

ILPC 2019 Special Stream No. 3

‘Work and Employment in the Global South: Beyond Established Narratives and Disciplines’

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Work in the Global South has always displayed a wide variation in the forms of work, the social relations they are embedded in as well as related forms of resistance. Forms of work and employment that characterise globalising capitalism – the rise in ‘non-standard forms of employment’, processes decentring work from the workplace, a withdrawal of the state from social provisioning, and challenges for workers to organise collectively – have long informed the working lives and lived experiences of workers in the Global South and resulted in alternative approaches as well as extraordinarily creative responses to the challenges facing them. Yet, conceptual lenses developed in analyses of the Global North are often ill-suited to research specific social relations elsewhere. This stream aims to draw in contribution that analyse the similarities and differences of work and employment in the Global South and investigates their distinctiveness in terms of how they are positioned in relation to the state, market and society.

The contributions to this stream will aim to mobilise distinctive dimensions of a political economy of work in the Global South. A wide range of production relations exist ranging from formal to informal employment to informal outwork to dependent self-employment to petty commodity production among others. These production relations are embedded in wider social relations of gender, caste, religion and ethnicity. Labour is subjected to increasingly extreme forms of commodification which are not attenuated by any meaningful decommodification as the welfare is non-existent or ambivalent at best. In such contexts, risk is socialised and resolved through a reliance on social networks or results in pauperisation. This emphasises a central and distinctive concern of work in the Global South, namely the interaction between production relations and social reproduction (links between work and household production; migration, informalisation and precarity; as well as connections between work spaces and living spaces) and this interaction underpins the formation of distinct solidarities and collective action.

The stream contributes to recent scholarship that examines the interrelationship between work, institutions and the wider political economy, for example by linking comparative institutional analysis and labour process theory, and development processes with labour regimes. It welcomes established scholarship on the labour process, work and employment, institutional analysis and development but also puts emphasis on extending these analytical frameworks

through a range of perspectives that have emerged in and on the South. It thereby hopes to develop a critique as well as a dialogue between established perspectives such as neo-developmentalism, global value chains, and comparative capitalism on the one hand, with social reproduction, popular economy and alternative development on the other hand. The novelty, theoretically and methodologically, of the stream is its comparative and cross-disciplinary approach, breaking down boundaries – both geographical and disciplinary – to research on labour, work, and development across the Global South.

The stream seeks contributions on following themes, though they are not restricted to these – either conceptually or empirically – with a substantive focus on country(ies) and region(s) of Latin America, South and East Asia, sub-Saharan Africa, and the Middle East. We strongly encourage papers from scholars based in these regions, as well as opening the stream to researchers working in other disciplines. Early career researchers and doctoral students are particularly encouraged to submit.

- Intersections of production relations with other social relations of caste, gender, religion and ethnicity
- Interlinkages between formal and informal and precarious work and labour and implications for regulation and institutions
- Migrant labour, labour markets and the organization of production
- Social reproduction and implications for labour process, class and resistance
- Role of state and capital in embedding regimes of informality and precarity
- Automation and implications for work
- Work and class in the context of dispossession, new regions and value chains
- Forms of collective action, workplace resistance, and trade union organising
- Alternative modes of organising work
- Comparative research methodologies or comparative and/or interdisciplinary approaches in/on the Global South
- South-South and North-South differences and points of comparison in work and labour

This special stream is linked to the Labour, Work, and Development Network launched in 2016 and brings together established as well as early career and doctoral scholars from a variety of disciplines – sociology, anthropology, international political economy and geography – conducting research on labour, work, and development across the Global South. For more details see: <https://labouranddevelopment.wordpress.com/>

Please submit abstracts via the International Labour Process Conference website (ilpc.org.uk) by the deadline of 26 October 2018.

For information on the ILPC 2019 and the Calls for Papers for the General Conference and the other Special Streams please go to <https://www.ilpc.org.uk/>