

Women's ILO:

Transnational networks, working conditions and gender equality

6–7 December 2012

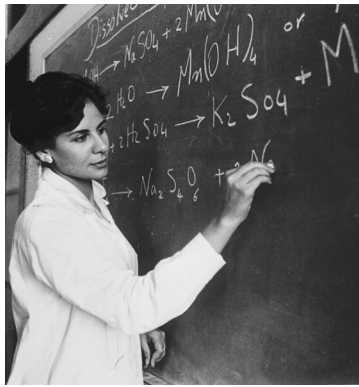
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UNIVERSITÉ
DE GENÈVE

FACULTÉ DES LETTRES
Département d'histoire générale



Day 1

Presentations (15 minutes plus discussion)

Venue: University of Geneva/Uni Mail

Room: M3020, 3rd floor (open to the public)

09.00 Welcome coffee

09.30 Introductions

Regina Monticone (ILO Century Project), Dorothea Hoehcker (ILO Century Project), Prof. Sandrine Kott (University of Geneva)

11.00–12.30 Creating transnational networks (chair Prof. Christoph Conrad, University of Geneva)

Dorothy Sue Cobble (Rutgers University): *The 1919 ILO and the rise of working women's transnational networks*

Françoise Thébaud (Prof. émérite, Université d'Avignon): *Marguerite Thibert et les premiers réseaux de femmes au BIT*

Glaucia Fraccaro (Universidade Estadual de Campinas/Secretaria de Políticas para as Mulheres da Presidência da República do Brasil): *The ILO and labour legislation for women in Brazil*

Kristen Ghodsee (Bowdoin College, USA): *Protecting women as workers and mothers: Socialist women's internationalism in Africa during the Cold War*

12.30–14.00 Lunch

14.00–16.00 Improving conditions of work (chair Prof. Elisabeth Prügl, Graduate Institute, Geneva)

Eileen Boris (University of California, Santa Barbara, USA): *The home as a workplace*

Kamala Sankaran (University of New Dehli): *Special Provisions for women in the Indian Constitution: The role of the ILO*

Akua Britwum (University of Cape Coast, Ghana): *Women, trade union democracy and informal sector labour force organization in Ghana*

Sonya Michel (University of Maryland, USA): *Migrant workers, care deficits and the prospects for global governance*

16.00–16.30 Coffee break

16.30–18.30 Searching for gender equality (chair Oliver Liang/ILO)

Susan Zimmerman (Central European University, Budapest): *Legal equality and gender-specific labour protection: The ILO, the international women's movement, and the debate about motherhood protection and the family in the interwar period*

Albertina Jordão (ILO Lisbon): *Les portugaises déléguées à Conférence internationale du Travail (CIT) de 1951 à 2010. Des femmes exceptionnelles, des pionnières?*

Nora Natchkova & Celine Schöni (University of Geneva): *Women at Work in a changing world. The International Labour Organization's politics and working women (1948–1978)*

Jennifer Fish (Old Dominion University, USA): *ILO Domestic Worker Convention and the reconfiguration of equality*

Day 2

Work on publication project

Venue: ILO

09.00–10.30 What do we know? Discussing the chronology of women's history with the ILO and the state of international research: current research trends and gaps

10.30–11.00 Coffee break

11.00–12.00 What do we need to know?

Re-discussion of themes for a publication in small groups

12.30–13.30 Lunch

13.30–15.30 Plan of action: Commitments and work plan

16.00–18.00 Meeting with the ILO Gender Bureau

Welcome (Jane Hodges, Director of the Gender Bureau)

Summary of workshop results

Coffee and refreshments organized by ILO Gender Bureau

The 1919 ILO and the Rise of Working Women's Transnational Networks

Professor Dorothy Sue Cobble

My presentation explores the International Labour Organization (ILO) as a key site for the forging in 1919 of an international "labour sisterhood" dedicated to industrial and gender justice through the promotion of labour standards and worker organization. I discuss the decision by trade union women and their allies to hold an International Congress of Working Women (ICWW) in 1919 to coincide with the inaugural International Labour Conference (ILC) of the ILO, assess the influence of both the ICWW and the women participating in the ILC on the international labour standards the ILC adopted in 1919, and trace the continuing legacies of 1919 for labour women's global organization and influence.

The ILO, the body charged by the Treaty of Versailles with formulating international labour policies in the aftermath of the First World War, held its inaugural meeting in Washington, D.C. from 29 October to 29 November 1919. Although twenty three women attended as non-voting advisers, no nation appointed a woman as a voting delegate to the ILC, a conference to which some forty nations sent close to three hundred employer, labour, and government representatives. Dismayed over their lack of voting rights and convinced that the voices of working women were crucial to the formulation of just international labour standards, trade union women and their allies organized a separate women's labour congress to coincide with the ILC. The ten-day ICWW, hosted by the Women's Trade Union League of America with the counsel and encouragement of British and French labour women, opened in Washington on 28 October 1919, with two hundred women labour reformers from nineteen nations and three continents in attendance. A majority of the women advisers attending the ILC also participated in the ICWW. By meeting separately and issuing their own set of labour standard recommendations, the ICWW hoped to influence the outcome of the ILC, embolden the women participating in the ILC, and forge a permanent international women's labour organization, the International Federation of Working Women.

Although scholars are divided on the impact of the ICWW on the 1919 ILC, many of the women advisers at the ILC, including ICWW participants Margaret Bondfield and Mary Macarthur from Britain, Tanaka Takako from Japan, Kerstin Hesselgren from Sweden, and Jeanne Bouvier from France, strenuously defended the ICWW's call for women's right to speak and for higher global labour standards, including ICWW recommendations for an 8-hour day and a 44-hour week for all workers, night work protections for women *and* men, abolition of labour by children under the age 16, and maternity benefits "adequate for full and healthy maintenance of mother and child." Many of the labour women who gathered in 1919 met again in 1921 and 1923, as part of the International Federation of Working Women, to influence ILO policy and advance the needs of women within the labour movement. Although the Federation disbanded in 1924, informal transnational ties among labour women persisted, particularly between women in the U.S. and Europe. A transnational network of prominent labour women reformers had been forged. Their lobbying and leadership in

the interwar era and the decades following would change gender and social policy in their own nations as well as in the ILO, the League of Nations, and the international labour movement.

Dorothy Sue Cobble is Distinguished Professor of History and Labour Studies at Rutgers University, USA. She specializes in the history of workers and social movements in the twentieth century. Her many books include *The Other Women's Movement: Workplace Justice and Social Rights in Modern America*, which won the Taft Book Prize and other awards, *Dishing It Out: Waitresses and Their Unions in the Twentieth Century*, and *The Sex of Class: Women Transforming American Labor*. She is the recent recipient of fellowships from Harvard University and the Russell Sage Foundation in New York. To see a full list of publications and copies of selected articles, please visit this [webpage](#).

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Marguerite Thibert et les premiers réseaux de femmes au BIT

Professor Françoise Thébaud

Résumé:

Vacataire au Bureau international du travail de 1926 à 1931, fonctionnaire internationale en charge du service du travail des femmes et des enfants jusqu'à sa retraite en 1947, puis experte missionnée dans les pays émergents jusqu'en 1966, Marguerite Thibert (1886-1982) est devenue « une grande dame du BIT ».

