Thematic Module 2  Labour as A Political Category

International Workshop

Between the State and the Site of Production:
The Making of Informal Labour Relations

26 – 27 September 2016
Tata Institute of Social Sciences
Mumbai, India
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Programme

26 September

9.00 – 9.30  Registration and Tea

9.30 – 9.45  Opening Remarks (Nicole Mayer-Ahuja, Bino Paul, Christoph Scherrer)
9.45 – 10.15 Between the State and the Site of Production: a conceptual approach (Nicole Mayer-Ahuja)

10.15 – 11.45  State Policies of Informalisation – Empirical Perspectives


Rohan D. Mathews (Göttingen): Informality and State Policy: An Assessment of Shifts in Legislation, Jurisprudence and Organising in the Construction Sector in India

Maansi Parpiani (Copenhagen): The making of the Local Migrant. Labour, Welfare and Urbanisation in Navi Muymbai

11.45 – 12.15  Coffee

12.15 – 13.45  State Policies of Informalisation – Theoretical Perspectives

Christoph Scherrer (Kassel): Why do States promote Informality?

Joerg Nowak (Hong Kong/Berlin): Law, Space and the State: Informal Labour in the Light of Marxist State Theory and Legal Geography

13.45 – 14.45  Lunch

14.45 – 16.15  Transnational Perspectives on Informal Labour Relations

Elvira Graner (New Delhi) and S.K. Sasikumar (Noida): Governing Labour Migration to the Gulf: addressing Informal under-currents in India and Bangladesh

Ana Paula Melli and Clair Siobhan Ruppert (Sao Paulo): Brazil and Mozambique – informal work, trade union action and public policies to informal workers on labour rights and social protection

16.15 – 16.45  Tea

17.15 – 18.45  Keynote

Chitra Joshi, Naveen Chander, Prabhu Mohapatra (New Delhi): Workers’ Struggle against Informality: Chronicles of Two Strikes in India

19.30  Conference Dinner  (at TISS)
27 September

9.30 – 11.30  **Labour at the Site of Production I: Organisation, Control, Conflict**

Jonathan Pattenden (East Anglia): Processes of Control, Possibilities for Resistance: The State, the Labour Process and Informal Migrant Workers in South India

Anna Sailer (Göttingen): The limits of regulation. The organization of work in the Bengal jute industry in the 1920s

Koyel Lahiri (Kolkata): Thinking beyond trade unions: Exploring informality, industrial conflict and forms of worker collaboration in the Delhi National Capital Region, India

11.30 – 11.45  Tea

11.45 – 12.45  Hemantika Basu (Mumbai): Women Sub-ordination at the Workplace: A Study of Informal Nurses and Care Workers in West Bengal (India)

Sheena Jain (Delhi): Ushering in the New. A View from the Pages of Faridabad Majdoor Samachar

12.45 – 13.45  Lunch

13.45 – 15.45  **Labour at the Site of Production II: The Home as a Workplace**

Suramya T.K. (Chennai): Regulation, Informalisatation and Female Work Participation in the Colonial and Post-Colonial Period: A Case Study of Beedi Rolling Industry in Malabar

Samita Sen (Kolkata): Domestic Workers – Informality, Flexibility and Mobility

Christa Wichterich (Basel): Surrogate Reproductive Work in India – What kind of Labour? What kind of Rules and Regulations?

15.45 – 16.15  Tea

16.15 – 18.15  **Labour at the Site of Production III: Self-employment**

Saikat Maitra (Göttingen): The Politics of Entrepreneurship: Territoriality, Livelihood and Urbanisation in Contemporary Rajarhat

William F. Stafford, Jun. (Berkeley): Service Transactions and the Locus of Labour: Questions Concerning the Monetisation of Mobility and Location

Debdulal Saha (Mumbai): Urban Informal Markets, State and Alternative Development in India

18.15 – 19.30  Concluding Remarks: Aditya Sarkar and Ravi Ahuja
Outline of ICAS:MP

The M.S Merian International Centre of Advanced Studies ‘Metamorphoses of the Political’ (ICAS:MP) combines the benefits of an open, interdisciplinary forum for intellectual exchange with the advantages of a cutting-edge research centre. The centre will focus on key political processes that have emerged in parallel in many parts of the world during the twentieth century through to the present day, processes that are entangled yet heterogeneous. Located in the global South where ‘most of the world’ resides, ICAS:MP critically intervenes in debates in the social sciences which, despite relying almost entirely on evidence from North-Atlantic rim societies, claim universal applicability. ICAS:MP is thus not just another initiative to strengthen ‘Area Studies’ nor a base for narrowly bilateral Indo-German comparison. Rather, it will serve as a centre of advanced international research located in India in order to consciously unsettle the methodological nationalism and Eurocentrism that continue to frame research in the humanities and social sciences.

Programme Outline:

The distinction between ‘politics’ and ‘the political’ has become a key precept of modern social science, philosophy, and cultural history. The awareness of the demise of the sovereign nation-state as prime actor and object of political science gave rise to an intensive and interdisciplinary debate on the ‘Metamorphoses of the Political’. Today, ‘the political’ changes its ‘aggregate state’ continually, encompassing new fields of social practice as it withdraws from others, frequently appearing as ‘antipolitics’. In the long 20th century, the Indian subcontinent has been one of the most vigorous sources of distinctive conceptualizations and practices of ‘the political’ beyond the North Atlantic region. The M.S Merian International Centre of Advanced Studies ‘Metamorphoses of the Political’ (ICAS:MP) combines the benefits of an open, interdisciplinary forum for intellectual exchange with the advantages of a cutting-edge research centre. The centre will focus on key political processes that have emerged in parallel in many parts of the world during the twentieth century through to the present day, processes that are entangled yet heterogeneous. Located in the global South where ‘most of the world’ resides, ICAS:MP critically intervenes in debates in the social sciences which, despite relying almost entirely on evidence from North-Atlantic rim societies, claim universal applicability. ICAS:MP is thus not just another initiative to strengthen ‘Area Studies’ nor a base for narrowly bilateral Indo-German comparison. Rather, it will serve as a centre of advanced international research located in India in order to consciously unsettle the methodological nationalism and Eurocentrism that continue to frame research in the humanities and social sciences.

