likely to persist for some time. Firms have restructured their operations in response to drops in demand and the rise of overcapacity, in many cases leaving thousands of workers jobless. This growing 'reserve army' of labour faces an increase in the 'responsibilities' expected of them in exchange for the 'rights' to welfare benefits and services. Those in work face a situation of uncertainty and pressures for cost cutting.

While these problems are not universal, some have yet to come to fruition. Some countries, like Germany, have used public policies such as short-time working to prevent, or perhaps just postpone, a drastic rise in unemployment. Elsewhere, as in the UK, high levels of public debt used to finance economic expansion in years past are stoking fears of a new round of mass redundancies centred on the public sector.

Our goal is to promote research examining the interplay of work and welfare, employment and unemployment. We welcome theory-driven, policy-relevant, methodologically rigorous contributions aimed at understanding the effects of the downturn on employment, broadly defined. Papers should address questions such as the following:

- Has the recession been used to create a new management regime defined by (so-called) human-centred lean production methods?
- How does the ratcheting up of punishments, conditions, and work requirements in the welfare state affect the experience of work and unemployment?
- What are the dynamics of work in the 'street-level bureaucracy' charged with implementing the policy response (e.g. job centres and their contractors)?
- How are trade unions and social movements campaigning to blunt the harmful effects of the recession on workers and the unemployed, and are these campaigns effective?
- To what extent can changes in the welfare state and the workplace be traced to broader trends in the political economy, such as neoliberalism and marketization?

We are interested in attracting a wide range of national and disciplinary perspectives examining the effects of the crisis in the workplace and outside: on the unemployed, and on policy and politics more broadly. Accordingly, we encourage abstracts from fields such as geography, public policy, and comparative political economy, as well as the 'usual suspects' of ILPC from the sociology of work, organization studies, and employment relations.

The Conference:

The Annual International Labour Process Conference is a leading conference on work and employment. It brings together academics and policy makers from the sociology of work and employment, labour studies, business and management, human resource management, industrial relations, organization studies and a range of other disciplines. Selections of conference papers are published in edited books, with twenty now published. Abstracts for the stream should be between 350-500 words and can be either theoretical and/or empirical. Abstract contents should enable the referees to determine what issue, development or problem is being investigated, how it is investigated, what the findings are and what contribution is being made to knowledge and understanding in the field.

ILPC2011 Conference Organizers:

Dr Daniel Muzio
Dr Jennifer Tomlinson
Dr Steve Vincent

For questions about the conference please contact: ilpc2011@ilpc.org.uk. Further information can be found at: <http://www.ilpc.org.uk/Portals/56/ilpc2011-docs/ilpc2011-callforpapers.pdf>

Please submit to www.ilpc.org.uk by October 31st, 2010