Mon propos n'est pas d'explicitier l'action des réseaux féminins et féministes dans l'adoption, par l'OIT, de conventions protectionnistes ou égalitaristes, comme le feront d'autres contributions. Mais plutôt d'observer l'institution (et une de ses fonctionnaires) à travers les réseaux qu'elles mobilisent. Ce faisant, il s'agit notamment de présenter d'autres facettes du Comité de correspondance pour le travail féminin mis en place en 1932.

Trois temps seront distingués. Pour la période 1926-1938, on soulignera les difficultés d'insertion au BIT de Marguerite Thibert dont les réseaux d'appartenance sont aux marges des groupes fondateurs du BIT, puis les logiques institutionnelles qui président à la formation du Comité de correspondance pour le travail féminin, logiques qui ne sont pas nécessairement celles des organisations féminines et féministes.

La période suivante marquée par la victoire et l'expansion du nazisme puis les débuts de la guerre apparaît comme un révélateur de l'importance et du fonctionnement des réseaux : d'une part, sollicitée et efficace, Marguerite Thibert contribue au sauvetage de femmes juives, allemandes et tchèques, du Comité de correspondance ; d'autre part, elle, qui pour raisons familiales n'a pu partir en 1940 avec le BIT à Montréal, puis a été suspendue de ses fonctions et se heurte ensuite à l'argument d'un budget fortement tronqué qui ne permettrait pas de la réembaucher, est rappelée à ses fonctions en 1941 grâce à l'intervention de six organisations féministes. Enfin, la fin de la guerre et les premières années d'après-guerre voient surgir de nouvelles questions et de nouvelles modalités de mobilisation des réseaux féminins et féministes.

Françoise Thébaud est Professor Émérite de l'Université d'Avignon, chercheuse associée à l'Institut des Études Genre de l'Université de Genève, codirectrice de la revue *Clio, Histoire, Femmes et Sociétés*. A notamment édité *Histoire des femmes en Occident – Le XX^e siècle* (1992, réédition complétée, 2002 ; traduit en anglais par Harvard University Press) et publié *Ecrire l'histoire des femmes et du genre* (2007). Prépare une biographie de Marguerite Thibert (1886-1982), fonctionnaire internationale, intellectuelle et femme engagé.

Marguerite Thibert and the first women's networks in the ILO

Professor Françoise Thébaud

Abstract:

An employee of the International Labour Office from 1926 to 1931, an international civil servant in charge of a service for women and children until her retirement in 1947, and later an expert advisor sent on mission to developing countries until 1966, Marguerite Thibert (1886–1982) has become an “eminent figure of the ILO”.

My purpose is not to explain the role of women's and feminist networks in the ILO's adoption of protectionist or egalitarian Conventions, as other contributions will do. Rather, it is to view the institution (and its officials) through the networks they mobilize. In doing so, I especially would like to present other facets of the Correspondence Committee on Women's Work established in 1932.

We have to distinguish three stages. For the period 1926–1938, we highlight the difficulties of Marguerite Thibert in integrating into the ILO because her networks were on the margins of the founding groups of the ILO. Following this, we analyze the institutional logic behind the formation of the Correspondence Committee for female labour – logics that are not necessarily those of women's organizations and feminists.

The next period, marked by the expansion of Nazism as well as the beginning of WWII, reveals the function and importance of networks which Thibert used to help rescue Jewish German and Czech women who were members of the Correspondence Committee. When the ILO relocated to Montreal in 1940 because of the war, personal circumstances did not allow her to join in the move and she was dismissed. Later, an allegedly truncated budget prevented her from being hired. Despite these obstacles, she took up her previous duties in 1941 after the intervention of six feminist organizations.

Ultimately, the end of the war and the early postwar years led to new questions and new ways of mobilizing women's networks and feminists.

Françoise Thébaud is a Professor Emeritus of the University of Avignon, associate researcher at the Institute of Gender Studies at the University of Geneva, co-director of the journal *Clio, Histoire, Femmes et Sociétés*. She has edited *History of Women in the West – The Twentieth Century* (1992, second edition reprinted in 2002 and translated into English by Harvard University Press) and published *Writing the History of Women and Gender* (2007). She has also prepared a biography of Marguerite Thibert (1886–1982), an international civil servant, intellectual and female activist.

THE FEMALE STRUGGLE FOR LABOUR RIGHTS AND EQUALITY, SAO PAULO, 1917-1932

Glaucia Cristina Candian Fraccaro

INTRODUCTION

In Brazil, the historical process of instauration of the labour legislation, by Getulio Vargas, during the 1930s, was many times interpreted as a moment in which the workers surrendered to the politics of co-optation of a government with a clear corporative project.

Scholars have stated that, after a period of strong organization of the workers' movement, worker protection laws might have occurred from top to bottom and might have put an end to the class pugnacity that dedicated to conquests such as a minimum salary, a working time regulation and the right to vacation.

That thesis was strongly determined by one of the articulators of the workers legislation project, lead by Getulio Vargas, Oliveira Viana¹. According to him, the workers had been absent from the instauration of both social and labour legislation because He considered the project to be a State initiative, a generous politicians' act of granting"².

Recent studies Brazilian History demonstrated that that perspective did not contemplate the various dimensions of that historical moment. John French is a historian who raised the problem about those ideas when researching "the moment the labours' movement in Brazil lost its innocence in the face of the State". To him, to consider that the working class in Brazil had been co-opted by the Vargas project was to consider the labour legislation an artificial one. Such a view also assumed a benefactor State to approve laws so as to decrease misery of those workers, and to ignore the workers agency.

After the publication of John French's book, there was a series of studies that considered the corporative state system in the 1920s to be vulnerable to the workers'

¹ Francisco José Oliveira Vianna (1883-1951) was a historian, sociologist, and lawyer, and was also a juridical consultant for the Labour Ministry, during 1930's first years. He was considered one of the main leaders of the process of the Brazilian Labour Legislation installation. See: www.cpdoc.fgv.br

² This debate was punctuated by John French. **Afogados em leis: a CLT e a cultura política dos trabalhadores brasileiros**. São Paulo: Fundação Perseu Abramo, 2001, p. 80.

action³. But, it is also curious to note that there is a great silence surrounding the role of female workers at the same historical moment, and it is that silence that this project is about.

DECREE ON FEMALE WORK AND THE STRUGGLE OF THE WORKING WOMEN

The silence surrounding the role of women in the new generation of historical studies about the process of installation of the Brazilian working legislation suggests that protection laws regarding working women resulted from governors' good will. Such reasoning erases beforehand any initiative that women might have taken in search for their rights.

At least since the 1917 strikes⁴, there are several evidences that female workers fought for their own rights. From the factory lines to the organization of the labour movement, women's participation in general strikes that marked the working class history is very clear. There was a reason to explain their projection: the textile factories became the main employer of women in the 1920s, a time in which women and children outnumbered men at work in Brazil⁵. Those women kept the guidelines for their demands in neighborhood associations and factory commissions.