Through its innovative modular and network structure, ICAS:MP will generate sustainable research cooperation among leading humanities and social science scholars from Germany, India and other countries who investigate similar research problems rather than necessarily the same region. Indeed, a core objective of ICAS:MP consists in connecting scholars whose regional specialization usually tends to keep them apart. Scholarly exchange and joint exploration within ICAS:MP will be defined by a shared interest in examining the shifting boundaries, historically contingent contents, and intellectual lineages
of the twentieth-century ‘political’ and by working comparatively, ICAS:MP will highlight the overlapping yet distinctive trajectories of political processes that have unfolded over the globe.

**Outline of Thematic Module 2: Labour as A Political Category**

The political metamorphoses of the long twentieth century saw the rise and demise of ‘labour’ as a political category the world over. In the mid-twentieth century, ‘labour’ served as a rallying cry across the political spectrum, as a keyword of worldwide ‘modernisation’ and even as a futurist leitmotif in literature and the arts. The legal regulation of the employment relationship was seen as the fulcrum of national as well as colonial social policies. Since the 1980s, trade unions have faced crises, erstwhile labour parties have changed their social constituencies, academics have proclaimed ‘the end of work’, while artists have aestheticised ‘labour’ as a relic of an archaic world.

Social policy has been refocused on social citizens’ rights, and ‘labour reform’ now implies the informalisation of employment. While the end of an age of ‘labour’ (as a political category) has sometimes been recognised as a global phenomenon, the study of labour and social policies has been confined typically to analysis at the national level, and compared mostly within the North Atlantic region: the impact of global entanglements and the forces that reproduce difference among the world’s labour regimes have remained largely obscured.

Combining historical and social science perspectives as well as regional expertise on non-European and European societies, this module examines the political metamorphoses of ‘labour’. The first temporal vantage point is the mid-twentieth century, permitting the reconstruction of earlier tendencies that crystallized into new labour policies in many parts of the world at that time. The second vantage point is the present: the contemporary perspective is required to identify (a) the historical limitations of the ‘age of labour’, (b) the forces that led to its demise and (c) the social and political tendencies emerging from its debris. The module’s researchers will compare related processes in various parts of the world without assuming a teleological drift towards homogenisation.

ICAS:MP’s location in India is a crucial advantage for pursuing this research agenda. While India experienced its own ‘age of labour’ between the 1930s and the 1970s, the result was not the emergence of a majoritarian ‘standard work relationship’, but a process of differentiation between ‘formal’ and ‘informal’ labour markets, a tendency that appears to have greater relevance today even in the global ‘North’. Indian trajectories since the 1970s are also reminiscent of broader trends: while informalisation processes enjoy political backing, new social policies define social citizen rights rather than employment relationships. At the micro level, the decline of ‘labour’ as a political category impacts on worker biographies in contradictory ways. Hence, India provides an ideal base for global research as tendencies in the transformation of labour regimes are sufficiently similar to permit comparison while the marked specificity of the Indian case alerts to diverging
ICAS: MP   Thematic Module 2: Labour as a Political Category

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- Prof. Rana Behal (University of Delhi),
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- Prof. Christoph Scherrer, Global Labour Univ./Dept. of Social Sciences, Univ. Kassel
- Prof. Marcel van der Linden, International Institute of Social History (IISH)/Dept. of Sociology, Univ. of Amsterdam
- Prof. Willem van Schendel, IISH/Dept. of History, Univ. of Amsterdam
Concept Note for the Workshop

‘Informal labour’ has been a topic of academic as well as political discussion ever since the early 1970s when Keith Hart coined this term in a study for the International Labour Organisation on the labour market in Ghana. As a relative concept, ‘informal labour’ is usually defined as being the opposite of ‘formal labour’, or legally regulated employment. Thus the term ‘informal labour’ typically refers to employment, and labour market dynamics, whereas the site of production tends to be neglected. Moreover, the role of the state in the making of ‘informal labour’ appears as a ‘black box’ in many discussions. If state action is considered at all, debates evolve around the question whether politics should promote or abolish these jobs: Whereas representatives of modernisation theory in the 1950s and 1960s have argued that informal labour was a leftover of pre-modern times, bound to disappear on the way to a bright, and modern future, as defined by the contemporary centres of capitalist development, more recent contributions have identified ‘informal labour’ as a result of current capitalist dynamics. While some argue that informal labour constitutes sub-standard employment, thus resulting in growing insecurity, not only for the workers concerned, but also for the remaining core workforces, others welcome ‘informal labour’, emphasizing its capacity to provide job options for those (especially women, and migrants) who are precluded from formal employment, and to promote a culture of self-help, in the context of family, ethnic group, or neighbourhood. Consequently, the political solutions proposed vary considerably: If informal labour is on the decline anyway, no state action is required; if it results in the undermining of social standards, political actors must fight informalisation; and if it is celebrated to overcome ‘labour market rigidities’, the role of the state is to boost informalisation further. The very question how state politics contribute to the making of ‘informal labour’, however, is hardly addressed. In this workshop, we would like to move beyond these debates, in mainly three respects.

