

Jobs and Joblessness in the Crisis

Call for papers for a special stream for the International Labour Process Conference

Leeds University

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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 centered on the public sector.

Our goal in organizing this special ILPC stream 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.

If you are interested in presenting a paper in this stream, please send the abstract to Ian Greer (icg@lubs.leeds.ac.uk) by 31 October 2010. For instructions on preparing abstracts, please see www.ilpc.org.uk.