In 1932, Lindolfo Collor⁶ ordered the Labour National Department⁷ to conduct an investigation on the female work in Brazil⁸. On May 17th of that same year, president

³ Among other thesis see: Angela M. C. Araujo. **A construção do consentimento** – Corporativismo e trabalhadores nos anos 1930. São Paulo: Edições Sociais, 1998 e Samuel Fernando de Souza. **Coagidos ou Subornados** – trabalhadores, sindicatos, Estado e as leis do trabalho nos anos 1930. PhD, Instituto de Filosofia e Ciências Humanas, Universidade Estadual de Campinas, 2007.

⁴ "The 1917 General Strike was a spontaneous worker's movement without the interference, direct or indirect, of any known individuals. It was an explosive protest that came out of a long period of tormenting difficulties that burdened the working class". Edgar Leuenroth, a historical Brazilian anarchist also describes the General Strike as an episode that resulted from the scarcity and the high cost of living to which the workers were submitted that year, in the city of São Paulo. See: Joel Wolfe. *Working women, working men: São Paulo and the rise of Brazil's industrial working class (1900-1955)*. Durham: Duke University Press, 1993.

⁵ June Hahner. **Emancipating the female sex** – the struggle for women's rights in Brazil, 1850-1940 Duke University Press, 1990.

⁶ Lindolfo Leopoldo Boekel Collor (1890-1942) was ahead of the Labour Ministry and promoted deep changes in the treatment given to the social issue in Brazil, taking care of the recognition of the syndicates, the constitution of conciliation boards for conflicts between employers and employees, the regulation of the work daily journey, the regulation of female and infantile labour and other aspects. See: www.cpdoc.fgv.br

Getúlio Vargas signed the decree number 21,417-A, which regulated women's working conditions: night jobs were forbidden as well as insalubrious activities. It also granted a maternity leave for a period before and after labour; and intervals during a working day for those women who were breastfeeding their babies, plus, the working places would have to arrange day care wherever there were more than thirty women employed. Furthermore, it established standard wages for both men and women: same job same pay, no matter the gender⁹.

The application of labour laws and decrees was in charge of the National Labour Council (CNT, in Portuguese), which was part of the government apparatus in favor of the installation of a social and labour legislation¹⁰. In a written report to CNT, an inspector denounced that the Decree on Female Work was being constantly infringed, as he had noticed that women were being registered as partners of the businesses, and made to work night shifts while receiving waitresses' wages¹¹. Although such occurrence might, at first sight, look as employers' efforts to further exploit women at work. It was, in fact, a female worker's demand, for they were afraid of losing their jobs, as the businesses were being adapted to the law. That is why they asked for the intervention from the Brazilian Federation for the Women's Progress¹², an entity lead by Berta Lutz, who had as her main goal the women's suffrage. The prohibition of night work was the only revocation those women's aimed at.

⁷ The Labour National Department was founded in 1918, and its main objective was to begin the work regulations in Brazil.

⁸ Helvecio Xavier Lopes. "O trabalho feminino no Brasil". Boletim do Ministério do Trabalho, Indústria e Comércio, n.32, abril de 1937, p. 104.

⁹ Decreto n. 21.417-A, from May 17, 1932, regulates the conditions of female work in the industrial and commercial establishments. From now on it will be cited as Women's Work Decree.

¹⁰ The installation of the social and labour legislation in Brazil involved the creation of a state bureaucracy whose responsibility was to evaluate the work situation in the country and to find solutions that were coherent with the corporative project. Thus it was born the CNT, for example, that had to inspect the work and wages in the industry, the work contracts, the conciliation and arbitration systems, minors' and women's labour, accidents, insurance, retirement, pension and credits. See: Samuel Fernando de Souza. **Coagidos ou Subornados**, p. 30.

¹¹ It was a fraud system, many times activated by employers who found it difficult to respect, for example, the eight hour day labour work. Samuel Fernando de Souza. **Coagidos ou Subornados**, p. 112.

¹² Brazilian Federation for the Women's Progress was a feminist entity for middle class women. Berta Maria Júlia Lutz (1894-1976) was a zoologist, scientist and an outstanding leading person of the feminist movement in Brazil.

The mobilization around the issue of night shift work reveals some indication that working women articulated to defend their own interests. Thus, there rises a question before the approval of that decree signed in 1932: what was the role of those working women in the fight for the regulation of female work? In a context of strong effervescency in the labours' movement, would they have organized themselves around their own rights? How could they have articulated while having before them the formulation of the Vargas social legislation, and the constitution of a feminist movement, born among the highest social levels and aimed at the conquests of civil rights?

In 1917, the performance of working women in the capital city of São Paulo became well known for the leadership in the general strike, the combativeness and high capacity of organization in the neighborhoods and factories. Fifteen years later, the approval of the Decree on Female Work was not treated as a revendication that suited resigned women. With this proposed research I intend to investigate to which process it is imputed the approval of the law that matches the wages of both men and women, and guarantees other rights to women. Among the hypotheses, the first one is that such decree could be but an updating of the Brazilian legislation due to the advancements in Europe. The idea of equal salary to equal work was included in the Treaty of Versailles, and it has been an international subject ever since. In addition to that, a signing of the female work regulation would be just one step towards the process of the formulation of the Vargas social legislation or, yet, a consequence of the kindness of employers who, after the *Enciclica Rerum Novarum*, began to disapprove and condemn the exploitation of women and children¹³.

Those hypotheses were developed within the Labour Ministry, and can be found in a paper which analyzed the evolution of women's work in Brazil¹⁴. To the author of that paper, the Decree on Female Work was a consequence of the international pressure, and also integrated Lindolfo Collor's Project to develop the Labour Ministry. However, the author also considers that the participation of the female workers was one of the reasons that lead to the signing of that decree which protected them at work: organized

¹³ June Hahner. **Emancipating the female sex.**

¹⁴ Maria Sophia Bulcão Vianna. "**A evolução do trabalho da mulher**", p. 106. The author referred to the 3rd. Feminine Congress. The participation of the working women in the regulation of their work was, to Joel Wolfe, so effective that might have occurred due to Salgado Filho's recognition to the women's leadership during the general strike; on the other hand, the government might have caused some satisfaction among the workers for prohibiting women's night shift labour. Salgado Filho was the Labour Minister.

in a class congress, they elaborated a preliminary project for the law against the prohibition of night shift. Those three axes form a relevant set of explanations to be investigated so as to make it possible to formulate a thesis regarding the fight for the women's rights in the years 1920s and 1930s.

This research proposal will make it possible to fulfill the gap found in the Brazilian history about the working women's fight for equality of rights in the world of labour. On the other hand, this research can highlight how the State balances the needs of the working women. It will also provide basis for a debate on how the society approaches the issues related to gender differences, and how it promotes equality.

From the point of view of Brazilian History, this research might prove to be fundamental to unveil a widespread but little explained issue among Brazilian thinkers: why Getulio Vargas' government, of a corporative character and well inclined to conservative politics, had such a progressionist performance in the subjects that involved the public participation of women?¹⁵

DEVELOPMENT

To develop this research it will be very important to understand the different matrices of thought that influenced the universe of female workers, because they constitute the initial point for the working women to formulate their own values. To understand the point of view of the Public Authority, I shall proceed to the reading of writings done by intellectuals related to the Vargas Project for the social and labour legislation, such as Oliveira Vianna and Viveiros de Castro, and documents which reveal that theme in both the Executive and Legislative.