Beyond ‘jobs, jobs, jobs’: Focussing on informal labour at the site of production. As argued above, many discussions about informal labour focus exclusively on the employment relationship. From this perspective, ‘informal labour’ is defined by the fact that contracts are not stable, social security schemes and labour law (designed to stabilize formal jobs) do not apply, and, in more general terms, that legal forms of regulation play a less significant role than extra-legal aspects. As early as 1976, Breman (EPW, 27.11.1976, p.1370) has made the point, however, that ‘(in)formal labour’ is not only about the labour contract, but also about the labour process. According to him, formal labour is bound to a specific type of corporate organisation, implying ‘a set number of inter-related jobs which are part of a composite, internally well-organised labour structure’. Accordingly, we suggest to broaden our perspective on informal labour, in order to systematically include the labour process at the site of production (or service provision). Among the questions we hope to discuss might be the following: To what extent does the informalised character of employment relationships influence the nature of work? What impact does informality have on cooperation on the shop-floor, between informalised workers, between them and fellow ‘formal’ labourers, and finally, between workers and managers? Does the informal character of employment translate into specific ways of
controlling labour, of organising production, and of designing career tracks and skill development? Are there specific ways in which informal labour relates to industrial conflict, and (collective) interest representation? By way of focussing on the site of production, we also strive to overcome the oft-criticised, but remarkably long-lived, and utterly misleading dichotomy between an informal and a formal sector of the economy, since on the shop-floors of this world, formal and informal labour work side by side, their working conditions as well as employment status being closely intertwined.

**Beyond the ‘invisible hand’: Discussing political regulation and the making of informal labour.** Ever since informal labour has entered the stage of academic as well as political discussions in the 1970s, these have been almost devoid of social actors, with the exception of the workers themselves, who arguably boost informalisation by way of circulating between village and city. Even though most definitions of informal labour emphasise the lack of legal regulation, state action is typically not in the centre of interest, however. In order to fill this gap, we hope to address questions like the following during this workshop: In what ways, and through which measures of political regulation have representatives of different nation states promoted the informalisation of labour during the last decades, and how can we account for current developments? What is the role of privatisation policies, of labour law, and of legal regulation with regard to social security provision in this process of state-led informalisation, in different spatio-temporal contexts? What kinds of interrelation exist between legislation, jurisdiction, and the tacit acceptance of semi-legal or illegal practices in the making of informal labour? Finally, how can we tackle the complex interplay between ‘politics of production’ (in the sphere of political regulation) and ‘politics in production’ that evolve on the shop-floor, according to Burawoy?

**Beyond the national ‘container’: Towards a transnational perspective on informal labour.** In current discussions, the increase in informal labour that can be noted around the globe since the 1980s (with the exception of some countries in South America, due to their ‘anticyclical’ policies of actively formalising employment) is often ascribed to processes of ‘globalisation’. Although it is obvious that the latter has never functioned as the ‘great equalizer’, as expected by some, it might still be useful to experiment with transnational perspectives on informal labour, given that certain tendencies of informalisation indeed transcend national borders. Among the questions we would like to tackle in this workshop are the following: If informal labour is on the rise in markedly different world regions, to what extent does the term refer to the same phenomenon, with regard to the character of the jobs under review, but also to their significance for a specific national labour market? How can we analyse interrelations between informal labour in different national contexts, as constituted, for instance, within the framework of global production networks or value chains? Can transnational cycles of political regulation be discerned with respect to informal labour, in different nation states or in the policies of international institutions (like the World Bank or International Monetary Fund) – and how can we account for them analytically?
The key note will focus on two recent workers upsurge in the Delhi NCR region - namely the Maruti workers strike movement in Manesar in 2012-2013 and the month-long Wazirpur steel workers strike in June 2014.

The Maruti factory in Manesar is the site of the most advanced automobile industry complex in India lying squarely in the heart of the organised formal sector. In contrast, the Wazirpur steel industry is located in a rambling chaotic fragmented and informally organised stainless steel utensil manufacturing complex. Comparing and contrasting ‘the dynamic of the strike movement in the so-called formal sector with the trajectory of strike movement in the informal sector we shall focus on three specific issues, a) the link between changing labour processes and the emergence of a militant workers movement, b) the process of informalisation within both the formal and informal sector and its link with politics of labour, and c) the specific nexus of capital and state that shaped and was in turn shaped by workers resistance. In our analysis of the workers’ movement in these settings we also shall throw light on the enduring coexistence of and interaction between formal and informal structures and the process/es by which informality and precariousness is/are continuously reproduced. While both these strikes were strongly repressed and may have failed to achieve their immediate goals, there is no doubt that the sudden emergence of the strike seemed to have caught the state and capital quite by surprise and the ripple effects of the strikes are still to be felt across the industrial landscape. Were these strikes in such different settings mere flash in the pan or do they reflect a reversal of trend and a deeper churn?

