

Summaries

Gerd Spittler

Work – Transformation of Objects or Interaction between Subjects?

Work can be basically conceived in two ways: as transformation of an object (the technical paradigm) or as interaction with a subject (the interactive paradigm). The first paradigm is constitutive of the modern position. But is work indeed purely instrumental? The idea that animals, plants, and even things possess their own sense of self-will (Eigensinn) is widespread in non-industrial, non-capitalist societies. This is demonstrated in this article by analyzing the work of hunters and gatherers, herders and peasants. The most interesting case is capitalist industrial work which is often seen as the prototype of instrumental activity. However, careful studies by sociologists and anthropologists, based on the method of participant observation, reveal the technical paradigm as a biased perspective. Even modern workers deal with machines as subjects. They see machines as partners, as enemies or friends.

Gerlind Schneider

Households, Networks and Markets: Women's Work for Security and Community in the Townships of Harare

The article presents findings of a research in women's work in Harare, Zimbabwe, which can contribute to a broadening of the concept of work, especially in a gender perspective. Women in Harare work together in self-organised women's spaces: in kin based alliances, in their neighbourhood, in savings clubs and in forms of cooperation in the market production, which provide economic resources as well as social security in community. The embeddedness of women's economic action in social relations and networks is the central basis of their economic activities. The articulation of subsistence and market activities is a typical feature of women's economy.

Ludger Pries

Deregulation as Convergence of the Industrial Relations in the Process of Globalization?

When referring to the interference between globalisation and industrial relations as the regime of collective regulation of work and employment conditions many scholars hold that globalisation leads to more market oriented and neoliberal

arrangements and thus causes a generalised downgrading of the relative weight of the industrial relations regime as a whole and especially of the part of workers and their interest organisations. This article is based on empirical comparative research in Brazil, Colombia, Mexico, the USA and Germany and suggests a twofold differentiation of this argument. First, general and universal globalisation driving forces are picked up and forged according to macro-regional and national settings and governance structures. Therefore, globalisation pressures towards the industrial relations regimes could lead to changes in different directions. Second, empirical evidence suggests ambiguous and contradictory changes of the industrial relations: tendencies of downgrading or de-regulation as well as some tendencies of re-regulation and 'other-regulation' could be detected. Regimes of Industrial Relations are not only an independent variable of the globalisation process but (could) work as a relatively independent and forging force as well.

Luz Gabriela Arango
Gender, Globalisation and Development

In this paper I discuss about development and globalization in Latin America from the perspective of gender studies and the sociology of work. I emphasize on gender as a central dimension of current social inequalities. I analyze the consequences of the import substitution industrialization model on women's work and gender inequality; also the repercussions of the neo-liberal globalization on women's work conditions and employ, and on the family's survival strategies in some latin-american countries. I finally propose some views for the future.

Manfred Liebel
Childrens Work in non-western cultures and societies

The article focusses on childrens work in non-western societies, that are based on concepts of childhood and practices of childrens work that are different from western societies. The author describes the significance of work for the social status, the participation and education of children. Considering the structural implications (mode of production, social systems), the immanent contradictions and international influences (colonialism, introduction of wage work) the question is put forward if the tradional forms of childrens work in non- western societies can be more than a historical reminiscence. What could be their contribution for a new development of childhood in modern western societies?

Joachim Betz

Steps against Child Labour: Useful and less Useful

The problem of child labour did attract considerable attention in international political debates during the last decade; solid empirical results on the spread of child labour, working conditions and payment to economically active children are, however, as rare as concrete programmes (of a certain volume and impact) for the elimination of child labour. The most popular assumption is that child labour is caused primarily by poverty. However, as cross-country studies demonstrate, there are other factors, including poor formal education, accessibility of schools, high birth rates, low female participation in the labour market and lack of employment and income alternatives in regions most affected by child labour. To control or eliminate child labour, international trade sanctions or national labour laws do not seem to be very effective, while efforts to improve schooling, to rehabilitate former child workers, to increase employment opportunities for families and to compensate at least partially for forgone income of their children is more promising, yet remains severely underfunded.

Reinhart Kößler/Hanns Wienold

Work and the Social Nexus. Classical Social Theory Revisited

The current tendency to purge the question of work from social theory amounts to a severe restriction of that theory's scope and content. In a brief sweep through some of the history of social thought, the centrality of work to such approaches is recalled. The potential contribution of a critical, comprehensive conception of work is then explored in a closer look at central portions of Marx's work on the critique of political economy. From this vantage point, work is a constitutive dimension of co-operation, communication, knowledge and society's relationship to nature, all central themes of current social theory. Moreover, a critical reading of classical political economy and its Marxian critique can yield important insights into current problems confronting the debate on development such as the informal sector or marginality, as far as they revolve around the social modalities of work for survival and reproduction.