To understand the universe of ideas surrounding the female work, I shall consult the sources produced by the Brazilian Federation for the Women's Progress. And still on that sphere, I shall research the references of other leaders, such as Patrícia Galvão¹⁶, Maria Lacerda de Moura¹⁷, and the reach and relation they engaged with entities such as

¹⁵ The feminine suffrage, for example, was approved in Brazil in 1932, even before it was approved in many of the European countries.

¹⁶ Patricia Galvão was journalist and feminist and in 1931 she joined the Communist Party.

¹⁷ Maria Lacerda de Moura was a feminist and anarchist writer.

The Brazilian Feminist Union, which was a part of the PCB; in which case, I shall consult the documents in the Women's Section of the International Communist.

It's also important to consult the foreign interpretation and the international relations among female worker's – for that reason, I shall include the sources from International Labour Organization.

Thus, the crossing of the obtained data in this universe of sources may reveal the reasons why and the manners the working women organized themselves around the fight for their rights.

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Protecting Women as Workers and Mothers: Socialist Women's Internationalism in Africa during the Cold War

Associate Professor Kristen Ghodsee

Abstract

During the Cold War, mass women's organizations in the Eastern Bloc forged strong ties with progressive women struggling for labor protections, sexual equality, national independence and economic development in the so-called Third World. In communist Bulgaria, the national women's committee championed socialist remedies for women's issues on the international stage, working together with the Women's International Democratic Federation (WIDF), the World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU) and the International Labor Organization. International congresses and ongoing bilateral exchanges between women in the Second and Third Worlds created expansive transnational networks that supported progressive women's activism around the globe.

In particular, the Committee of the Bulgarian Women's Movement (CBWM) supported progressive women in many African countries, including Zambia, Tanzania, Ghana, Zimbabwe, Ethiopia as well as the women of the African National Congress in South Africa. Through its ongoing material and logistical support, the CBWM helped to train an entire generation of progressive women in Africa, women who became actively involved in the international women's movement. A careful study of this little known phenomenon may shed new light on the history of 20th century feminism. It may be that the successful activism of Eastern Bloc women in the developing world was a key reason that Western governments started to take women's rights seriously, and that the development of global feminism was more influenced by Cold War superpower rivalry than has previously been acknowledged.

Kristen Ghodsee is the Director and John S. Osterweis Associate Professor of Gender and Women's Studies at Bowdoin College. She is the author of four books, including *The Red Riviera: Gender, Tourism and Postsocialism on the Black Sea* (2005), *Muslim Lives in Eastern Europe: Gender, Ethnicity and the Transformation of Islam in Postsocialist Bulgaria* (2009), and *Lost In Transition: Ethnographies of Everyday Life After Socialism* (2011), as well as numerous journal articles on postsocialist gender issues. She has won residential research fellowships at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton, and the Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study. In 2012, she was awarded a John Simon Guggenheim Fellowship in Anthropology and Cultural Studies. She is currently working on a new book manuscript, tentatively titled, *Women in Red: Communist Mass Women's Organizations and International Feminism during the Cold War, 1968-1990*.

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The Home as a Workplace

Professor Eileen Boris

Abstract

Writing in 1984 to the Program on Rural Women about its questionnaire on home-based workers, Andrea Singh of the ILO Office in New Delhi reported in dismay that one of her correspondents “was of the impression that the information we wanted to collect referred to domestic servants.” This conflation of garment outworkers and domestic servants was not the first time that policymakers misread one form of home work for another. Naturalized as women’s work, unpaid family labor retained its association with wives, mothers, and daughters even after commodification. Such toil—whether cooking and caring or outwork—represented work requiring modernization, a hindrance to women’s full participation in economic life. Social reproduction—whether or not done for a wage—moved from the periphery of ILO concerns to the center of its efforts to expand world employment by the 1970s as both women experts within the ILO and women workers themselves turned to improving the conditions of home laborers.

Upon its founding, the ILO conceived of the worker as a man employed in industry, transport, agriculture, or extractive labors, most of which took place away from residential spaces. When it came to women, historians have followed the same path as had the ILO itself by focusing on protective conventions that covered the woman worker on the basis of her female difference, casting her as a special type of worker. This presentation offers another lens to chart the position of women within ILO deliberations by looking at where the majority of women worked globally: the home. In recovering the intertwined history of home labors, it traces first various associations between domestic service, family responsibilities, subsistence home production, and industrial homework and then the distinct struggles around non-standard and informal sector employment that marked the setting of labor standards for the woman worker, increasingly projected as the rural women in the global South. Conventions covering Home Work (no. 177) and Domestic Work (no. 189) represent the culmination of efforts that expanded after WWII but came to fruition only with the organizing of home-based workers themselves.

Eileen Boris is an interdisciplinary historian whose work focuses on the racialized gendered state and the home as a workplace. She is Hull Professor and Chair of the Department of Feminist Studies and Professor of History and Black Studies at the University of California, Santa Barbara. Her books include the prize-winning *Home to Work: Motherhood and the Politics of Industrial Homework in the United States* (Cambridge University Press, 1994); *Intimate Labors: Cultures, Technologies, and the Politics of Care*, co-edited with Rhacel Parreñas (Stanford University Press, 2010) and, with Jennifer Klein, *Caring for America:*

Home Health Workers in the Shadow of the Welfare State (Oxford University Press, 2012), which received the 2012 Sara A. Whaley Award from the National Women's Studies Association for the best book on women and labor. She has held the Bicentennial Chair in American Studies at the University of Helsinki and visiting professorships at the University of Melbourne, Tokyo Christian Women's University, and University of Toulouse. Currently, she is on the Advisory Board of the International Institute for Social History in Amsterdam; the Executive Committee of LAWCHA (Labor and Working Class History Association) and that of the Social Science History Association, and the editorial board of *The Journal of American History* and the *Journal of Policy History*. Her public writings have appeared in *The Nation*, *New York Times*, *Huffington Post*, *New Labor Forum*, *Salon*, *Dissent*, *Labor Notes*, and *Women's Review of Books*. She is the principal investigator of the Mellon funded working group, "Working at Living: The Social Relations of Precarity." Her current book project is tentatively called, *Beyond Difference: The ILO and the Gendering of Global Labor Standards*.

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Special Provisions for women in the Indian Constitution: The role of the ILO

Professor Kamala Sankaran

Abstract

The Indian Constitution adopted in 1949 is one of the early constitutions expressly providing for substantive equality for women. The need to go beyond formal equality and to adopt clauses permitting, and in fact, directing the State to provide for special measures for women can be attributed partly to the role of the ILO and its influence on laws and policies in India. Prior to adoption of its Constitution, India had routinely made use of the clause in the ILO Constitution which provided that countries that had 'different' conditions could have modified standards that suited the level of development/climatic conditions of such countries. However, when it came to differential standards for women workers, it appears there was considerable resistance within India to adopt special standards in terms of working hours or benefits. One of the arguments put forward for this position was that this would cause a reduction in the employment of women workers.

The ILO Conventions of the 1920s and 1930s relating to the ban of night work and underground work influenced law and policy within India, and several laws were adopted in India that prohibited night work and underground work for women, influenced partly by the ILO and also partly by the economic slowdown of that period and the lowering of demand for women workers in the textile and mining industries. The position that emerged in this period, namely, that women needed 'protection' and the justification for special provisions for women appears to have played an important role in the Indian Constitution as eventually adopted in 1949. This paper will examine some of the issues of night work, underground work, and maternity benefit to understand how the ILO shaped the conception of substantive equality in India.