These two strike movements are significant mainly because they occurred in a conjuncture marked by steady decline in organised working class union movement, sharp diminution in strike incidence and increasing invisibilisation of labor in the public sphere over the last two and half decades. The cause of this decline is often placed at the door of the formalisation process which has shrunk the space of organised working class presence. Today (when ?) 93 per cent of the workforce in India is classified as informal workers but more pertinently nearly 60 percent of the organised sector workers are either temporary, contractual or precariously employed. This scale of informalisation has happened without any significant alteration of labour laws in India. This structural segmentation over the decades and more since the 1990s is coupled with the phenomenon in which, the subjectivity of labour as social class has got marginalised and labour seems to get addressed either as individual right bearing citizen or identified with their socio-cultural community identity. In the last one and half decades, workers’ struggles were centered around two broad issues: Right to form unions and struggle against differential treatment of contract and permanent workers. In order to have complete control over production process, capital had used various strategies but the core of it has been to create layers of segmentation among workers and establish management friendly unions. State’s regulation and inaction always has been key to this process.
In this key note, we will look at the workers’ struggle in Maruti as an example to examine, how the demand and struggle for their independent union, dignified work space and better work condition etc. are reflection and response to the new regime of work-relation under neo-liberalism. What has been remarkable with this workers’ struggle was the emergence of an organic solidarity at the level of shop floor, between the workers who were understood to be divided on many axes, such as contract vs. permanent, migrant vs. local etc. The other important issue that demands attention is to understand the shift in the production process and consequently its impact on work-relations inside the company. What signifies the new model of production in Maruti since 1990s, but more since the last decade and half is, contractualisation, retrenchment, informalisation, outsourcing, and complete takeover of a public sector company by private capital. This process was accompanied by a surprising degree of automation (?), robotisation and deepening of capital intensity in production. This was reflected in the changing composition of the workforce in the Maruti Manesar plant consisting of first generation young skilled workers divided amongst themselves in various statuses such as permanent, temporary, apprentices and casual workers often performing the same tasks on a highly automated assembly line.

Wazirpur steel industry, on the other hand, was from the beginning of its existence in the 1980s emerged and consolidated itself in the shadow of illegality and informality. Marked by many small firms with fake ownership patterns and fragmented labour processes the workers were often long term migrant/circulants with little permanent stake in the industry. They assiduously maintained links with their rural origins to mitigate seasonal and cyclical redundancy which permanently plagued the industry. Work processes were primitive, hazardous and marked by extreme intensity of work. Low pay and complete absence of any form of social security was an enduring feature of the industry.

Despite these apparent dissimilarity in the condition of the industry, work processes and composition of the workforce what is remarkable was how similar (was) the nature of demands of the workers in the strikes was - legal recognition as workers with rights to bargain, limiting the intensity of work and demand for a dignified wage and social security. In Maruti the permanent and temporary workers unitedly fought for formal recognition of their union while in Wazirpur workers in the most vulnerable and precarious and fragmented in many small units fought and sustained a strike for more than month. In our analysis we shall compare the politics of formation of workers collectives and the configuration of state and capital in significantly shaping and in turn being shaped by workers resistance. In the process we hope to challenge the prevailing paradigm that has seen informalisation as leading to depoliticisation of the working class.

For information about the key note speakers see
Abstracts (in alphabetical order of first name)

Brazil and Mozambique: comparative study about informal work, trade union action and public policies to informal workers on labour rights and social protection

Ana Paula Melli (CUT Brazil, Sao Paolo)
Clair Siobhan Ruppert (CUT Brazil, Sao Paolo)

The paper is about a transnational perspective on informal labour, on special focus how trade union movements and public policies are facing informal work into two countries: Brazil and Mozambique. Our interest was born since CUT Brazil (the largest trade union organisation in Latin America) started a cooperation project with OTM-CS (representative trade union organisation in Mozambique), through an education project with the Mozambican informal workers organisation (AIEMO), that has as the main goal, to improve (increase) the work and living conditions of street vendors at the open markets in Maputo and all provinces of Mozambique.

Historically, both Brazil and Mozambique had Portuguese colonisation, a feature that contributed to build solidarity alliance between two countries, by official government initiatives and by trade union movement as well. When comparing Brazil and Mozambique, the latter’s population size is only about one tenth (28 versus 208 million) and the share of economically active population is only half (21 versus 46.7 per cent). Vast differences can also be seen when looking at minimum wages (231 US $ versus 32 $). Nevertheless, there are also some similarities, with special focus on informal work. Thus, in both countries, informal sector is huge, with significant workers without labour rights and social protection, at nearly 40 per cent (39.8 versus 39.5 per cent; based on Estratégia do Emprego e Formação Profissional em Moçambique 2006-2015. Mozambican government; www.ibge.gov.br)

CUT Brazil and OTM-CS have an example of cooperation alliance, that has the main goals of the cooperation project is strengthening the workers’ organisation on informal economy. Access social protection through laws based on International Labour Organization (ILO) 102 Convention and 116 Recommendation, strengthening the capacity of bargaining with public power about informal working conditions and conditions of life, especially women conditions of life.

Many researches about informal economy in Mozambique have the similar conclusion: women and girls are the main affected by the labour market on informal economy. In this way, our paper will identify how the access to the law guarantees that come from ILO instruments and the trade union action, have been impact the working and live conditions. The comparison between Brazilian and Mozambican conditions will be based on these two points. In this point is interesting to verify in our paper, how this international organisation of regulation of labour relationship, ILO, is reference to achievement of improvement of work and life conditions in Brazil and Mozambique, with special focus on ILO instruments that extend the social protection to workers from informal economy.
The issue to be analysed is how these instruments are effective in Brazil that have the domestic law related to social protection with bigger coverage than the ILO Convention 102 and by Mozambican side, how this ILO instrument is appropriate to the trade union movement as way to include workers from informal economy into a basic floor of social protection.

