



Leibniz Institute for
**EAST AND SOUTHEAST
EUROPEAN STUDIES**

Pathways to ‘Standard Employment’ in Modern European History

Leibniz-Institut für Ost- und Südosteuropaforschung,

Landshuter Str. 4, Regensburg

November 24th and 25th, 2022

Raum 109/hybrid

All contemporary discussions about precarious work presuppose the notion of standard employment, the alleged norm gradually undermined by the rise of atypical employment in the latter decades of the twentieth century. Characteristically, the so-called “Supiot Report” for the European Commission - *Au-delà de l’emploi* (1999) – argued that a standard form of dependent, stable and socially protected employment came to encompass the majority of West European wage earners after 1945. And yet, for all its centrality in critically situating the dynamic of employment régimes and the transformation of labor relations over the past half-century, we know far too little about the emergence and development of standard employment across the continent. Two overlapping frameworks of interpretation have thus far served to guide debate on the topic. The first charts the evolution of the employment contract in law, jurisprudence and legal doctrine to tell a story of transition from contract to status – more precisely, from the regulation of employment under various systems of civil law in the nineteenth century to its relegation to the new branch of labor law. Status here stands for the modicum of rights, often underpinned by seniority, inserted in the employment contract - from fair dismissal to paid vacation - and reinforced by collective agreement. First applied to office clerks, this bundle of rights was then extended to a wide variety of employment relationships and came to inform the imagination of policy-makers, workers and employers alike in the middle decades of the past century, a “dominant fiction” (Ulrich Mückenberger) not free of myriad exclusions, notably along the lines of gender, citizenship and race.

The second is more openly Eurocentric. It tells the story of the suppression of casual work in which the expansion of social insurance is assigned the driving role, flanked by collective bargaining, Keynesian policies and the geopolitics of the Cold War. Absent strong trade-unions and the representation of labor in national parliaments after the end of the Second World War, the argument goes, a whole host of innovations in social insurance – from unemployment benefits and work accident compensation to healthcare and pensions – would have remained confined to a minority of employees. Not simply a functional requirement of the postwar European economies under circumstances of high growth and full employment, the



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generalization of a standard model of employment was rather the outcome of a specific *rapport de force* between classes. It was this constellation of factors, mediated by public policy, that generalized standard employment, and subsequently marginalized once prevailing forms of employment: sub-contracting and self-employment. Here, too, standard employment served as a “dominant fiction”: not only the model around which labor law was written, but also the key institution for the regulation of the labor market; one predicated, as Simon Deakin argued, on valuing criteria of length and continuity of service. By rationing access to social insurance on these criteria, it pushed employers to promote and employees to seek stable, full-time, life-long forms of employment.

The aim of this workshop is to take stock of these narratives. Devised by labor law scholars to assess the changes in patterns of employment since the 1980s, how do these interpretative frameworks stand up to more recent scholarship? Originally articulated to examine British, French and German employment patterns, what is the heuristic value of these narratives outside of core European countries - on the Eastern, Southern and Nordic fringes? To address these questions, this workshop brings together contributions from across the social sciences and history. Conceptually, we are interested to explore the ways in which the standard employment relationship might serve as a category of analysis in modern European history. Empirically, we want to confront the existing literature with empirical material collected on the peripheries of Europe. What trajectories did standard employment take in Portugal, Spain, Italy or Greece? Was there a “socialist” model of standard employment in Eastern and Southeastern Europe surviving well into the 1990s? What shape did standard employment assume in the Scandinavian lands? Finally, what elements of comparison between these regions could emerge once the notion of standard employment is historicized and opened up to national contexts beyond the enclave of Western Europe?

November 24th

Opening Remarks by Ulf Brunnbauer, IOS Director (13:00h)

Panel I *The Notion of ‘Standard Employment’ Today* (13:30 – 15:30h)

Nicole Mayer-Ahuja (University of Göttingen): Standard Employment: Restricting Individual Freedom or Paving the Way for Human Emancipation? Reflections on its Construction and Deconstruction in Western Germany (zoom)



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Aaron Benanav (Humboldt University) From Total Mobilization to Full Employment: Some Milestones in the Emergence of the Standard Employment Relationship (zoom)

Coffee break

Panel II *Western Europe* (16:00-18:00h)

Stefano Musso (University of Turin): Decent work as a target. The case of Italy (zoom)

Per Bonde Hansen (Oslo Metropolitan University) Historicizing 'Standard Employment' in Norway: Employers, Trade Unions, the Government and Negotiations over Access to Labor and Employment Protection (zoom)

Eloisa Betti (University of Bologna) Deconstructing the Norm: Rethinking the Standard Employment Model through a Gender Historical Perspective. Italy in the Global Context (in person)

Dinner 19:00

November 25th

Panel III *East and Southeast Europe* (9:15 to 11:15h)

Adam Mrozowicki (University of Wrocław): The Fourth Wave of Precarisation? Post-pandemic Crises and Labor Precarity in Poland – (zoom)

Kateryna Burkush (Catholic University of Lille): Non-Standard Employment in the Soviet Union: Seasonal Work Contracts as a Digression from Socialism (in person)

Anna Calori (University of Vienna) From „shirking“ to „waitlists“: beyond notions of standard employment in socialist and post-socialist Yugoslavia (zoom)

Coffee Break

Panel IV *Southern Europe* (11:30 to 14:00h)

Stefanos Ioannidis (University of Ioannina): The Concept of 'Standard Employment' in Twentieth Century Greece: Expectations and Reality (in person)



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Adrian Grama (IOS) Standards of Stable Employment: Portugal and Romania in Comparison (in person)

Jesús de Felipe-Redondo (Universidad Autónoma de Madrid): Human Nature, Objective Social Structure, and Social Reforms: Unionized Spanish Workers Attitudes towards Social Legislation, 1870-1930 (zoom)

Marcial Sánchez-Mosquera (University of Seville): The Problematic Application of the Standard Employment Concept in Spain during Francoism” (in person)