Kamala Sankaran is a Professor at the Campus Law Centre, Faculty of Law, University of Delhi. Her areas of research include the informal economy, international labour standards, constitutional law, and gender and the law.

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Women, trade union democracy and informal sector labour force organization in Ghana

Dr. Akua O. Britwum

Abstract

In Ghana the informal economy dominates the formal, employing over 85% of the working population. Trade unions have been forced to re-think the essence of trade unionism in order to expand organisational work into the informal economy. At the same time informal economy workers have recognised the importance of organising in order to cope with increasing hostile government policies that threaten their very survival. The Ghana Trades Union Congress (TUC Ghana) in 1996 directed its affiliate National Unions to intensify their efforts at organising in the informal economy workers. Several national unions ventured into the informal economy with different approaches and levels of success. Beyond difficulties posed by the varying strategies for membership recruitment lie the problematic area of securing informal economy groups institutional anchor within unions and space in union governing structures. The non-standard employment relations of informal economy groups have implication for voice and representation in union for it determines what demands informal economy groups can make on the unions that purport to represent them. Using the results of a case study on trade union organisation in the informal economy in Ghana, the paper points out that expansion in the sector originates from two related sources, employment practices in the formal as well as the search for survival by Ghanaians abandoned by the state through the withdrawal social provisioning. Women informal economy groups face a dual challenge securing meaningful representation in unions with a yawning gender democratic deficit. Gendered union structures continue to stifle female union representation despite decades of gender democracy strategies to address the deficit. In the face of their exclusion from formalised economic systems, women's trade associations embody support and regulatory systems that guide their trading activities in urban markets. The economic and political import of such market based trade associations have been captured, very little is known about the potential contribution of such organisational forms to women's struggle for representational equality. An examination of the possible contributions of such associations towards the struggle for representational democracy in Ghana has important implications for the promotion of women's employment rights and livelihood security.

Akua O. Britwum is a Senior Research Fellow at the Institute for Development Studies (IDS) at the University of Cape Coast in Ghana. She has on two occasions served as a Guest Lecturer at the International Center for Decent Work and Development (ICDD), University of Kassel, Germany. She holds a PhD from the University of Maastricht. Her area of teaching and research is gender and labour studies. She has conducted research on sexual harassment and gender mainstreaming in Ghanaian Universities, as well as trade union internal democracy. Her current research activities

include gender and land rights, market women traders' associations, gender and leadership in trade unions. Her publications cover gender based violence, gender and economic participation as well as union internal democracy and informal economy labour force organization. She is an Associate Fellow of the Global Labour University and also the Convener of the women's right advocacy organisation, the Network for Women's Rights in Ghana (NETRIGHT).

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Legal equality and gender-specific labour protection: The ILO, the international women's movement, and the debate about motherhood protection and the family in the interwar period

Professor Susan Zimmermann

Abstract

At the workshop I will present one element of my work in progress on the relationship between the ILO and various women's organizations in the interwar period, and the slowly changing attitude of the ILO towards women's work as developing in this context. In the interwar period the question of motherhood protection policies gave rise to a prominent and revealing debate internationally on how to reconcile gendered embodiment and the requirements of paid labour, and on how to construct the relationship between women's work, labour policy and the state. The ILO advocated a set of sex-specific measures which emphasized the distinction between work and motherhood and the role of the latter in shaping women's lives. While international women's organizations deeply disagreed on how to come to grips politically with women's roles as mothers in labour protection policies, feminists who advocated policies based on strict legal equality gained influence in particular in the debate with the ILO in the 1930s. In this paper I compare the ILO-approach and the approach foregrounding legal equality, and explore some of the problem zones of both in particular. In addition, I try to identify how the debate on motherhood contributed to changing the terms of international discourse and policy in relation to women's work more generally. Finally, I will outline the place of labour policies with a focus on motherhood within the changing landscape of the politics of gender-(un)specific international labour protection in the interwar period.

Susan Zimmermann is a Professor of History at the Department of History and the Department of Gender Studies at Central European University in Budapest. She also teaches at the University of Vienna. Her recent monographs are *Grenzüberschreitungen. Internationale Netzwerke, Organisationen, Bewegungen und die Politik der globalen Ungleichheit. 17. bis 21. Jahrhundert*, Vienna 2010, and *Divide, Provide and Rule. An Integrative History of Poverty Policy, Social Policy and Social Reform in Hungary under the Habsburg Monarchy*, Budapest-New York 2011. Currently she is working on a book project on international politics of labour protection, gender specific labour protection and legal equality, 1920s to 1940s, forthcoming with Löcker Verlag, Vienna.

Short description, book manuscript, forthcoming (Löcker Verlag, Vienna)

***Liaison et division* and the Making of Global Labour Standards Transnational Politics on Labour Protection, Group Specific Labour Protection and Legal Equality, 1920s to 1940s**

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Abstract

When in the early 1930s the International Labour Organisation revised its Night Work Convention, a group of internationally organized woman activists lobbied for the revocation of the instrument as a whole on the grounds that its focus was on gender-specific labour “protection” or else “restrictions” for women. In their view, legal equality – defined for the purpose of this study as the politics of narrowing the gender gap in labour protection – took precedence over the politics of expanding labour protection, defined as politics of narrowing the class gap in the world of work. To these women, diminishing the reach of special labour protection for women appeared – at this historical juncture – to be the only path that could lead to more gender equality in the world of work. The weakening of organized labour during the world economic crisis had made even the idea of extending previously gendered standards of labour protection to the male workforce appear unrealistic.

In contrast to these politics of legal equality as pursued by legal equality feminism – a term I will use to describe this phenomenon in this study – both dominant forces within the ILO and other women’s organizations were supportive of differential labour protection for women, if in part for divergent reasons.

Yet the feminist politics of legal equality as pursued by legal equality feminism, while noticeably gaining ground internationally in these years, were in no way truly global in outlook. When in the late 1920s the International Labour Organisation prepared its Forced Labour Convention – directed first and foremost at the protection of “native labour” in colonial and mandated territories and protectorates – legal equality feminists were (silently) supportive of the demand of other women’s organizations to include a special women’s clause into this first international instrument concerned with “native” labour. The demand was to prohibit, instead of regulate as was the principal intention of the Convention regarding male “native labour”, the forced labour for “native” women. Legal equality feminists aimed to promote the globalization of free labour – which in their view later on was to be protected in a gender-neutral manner – by making women (and also men) of the Southern hemisphere free to contribute to the creation or development of colonial market economies. Creating a gender gap in international labour standards directed at the Southern and coloured world of work was meant contribute to “colonial development” defined for the purpose of this study as a politics of narrowing the global and race gaps characteristic of the history of the 20th century. By 1938/1939 legal equality feminism – in contrast to the (largely) implicit support it had lent to special labour protection for “native” women in the South – lobbied successfully for the omission of a gender-specific protection clause for women in a new ILO-Convention on long-term contract labour. The involvement of “native” women in bonded labour on the same terms as men was seen as an important advancement for women in the South.