For Mozambique, our research is based on AEIMO (Associação da Economia Informal de Moçambique), a trade union organisation that represent informal workers by commerce sector, that is responsible for all kinds of institutional negotiation related to working conditions and legal conditions of informal labour markets. We mainly identify how AEIMO is operating towards the inclusion of informal workers into the national system of social protection. On the Brazilian side, our research is based on CUT Brasil (Central Única dos Trabalhadores) to identify how this organisation works to extend labour rights to the informal economy, especially through participation in forums of public policies that regulate the social protection access. In addition, we want to identify if the project cooperation between CUT Brazil and OTM-CS effectively is contributing to improve live and work conditions in Mozambique, into a concept of decent work by ILO.

In terms of methodology, our paper is based on empirical research from OTM-CS, AEIMO and informal markets in Maputo (Mozambique capital), as well as interviews with representatives of this organisations, coordination project and workers of the Maputo informal market. We will analyse this empirical research under the theoretical framework of Martha Chen, especially her analyses about the linkages between the informal economy and the formal economy should be promoted through an appropriate inclusive policy and regulatory environment.
Rural Women in Construction Work:
Mapping Issues of Labor & Law through Government Schemes

Anindita Tagore
(JNU, Centre for the Study of Social Systems, New Delhi)

In a developing country such as India, construction activities take place in every corner, as it emerges from rural space to small townships to major cities, with infrastructure development and housing plans at its core. Next to agriculture, the construction industry employs the largest number of workers, both in cities and in rural areas. Specifically, in the Indian construction scenario, women have contributed equally but are not considered equal in terms of skill enhancement or in improving their technical and entrepreneurial capacities.

This is applicable in both rural and urban situations. Considering rural women as per the census 2011 have a workforce participation rate of 30 per cent compared with 53 per cent for males out of which rural women form 8.9 per cent (Bhalla and Kaur 2011) of the total workforce of the entire construction sector. Studies indicate that most women are engaged in unskilled jobs (manually carrying/transferring construction materials) within the construction industry, where by these women workers are mostly employed on a casual basis by contractors, sub-contractors and petty contractors. Jhabvala and Sinha (2002) in their paper “Liberalization and the Women Worker” write how work participation women constitute around 30-40 per cent of the total workforce on any given construction site. Wherein, 90 per cent of these women workers perform physically taxing ‘un-skilled’ tasks of loading and unloading building materials and lowly paid functions in the construction trade. With increasing mechanisation in the sector and new machinery and tools that rarely consider women’s ergonomics, they are likely to be further distanced from the development and economic potential offered in the sector.

In India, the Ministry of Labor and Employment states laws pertaining to construction workers, which are primarily two, first the Building & Other Construction Workers (Regulation of Employment and Conditions of Service) Act, 1996; and second The Building & Other Construction Workers’ Welfare Cess Act, 1996. The first law aims to provide for regulation of employment and conditions of service of the building and other construction workers as also their safety, health and welfare measures in every establishment which employs or employed during the preceding year ten or more workers. The second one an Act which is to provide for the levy and collection of a cess on the cost of construction incurred by employers with a view to augmenting the resources of the Building & Other Construction Workers’ Welfare Boards constituted under the Building & Other Construction Workers (Regulation of Employment and Conditions of Service) Act, 1996. Peoples Union for Democratic Rights, Delhi (2009) had produced/come with an article ‘Violation of Workers’ Rights at the Commonwealth Games Construction Site’ which revealed the condition of female construction worker working in a government funded construction site. The article states that labor laws and women workers’ rights are being violated with
impunity under the very eyes of the government authorities which clearly reveals the widespread acceptance of such practices. Concluding that if such examples could be seen in broad daylight, within the space of urban areas then imagining the condition of rural zone in itself becomes a reason of anxiety.

Since the paper concentrates on rural communities where construction sector is an emerging viable option for livelihood creation for women and is seen as a poverty alleviation strategy by Governments, civil society and other development agencies. Broadly in rural areas non-agricultural work, under which construction falls, requires on an average both skilled as well as manual labour along with some degree of autonomy (in terms of mobility to move around to different locations) in order to get regular work. Srivastava and Srivastava (2010) in their paper “Women, Work, and Employment Outcomes in Rural India” argue that since rural economy has been largely stagnant over the years most women, therefore, are able to get work for only a few months in the year. This keeps them employed only in the “subsidiary status”. The Indian government, on the other hand, has launched various flagship programmes in the country to meet the immense infrastructural requirements. Focusing specifically in the area of construction, three core government schemes which comprise of construction work for men as well as women are the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employee Guarantee Act (MGNREGA), Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY) and Indira Awaas Yojana (IAY). In this paper MGNREGA, PMGSY and IAY are analysed to identify the conditions of rural women working in a construction site.

Hence under the broad rubric of involvement and influence of rural women in construction sector the paper tries to highlight the three core section, first section revolves around women & labor issues in Construction sector. Second section discusses labor laws which exist for the construction worker, evaluating their impact on women workers specifically. Followed by the last section which maps situation of rural women working in construction site and the recent government schemes which offers construction work in rural areas how they perform in providing equitable and just environment to women workers.