Taken together, the incidents described above marked the period from the late 1920s to the late 1930s as a turning point in the long-term development of international labour policy. The battle over special labour protection and legal equality (with or without general labour protection) in Northern international labour policy was transferred into labour policy emerging with reference to the South-North divide. In the process, the already complex intersection of gender and class characterizing this battle interacted in particular ways with political attitudes regarding race and global inequality. The making of global labour standards thus came to involve both the conflict over special labour protection denied or advocated with an (implicit) focus on “industrial” countries, and the question of engendering protective labour legislation of a different type for “native” populations or inhabitants of “non-metropolitan territories.”

In the long run the conflict over the revision of the Night Work Convention represented the beginning of a change of direction in Northern-global labour policy (i.e. labour policy which had originally been built on the experience of the Northern Hemisphere and became increasingly

global in outlook in the following decades). International labour policy stemming from this tradition from 1930s onward embarked on a route towards abandoning, in many areas, the idea of differential labour standards for women and men. Yet the path toward reducing the gender gap in the world of labour was characterized all along by a strained and at times contradictory relationship with the politics of building and extending labour standards aimed at diminishing the class gap in the world of work. Labour policies pursued in many countries as well as in the European Union followed this complex and contradictory path. At the same time, the inclusion in 1930 of a special women's clause in international labour standards referring to "native" and later "non-metropolitan" labour was part of a 20th century trend in international North-South labour policy (i.e. international labour policy directed at the Southern and coloured world of work) aimed at promoting the global expansion of free wage labour with a view to, in a second step, include Southern and coloured labour into pre-existing international instruments rooted in the Northern-global tradition. Yet while these labour standards directed at the South in the long run definitely contributed to the globalization of wage labour, international labour policy was largely unsuccessful for many decades when it came to globalizing Northern labour standards. In the world of Southern labour the class gap remained huge and so did the gap between Northern and Southern labour protection, while gendered international labour policy with a focus on Southern labour was influenced by at least three in part contradictory tendencies: the interest in involving female labour, mostly unprotected, in expanding market production; resistance against this tendency, driven by diverse and in part contradictory interests; and the globalization of the trend towards narrowing the gender gap in labour protection described above.

Only by reading together the long term trends in international labour policy relating to both the Northern experience and the South-North divide and their interaction with each other can we answer the following questions: How did the struggle over legal equality versus special protection for women relate – globally – to the struggle over narrowing the class, race, and global divides in labour protection? In which way did the various actors in international labour politics and international women politics in their policy and vision prioritize or equalize, and for which reasons, any of these four dimensions (class, gender, global and racial and divides/gaps) involved in the making of global labour standards? How did these four dimensions built into global labour policy interrelate in the development of international standards of labour protection?

This study is intended to serve as a historical-empirical contribution to answering these questions. I explore two dimensions of the politics of *liaison et division* which characterized the struggle over global labour standards in view of the relationship between politics aimed at or involving the narrowing and/or broadening of the class, gender, race, and global gaps from the 1920s to the 1950s (and, potentially and in a second phase, into the 1990s). These relationships were shaped by *liaison et division* between the ILO and women's organized internationalism on the one hand and by *liaison et division* within both the ILO and women's organized internationalism on the other. In particular, I explore (1) the factors and actors that brought about the change in the position of the International Labour Organization regarding the issue of special labour protection and legal equality within labour policy relating to both the Northern experience and the South-North divide. In addition, I analyze (2) the role and politics of a network of legal equality femi-nists – organized in the Open Door International and the Equal Rights International from 1929 and 1930/1931 respectively – regarding the same issue in international labour policy and within the field of women's internationalism as a whole. Organized legal equality feminism gained increasing international importance from the 1930s in relation to the ILO, within women's international politics, and in international politics and organization at large. A key role was played, in the early years, by the Joint Standing Committee of Women's International Organisations established in 1925 and the Liaison Committee of

International Women's Organisations established in 1930/1931. The later had a broader mandate and came to serve as an important organizational structure within which the politics of *liaison et division* among women's organizations and between women's organizations and the ILO regarding the issue of labour protection for women in the South and in the North gained momentum. It is a further aim of my study (3) to analyze the role played by these committees. Finally I (4) contrast the historical dynamics of the politics of *liaison et division* in international labour and women's politics with the actual development of international instruments of labour protection aimed at or involving the (interrelated) narrowing and/or broadening of the class, gender, race, and global gaps in the same period.

As I explore these complex and combined developments, my reading of the material at hand is guided by three questions: What strategies of narrowing or widening class, gender, race, and global distance and inequality did the diverse political actors/discourses/positions pursue? How did these actors/discourses/positions conceptualize (often only implicitly) the way towards narrowing one of the four gaps (namely in the realm of class, gender, race, and global) in relation to pre-existing gaps in the other three realms? What role did the given historical constellation or the actors' perception of this constellation (e.g. pre-existing special labour protection for women; the likelihood of successfully pressing for more labour protection for men, women, or both sexes, in which part of the world) play in shaping their self-positioning with regard to the second question?

Structure:

Part I: The changing landscape of women's international activism and official Geneva internationalism

Here I describe how within feminist inter-organizational international co-operation a drive towards internationalizing legal equality feminism emerged and how as a result the organizational landscape of international women's movements underwent substantial change from the late 1920s. This development was closely connected with women's politics in relation to both the League of Nations and the ILO. I describe the emergence of new international women's organizations and highlight the development of internationally co-ordinated activism based in the idea of legal equality feminism directed at the ILO and the unfolding struggle between women's activism and ILO politics.

Part II: Fault lines of the battle over special labour legislation for women and the changing dynamics of the interaction between women's politics and the ILO

Here I analyse how these developments combined with argumentative and political change in the battle over special labour legislation for women on the international level and with a focus on industrialized countries. I focus on both the politics of the women's organizations and the ILO as well as the interaction among the diverse organizations and pressure groups involved. I evaluate the impact of the changing emphasis in international women's organizations policies in relation to labour protection on the politics the ILO pursued in the field.

Part III: A Northern battle transferred to the South? The gender of international labour-standards for non-metropolitan territories

The third part of the study describes the ambiguous relationship that emerged between these struggles and the unfolding focus of the ILO's politics over forced labour in "non-metropolitan" territories. I analyse the gender dimension in ILO politics directed at "native workers" and bonded labour from the point of view of its envisioned and implied impact on the combined race- and gender gaps and the relationship between class- and development policies. I

explore the impact of legal equality feminism and more „traditional“ labour-related international women’s politics on the development of these international labour standards.