References
The limits of regulation
The organisation of work in the Bengal jute industry in the 1920s

Anna Sailer
(Centre for Modern Indian Studies, Georg-August Universität Göttingen)

In this paper I intend to analyse the regulation of labour under the ‘multiple-shift’ system. This system was a dominant feature of the Bengal jute industry between the 1870s and the 1920s. It combined the deployment of groups of workers, or sets, rather than individuals, with specific modes of regulation, which reflected different managerial concerns over the process of production. Whereas the former was a stable feature of the organisation of work, new modes of regulation of existing groups of workers were introduced successively throughout this period. In the 1870s, these changes affected workers in the preparing and spinning departments; and they corresponded to a situation of an unstable supply of labour. In the 1890s, groups of workers in the weaving-department were re-arranged, as managers and managing agents sought to improve measures of labour control. By the 1920s other sections of the workforce had been incorporated into the ‘multiple-shift’ system, and it now affected all workers who were deployed on the machinery. The ‘multiple-shift’ system, at this point, appeared like a kaleidoscope of different regulations designed to regulate practices of work within sets, in correspondence to the requirements of the process of production, and to the conditions of the industry at large.

Despite these interventions into the organisation of work at the point of production, the ‘multiple-shift’ system was consistently informed by practices of work and employment, which can be described as informal. The deployment of sets rested on a structure of excess-labour, and workers had to share their work with other members of their set, or with ‘extra’ workers, in order to arrange for hours of work and break amongst themselves. Sirdars were responsible for overseeing these arrangements at the point of production. They were, further, in charge of ascertaining the attendance of workers, as well as hiring workers on a daily basis. The only exception at this point were weavers, who had regular employment contracts.

This situation began to change in the 1920s. While this decade witnessed the full extension of the ‘multiple-shift’ system at the point of production, it was simultaneously marked by increasing conflicts over the underlying organisation of work. The deployment of groups of workers, more precisely, seemed to pose an increasingly serious obstacle to the introduction of new measures of labour control by capitalists, as well as to the proper implementation of factory regulation by the colonial state. The fact that neither managers nor factory inspectors could formally identify individual workers in the midst of sets and informal work arrangements, seemed to forestall this option. In other words: the ‘multiple-shift’ system appeared to block a development towards a more formalised set of labour relations.
Taking these considerations as a point of departure, I intend to scrutinise the modalities of labour regulations under the ‘multiple-shift’ system. By placing this analysis in the 1920s, I will consider it at a moment which can be seen as a conjuncture, as the system at this moment reflected (1) past attempts to regulate informal practices of work at the point of production; as well as (2) the limits which contemporaries saw for the (anticipated) future of industrial relations. The paper, thus, will be divided into two parts. In the first part, I will try and map the different trajectories of labour regulations by giving an overview of the implications of labour regulations under the ‘multiple-shift’ system in two crucial sections of the mill: first, the preparing and spinning departments, and, second, the weaving department. In the second part of the paper, I will consider how the ‘multiple-shift’ system emerged as a central theme in conflicts over the development of labour relations. Or, in other words, I will ask: what where the limits which this mode of work organisation seemed to imply for the emerging concerns with more formalised labour relations? The specific structure of the ‘multiple-shift’ system helps us at this point to illuminate the concerns raised by capitalists and state representatives more clearly, and, thus, to consider the dynamics of the changing regulation of work in the Bengal jute industry.
Surrogate Reproductive Work in India –
What kind of Labour? What kind of Rules and Regulations?

Christa Wichterich (Basel):

States have mapped out with legal provisions and proscriptions a transnational market for assisted reproductive technologies (ART) and reproductive practices, including in-vitro-fertilisation (IVF), egg “donation” and surrogacy. India has become a hub in the transnational reconfiguration of reproduction. The core of this booming sector is the work of poor, subaltern women in India to provide the service of pregnancy and of giving birth for somebody else, mostly white, middle class couples from the Global North, presently estimated at about 20,000 per year. The Indian surrogate mother acts at the interface of the medical-industrial complex, bio politics, and the hegemonic reproductive regime in Indian society. Key markers of these three power regimes are the categories of gender, class/caste, race/ethnicity and North/South. The bio-capitalist economy expands commodification and market principles into areas that have been outside of the market before, actually body substances, biological reproduction and life production.

The role of the Indian state in shaping this sector is ambiguous: while adopting anti-natalist programmes for decades, the Indian state has legalised this fertility-driven sector by giving licences to IVF- and ART-clinics, and promoting medical and reproductive tourism, however without consistent regulation. But in 2013, the Indian government restricted surrogacy to heterosexual couples (like Russia did), and recently it proposed a restriction to Indian citizens as means of overcoming infertility in the nation state (like Thailand did), meaning overruling economic growth and neoliberal perspectives by moral and nationalist considerations. Surrogate mothers in different parts of the country protested against this planned deprivation of an income-generating (earning) opportunity.

The paper takes up controversial debates about this kind of labour, which encapsulates and blurs all categories of Marxist and neo-classical economics while being a part of a transnational techno-medical fertility industry mediated by various brokers, legal advisors and touristic agencies. Like other care work and like sex work this labour is considered to result from natural feminine capacities what justifies a low payment called “compensation” rather than wage. Although often based on a contract between the surrogate mother and the commissioning parents - but hardly based on informed consent - the labour relations are characterised by informality and precarity without social protection for the surrogate mother. The informal service work consists of the exchange and commercialisation of the usage of the womb as means of production, and of producing a healthy child that constructs somebody else as social parents. This “clinical”, “emotional” regenerative work is mystified as gift economy, as only “helping” another infertile women or a childless couple while it is subjugated to the capitalist principles of valorisation, commodification and efficiency.
Being highly contested, this unique form of labour distorts the categories of mainstream economics and asks for new analytical categories which take into account with an intersectional approach the stratification of reproduction, acknowledge the surrogate mother’s agency and subjectivities by analysing it as waged labour in a highly alienated, exploitative and precarious production process that urgently requires socio-economic regulation by the state.