Related presentations and publications:

Night work for white women, bonded labour for colored women? The international struggle on labour protection and legal equality, 1926 to 1939, in: Sara Kimble, Marion Röwekamp (eds), *New Perspectives on European Women’s Legal History* (forthcoming 2012)

Liaison et division and the Making of Global Labour Standards: Transnational Politics of Labour Protection and Legal Equality in the Interwar Period. Public Lecture, anniversary Lecture Series *Voicing Genders, Engendering Voices Series*, 15th anniversary of the Department of Gender Studies and the 20th anniversary of CEU, 18 October 2011

Differential labour standards for “non-metropolitan” workers and imperial world order. The politics of the ILO, 1920s to 1940s, Workshop „International Law and Empire“, Helsinki, 4 – 6 October 2011

Liaison Committees of International Women’s Organizations and the Changing Landscape of Women’s Internationalism, 1920s to 1940s. Secondary Essay, commissioned for *Women and Social Movements, International—1840 to Present*. Digital archive, eds. Thomas Dublin and Kathryn Kish Sklar (to be submitted by 30 June 2011)

The ILO’s discourse and politics on “native” labour in relation to development, 1926 – 1939. Paper given at the Workshop in conjunction with the research project *Developing Africa: Development Discourse(s) in Late Colonialism*, Vienna, 13-15 January 2011 (accepted for publication)

The Long-term Trajectory of Antislavery in International Politics. From the expansion of the European international system to unequal international development, in: Marcel van der Linden (ed.), *Humanitarian Intervention and Changing Labour Relations. The Long-term Consequences of the Abolition of the Slave Trade* (= Studies in Global Social History, vol. 7), Leiden, Brill, 2011, 431-496.

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Les portugaises déléguées à Conférence internationale du Travail (CIT) de 1951 à 2010. Des femmes exceptionnelles, des pionnières?

Albertina Jordão

Résumé:

Chaque année, en juin, les États membres de l'OIT envoient leurs délégations tripartites à la Conférence internationale du Travail (CIT), nommée aussi « parlement mondial du travail ». Cette recherche a deux parties : d'abord une lecture à partir du rassemblement des données sur la participation des Portugaises aux délégations à la CIT. Le Portugal est membre fondateur de l'OIT et si c'est vrai que pendant quelques années les délégations ont été très peu nombreuses, il a fallu attendre 32 ans pour que la première Portugaise soit désignée pour intégrer la délégation nationale. En effet, c'est en 1951 que, selon les archives du BIT, on trouve un nom féminin dans les listes des délégations (conseillère de la délégation gouvernementale)

Cette partie de la recherche est basée sur une analyse par décennie. On constate un manque évident de linéarité en ce qui concerne l'évolution de la participation féminine, surtout si l'on compare les déléguées femmes à leurs homologues masculins, mais aussi quand on regarde la participation en fonction des trois groupes : employeurs, gouvernement et syndicats.

A partir de l'analyse des données on peut signaler trois moments différents, en ce qui concerne la participation des femmes portugaises.

Une première période de 1951 à 1974, qui est celle de la dictature, la révolution du 25 avril de 1974 marque la fin du régime. La participation féminine a été vraiment peu importante. Comme déjà mentionné la première participation féminine a été en 1951. Elle restera la seule pour 10 ans. En 1961, une autre femme est nommée par le gouvernement. La première représentation féminine des syndicats remonte à 1964.

Un deuxième période va de 1974 à 1994. Le Portugal est devenu une démocratie et on constate un profond changement des droits et une activité intense et nouvelle en matière de ratification des Conventions de l'OIT. Les normes internationales de travail pendant ce période sont devenues la source et l'inspiration de toute la réforme législative, surtout en ce qui concerne les conditions de travail. A peu près 50% des Conventions ratifiées par le Portugal ont été ratifiées pendant cette période-là.

Une troisième période s'étend de 1995 à 2010, elle correspond à une croissance effective de la participation féminine à la CIT traduite par les chiffres. Pour la première fois les trois groupes : employeurs, gouvernement et travailleurs intègrent des femmes dans leurs délégations. On observe, entre 2000 et 2010, plus de femmes représentant les employeurs que de femmes représentant les travailleurs. Différentes raisons peuvent-être évoquées pour expliquer ce phénomène : la meilleure qualification des femmes suivie d'une tendance à la féminisation des structures patronales dans différents secteurs de l'économie comme p.ex. l'agriculture, les services et le commerce. Cette tendance semble refléter la croissante féminisation des emplois dans ces secteurs-là.

Une deuxième partie de la recherche porte sur l'expérience de quelques femmes «exceptionnelles ou pionnières» qui ont eu la chance de participer aux conférences pendant la période en étude. Et je dis chance vu le contexte social et politique assez défavorable. Un exemple : le premier concours pour la carrière diplomatique a été ouvert aux femmes en 1974. Avant, cette carrière était interdite aux femmes.

A partir de la définition de quelques critères on a construit un échantillon pour constituer un groupe qui peut illustrer l'expérience de certaines femmes en tant que membres des délégations portugaises à la CIT. A partir d'un guide d'entretiens les anciennes membres des délégations à la CIT racontent leurs expériences et nous aident à tracer leur participation pendant soixante ans.

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The Portuguese female delegates to the International Labour Conference (ILC) between 1951 and 2010. Exceptional and pioneering women?

Albertina Jordão

Abstract:

Each year in June, the member States of the ILO send their tripartite delegations to the International Labour Conference (ILC), also known as the “World Labour Parliament”.

This research is in two parts: firstly, a lecture based on the collection of data on the participation of women in Portuguese delegations to the ILC. Portugal is a founder member of the ILO and, while it is true that for several years delegations were few in number, it took 32 years for the first Portuguese woman to be named as part of the national delegation. In fact, it was only in 1951 that, according to the ILO archives, a female name appears in the list of delegates (as adviser to the government delegation).

This part of the research is based on an analysis by decade. We note a clear lack of linearity as far as the evolution of female participation is concerned, above all if we compare female delegates with their male counterparts but also when we look at female participation in relation to the three groups: employers, governments and workers. The data analysis shows three separate stages in the participation of female Portuguese delegates.

The first period, from 1951 to 1974, dates back to the years of the dictatorship, which was brought to an end by the revolution of 25 April, 1974. Female participation was accorded little importance. As already mentioned, the earliest participation by a woman was in 1951. She was to remain the only female representative for the next decade. In 1961, another woman was nominated by the government. The first female participant for the workers did not appear until 1964.

The second period ran from 1974 until 1994. Portugal had become a democracy and there was a notable change in respect of rights and new and intense moves towards ratification of ILO conventions. Over that period, international labour standards became the source of, and inspiration for, all legislative reform, especially that relating to working conditions. About fifty percent of all conventions ratified by Portugal were ratified during that time.

A third period, stretching from 1995 to 2005, corresponds to a real growth in female participation at the ILC, as shown by the attendance figures. For the first time, all three groups, employers, governments and workers, were integrating women into their delegations. Notably, between 2000 and 2010, there were more women in the employers’ delegations than in those of the workers. This phenomenon could be explained by different factors; better qualified women together with a tendency towards a feminization of employers’ structures in different economic sectors, e.g., agriculture, services and commerce. This tendency would indicate a growing feminization of jobs in these sectors.

A second part of the research relates to the experience of some of the “exceptional or pioneering” women who were fortunate enough to have participated at the conferences during the period covered by the study. I have chosen the term ‘fortunate’ because of the prevailing less-than-favourable socio-political context. One example of this is the fact that the first

competition for entry to the diplomatic service to be open to women was not until 1974. Before that, a diplomatic career was forbidden to women.

Based on a definition encompassing certain criteria, we have put together a sample group to illustrate the experience of some of the female participants of the Portuguese delegation to the ILC. Through a series of interviews, past members of ILC delegations recount their experiences and help us retrace their participation over the last sixty years.

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Women at Work in a Changing World. The *International Labour Organisation's* Politics and Working Women (1948-1978)

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Abstract

Division of labour is a structural value of Western societies. In this sense, a gender perspective on labour issues allows understanding why and how (re)constructed inequalities between men and women are in a long-term perspective and at the international level.

Our study focuses on one of the major players in the international regulation of women's labour in the 20th century – the *International Labour Organisation (ILO)*. It questions certain prevailing paradigms of historical research in the sexual division of labour, and brings to light new explanatory hypotheses regarding a gender-based history of labour and international organizations. The analysis' focus is on the period of the so-called 'Trente Glorieuses', comprising the years of the post-war economic boom and the early stages of the Cold War (1948–1978). A second focus is placed on the political movements against colonisation. In our research we use a renewed heuristic approach connecting three levels: firstly, national and international action by women with regard to women's work; secondly, sexual and international division of labour as discussed within the *ILO*; finally, the redefinition of the political balance of power at the national and international levels, denoting conflictual and/or peaceful relations between the historical agents involved in the establishment of social standards/norms.

Through the cross-comparison of rich and varied sources, which so far have not been analysed (archives of the International Labour Office (*BIT/ILO*), United Nations Organization, World Bank, Rockefeller Foundation, national archives of Argentina and archives of women's/feminist organisations), this research aims to improve the historical knowledge of *ILO's* normative policies during that period with regard to working women. The study further contributes to connecting empirical data on the employment of women with an analysis of international networks of women/feminists and the groups represented in *ILO* – governments, employers' organisations and trade unions – in the redefinition of the sexual and international division of labour. In the third phase, thanks to the analytical back and forth between normative and operational action in the field of technical assistance in one country, Argentina, the research confronts discourse and practice, qualitative and quantitative tools in the field of international and sexed employment policy.

Three lines of research were defined in order to gain innovative insights into the complexity of the issues connected with the employment of women during the period studied.

a) In the first phase, we show in what way the *ILO*'s policy with regard to women and work was intrinsically linked to the international context. We systematically examine projects and legal instruments such as conventions and recommendations elaborated and adopted by the *ILO* with regard to women's work and the so called aid for development.

b) In the second phase, we analyse relations between the principal protagonists of the policies described in point a): representatives of governments, employers' and workers' organizations of the *ILO* Member States; networks with expertise on women at work; national and international women's/feminist organizations.

c) In order to understand how the issues relating to the new prerogatives of the *ILO* regarding working women were treated on the ground and in an international level, we will study in a third phase the specific role of women in *ILO*'s technical assistance by focussing in particular on Argentina.

In the framework of this research project, we will develop a prosopography of key women protagonists in our field of study. It will be a qualitative analysis of common *and* divergent characteristics of individual actors in a common sphere of action, according to a precise definition of a period and a space. Such an analysis aims to fill a gap in international historiography on women as actors in the national and international arena.

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ILO Domestic Worker Convention and the Reconfiguration of Equality

Jennifer Fish

Abstract

The 2011 adoption of the Domestic Worker Convention marked a poignant moment in the struggle to regulate household labour. Establishing global standards for this growing sector of the informal economy has raised ideological and practical questions about the capacity to include labour performed in private households within the frameworks of international protections. The ILO last held preliminary discussions on paid domestic labour in 1948, followed by a second call for standard-setting action in 1965. Forty-five years later, the Governing Body of the ILO placed “Decent Work for Domestic Workers” on the agenda to consider the first international convention and set of recommendations. Unlike any other ILO policy discussions, the 2010 and 2011 International Labour Conferences included the participation of a global network of domestic worker representatives, who presented a collective reminder of the value of household labour, the need for global regulatory standards, and the impact of international policies on the everyday lives of women workers throughout the world. As one leader of the International Domestic Workers Network stated in her 2011 public address, “We are not ‘maids’, or ‘servants’, or even ‘helpers.’ We are ‘workers.’” Bringing home and care work into focus within the ILO has generated a series of labour, human rights and gender campaigns that emphasize the critical role women workers play within the global economy. This international movement to recognize, respect and regulate household labour exposes core feminist questions of equality between women employers and domestic workers, according to varying geographic, race and class divisions. Within the ILC discourse, prominent women members of government delegations and ILO leaders recognized their own reliance on domestic labour, in efforts to promote global protections and the adoption of an international convention. This case study draws from direct fieldwork during the 2010 and 2011 ILC discussions to situate the “Decent Work for Domestic Workers” dialogues within broader considerations of the relationships among gender, development, transnational networks, and the promotion of social equality through the ILO.

Jennifer N. Fish is Chair of the Department of Women’s Studies at Old Dominion University in Virginia, USA. As a scholar and public sociologist, she specializes in women’s labour and migration in the informal economy, civil society organizations, and social reconciliation in the aftermath of conflict. For the past fifteen years, she has worked with the South African Domestic Service and Allied Workers Union to promote domestic workers rights and collective organization capacity. Her book publications include *Domestic Democracy: At Home in South Africa* (Routledge, 2006) and the co-edited collection *Women’s Activism in South Africa: Working Across Divides* (University of KwaZulu Natal, 2009). Most recently, she has served as a research consultant to the International Domestic Workers Network, the International Labour Organization and the Women in Informal Employment: Globalizing and Organizing (WIEGO) policy network.

Migrant Workers, Care Deficits, and the Prospects for Global Governance

Professor Sonya Michel

Abstract:

Over the past few decades, population aging and the shift of women into the labour force has reordered the gender division of labour and created a massive demand for extra-familial care work around the world. In response, hundreds of thousands of women have been migrating from poorer to richer countries to take up jobs as care workers, often facing difficult working conditions abroad and creating “care deficits” in their home countries as immigration restrictions in destination countries force them to leave children behind and sending countries lack the resources to establish social services to compensate for lost maternal care. This “global tilt” in care resources has become a global issue, one that poses a challenge for global governance.

International organizations have addressed the issue in different ways. The OECD and like-minded organizations that focus on international trade and development, such as the Inter American Dialog and the Center for Global Development, argue that migration is driven primarily by economic opportunity and thus should not be discouraged or heavily regulated. Insofar as women’s migration affects their families, the OECD emphasizes improvements to their financial situation, not the psycho-social implications of maternal absence. Indeed, it is often implied that drawing attention to the negative effects of maternal absence is “anti-feminist.”

The ILO, by contrast, has addressed aspects of this situation by addressing the rights of migrants and of workers, most directly through the recently adopted Convention on Decent Work for Domestic Workers, and also through its concerns with social security, currently channelled into work with the UN on the Millennium Development Goals. The UN, in turn, also addresses aspects of this issue through its articulations of the rights of the child (which include the right “to grow up in a family environment”) and the rights of women. However, the recently formed UN Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women does not seem to have taken up the issue of migrant women workers’ family concerns.

Currently, the most effective advocacy for migrant care workers and their families comes from the migrants themselves. In British Columbia, Canada, for example, the Philippine Women Centre has criticized Canada’s much-ballyhooed Live-In Caregiver Program (LCP) because of its negative impact on families, while the European Network for Migrant Women has recently begun to lobby the EU for the right to family unification.

This paper will outline some of the consequences for children and families of women’s migration and provide an overview of the responses of international organizations. It will

then address the prospects for global governance and it touches on many of the issues with which the ILO has long been concerned: migration, domestic work, family security, and economic development.

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