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Why do
States Tolerate or even Promote Informality?

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For an answer to the question why states tolerate or even promote informality, I will first turn the question around: why did states formalize labor relations and protected labor by providing workers certain work-place rights and social security. The beginnings of labor protection in Europe and Anglo-Saxon settler states are strongly related to inter-state warfare and to accommodating and controlling labor. Thus the question is: To what degree have these factors of bio-politics lost salience?

The inquiry though rooted in historical-materialism in the tradition of Gramsci and Poulantzas is also theoretically informed by Michael Mann’s emphasis on state building as territorial contestation and Ernesto Laclau’s discourse analysis.

Such a perspective places states’ behavior in the context of international hegemony which has shifted from Fordism to Neo-Liberalism at its core since the mid-1980s. During Fordism the strength of the labor movement called for compromises reinforced by the efforts to contain the Soviet Union. Although the former colonies of the core did not turn fordist, nevertheless many of them signed ILO conventions not just for being recognized as a state but mainly because organized labor had played an important role in the struggle for independence. In practice, however, protection focused mostly on state employees in continuation of the colonial state. In both the Global North and South large groups remained outside formal protection or were only marginally included though in different quantities: esp. in agriculture and women under the male bread-winner model.

Under Neo-liberal hegemony, buttressed by the US state, war making is in the hands of professionals or takes the form of civil war. Thus, less mobilization and, therefore, fewer compromises with labor are necessary. Capital enjoys a global labor pool which is materialily, legally and discursively underpinned by globalization’s infrastructure: internet, investment treaties, and discourses and conditionality of the organizations of global economic governance such as the IMF and the World Bank. As macro-economic demand can be found beyond borders, labor has become less necessary for stabilizing demand.

As labor turns again more into a commodity, the most vulnerable among workers are those without a citizen status, either legally or in the perception of dominant groups in society: illegal migrants, migrants, historically discriminated groups of which women form the largest group. The reason is that they are least represented in the state (and thus seen as least deserving state support), but also because bringing them into the formal labor market would usually necessitate more educational expenditures. Beyond capital, better paid wage earners or self-employed persons frequently uphold informality, e.g. their domestic or care workers.
For countries in most of the Global South, the transition out of agriculture is also unlikely to imitate the European/US/Australian experience because of a significantly higher population pressure. In comparison to the industrialization phase of today’s advanced economies, countries of the Global South are less able to absorb labor in the manufacturing sector for the following reasons: (1) The productivity differential is significantly higher; (2) subsidized agricultural products from the North; (3) on average better health; (4) fewer cross-border migration possibilities.
Urban Informal Markets, State and Alternative Development in India

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Workers in the urban informal sector are said to be ‘working class in embryo’ (Sanyal 1991). These workers have distinct issues and requirements from the state which are altogether different from the needs of industrial workers. Here workers face problems of employment. As workers are seen to generate sources of employment in the urban informal sector, staying unemployed is not a plausible idea for them. Instead, as Hart points out, they create or generate their own employment opportunities. Self-employed workers in the informal sector due to their entrepreneurial abilities are also said to have abilities to organise themselves into a separate political force even to the point of moving governments and bringing about political revolution. The central discussion of this paper is to discuss the role of state and politics that have performed in the process of development in context of informal sector.

While De Soto (1989) believes that state has restricted or hampered the natural development process, Portes (1994) argues that state intervention is necessary for promoting development. There are two clear alternatives towards development. De Soto argued that people choose informal path for development to avoid complex nature of regulatory governance. He emphasised least government whereas Portes discussed a system of well-defined and well-designed rules and regulations that would secure property rights which will lead to a well-functioning market economy. People do not choose the alternative; they are in fact compelled to choose and create their own alternatives (Margit and Kar 2009; Roy Chowdhury 2007). Idea of informality persists from the views of state’s failure in economic management. On the one hand, the high incidence of poverty and absence of a social welfare system, a democratic state uses the informal sector as a buffer for the poor people. On the other hand, the extra-legal occupations work as substitutes for social security and emerge as an innovative and effective re-distributive strategy. This is a paradox of development.

This study intends to understand the puzzles that are being created by the state to respond to an ever rising urban informal sector. The analysis has been drawn from interviews with 2,000 urban street vendors and key respondents from civic authorities and trade unions across 17 cities in India, by using quantitative and qualitative approaches. The role of state has become even more important in context of street vendors by passing the Street Vendors’ (Regulation of Vending and Protection of Livelihood) Act in 2014. After setting in place this legal framework, the basic characteristics of the occupation are on edge of changing. Entry to the activity is now becoming restricted, informal credit markets are being replaced by formal institutional credits, and rent seeking will be substituted by revenue collection. In the process, power relation, traditional market characteristics, bargaining power and livelihood strategy are too being restructured. Street vending is believed to operate in an extra-legal framework which implies non-compliance with the state laws. In the process of operating the activity, they enter into a political nexus with various agencies in sustaining at the market. The extra-legality of street vending can be
attributed to hierarchical bureaucratic structure of the state, its agencies, and involvement of different actors. Close coordination (or absolute coordination failure) between actors or agents regulating the activity is leading to wastage of resources.

Street vendors are the political actors who utilise their agencies to negotiate over individual interest, bonding social relationship and business (Sanyal 1991; Cross 1998). Although vendors are aware of the exploitative nature of relationship, they do not mobilise to protect self-interest or even class interest. Rather they coordinate in sustaining social relationship and their overall working life. In absence of laws and policies, different labour market institutions (Saint-Paul 2000) including formal (organisations and agency) and informal (rents in forms of bribes) are formed which help them to sustain at the market. Now the Act clearly outlines the rules of the activity is a formal institution which shall govern street vending. Therefore, at this outset, this study addresses four questions: firstly do they choose to operate outside the formal state machinery and administrative set-up or do they actually suffer because of the state’s incapacity to give them their due recognition and support in perpetuation of livelihood? Secondly, what and how do politics of market institutions interplay for street vending in existence as extra-legal activity? Thirdly, whether and how will these labour market institutions lead to a better functioning of this segment of the informal sector? And lastly, will the informal market institutions of rents perpetuate even in the presence of the legal labour market institutions (the Act)?

Vendors can be said to be extra-legal entities or outside legal boundaries as they operate or rather help forming an informal market institution of bribe payments even post Act. There are different actors involved in the process of bribes (vendors, police and civic authorities). The vendors perceive the bribes as an alternative arrangement that is the cost of being employed. Therefore, being less aware of exploitation in the hands of both formal and informal institutions, they understand that it is ‘necessary and inevitable’. Extra-legality is characterised by political negotiations between vendors, state and other non-state actors.

Total deregulated and decentralisation is harmful and result in further marginalisation. When left to the market, vendors are victims of illegal and rampant bribes and associated harassments. Leaving totally on the market forces might lead to market failure. State refers to central law-making and law implementing agency of national government. However, from the preliminary investigation, we have found that federal governments are often divided in their approaches and which result in lacunae in law implementation. At present many of the provisions of the district and municipal acts contradict and contravene the provisions of the Street Vendors’ Act. In absence of proper state response and legal frame, multiple layers of informality and illegality are perpetuated in the street vending activity.
Governing Labour Migration to the Gulf.
Addressing Informal under-currents in India and Bangladesh

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In many countries in the Gulf region, labour migration from South Asia has contributed vastly to ‘hosting’ an increasingly high number of labour migrants, at various skill levels. At the countries of origin, remittances from the gulf region have not only contributed significantly at the micro-level to subsidise these households, but also at the macro-level, where national governments have received substantial amounts of foreign currency, from highly sought petro-wealthy trade partners. At the same time, many labour migrants face considerable difficulties, both prior to their departure, as well as while working abroad. Although international labour migration is clearly regulated by various policies and legislations at both origin and destination, we would argue that there are quite a number of rather crucial loopholes regarding the governance of this vital economic sector. We epitomise these by using the naturalistic metaphor of ‘informal undercurrents’, and exemplify our arguments with case studies from India and Bangladesh.

Over the past decades, most countries in South Asia have set in place comprehensive sets of policies and legislations that regulate the modalities of how international labour migration is to be organised. These specify clear guidelines for core stakeholders from state and private sector bodies, such as manpower agencies, funding agencies, and government entities, including line ministries. Similarly, all countries in the Gulf region have passed legislations, including regulations for minimal wages, working and housing standards, and monitoring mechanisms. Given these regulations, labour migration seems to be a model sector of the economy, where multi-layered governance mechanisms guarantee a high level of formality, at both ends. Yet, rather dramatic stories about labourers working under live threatening working conditions, regularly document the high discrepancies between these formal arrangements and actual informal ones.

When addressing governance, we apply the term both as an analytical concept, as well as a policy approach. For the first, we follow the definitions by Bevier (2012). In addition, we also support these arguments with ideas from institutional economic theory, addressing the need for disaggregating interest groups, and their respective power positions. This takes up North’s argument that ‘Institutions [...] are created to serve the interests of those with the bargaining power to create new rules’ (1995, 18). Thus, we would argue that for regulating international labour migration, it is these conflicting interests that constantly aim at modifying formal arrangements, and gradually replace these by informal regulations. The latter then gradually undermine governance, bringing about what Shobhan has termed the ‘malgovernance’ of development.
For empirical evidence, the paper focuses on two countries of origin where labour migration to the Gulf countries, is highly prominent, India and Bangladesh. While from India, labour migration has increased slowly from 2.4 million (1990) to 3.1 (2000) and to above 6.8 million in 2013, they by now account for nearly half of all labour migrants from South Asia, and one third of all labour migrants. Overall figures from Bangladesh are lower (less than one million in 1990 and 3.1 million in 2013), but increases have even been more pronounced. What is of core interest for our analysis are the intrinsic interrelations between formal and informal arrangements at both, countries of origin and destination. Although both countries have put in place a comprehensive legal and institutional framework, labour migrants still need to oscillate between formal and informal arrangements. After discussing these aspect of mal-governance at the policy level, we will then identify aspects that refine our analytical understanding of governance.
Women Sub-ordination at the Workplace:
A Study of Informal Nurses and Care Workers in West Bengal (India)

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The present paper is based on a study that intends to understand changing workplace structures and dynamics of workplace relations of care workers (nurses and ayahs). It uses Marxist-Feminist approach (Engels 1884, Dalla Costa & James 1972, Hartmann 1979, Mac Kinnon 1982) in the context of a rapidly growing city of north eastern India— Siliguri (Meghalaya). The rationale behind considering Siliguri is that the city is experiencing fast urban development since 1990, particularly in terms of rise in demand for education, health care, real estate, banking, insurance, retail and so on (mainly private). In the presence of limited state assisted healthcare facilities, the city has been witnessing 400% rise in private healthcare in last two decades. These private healthcare centres are highly depending on cheap labour pool.

Until the late 1980s, the profession of nursing services was dominated by rural Bengali women who came from rural areas (neighbouring districts of North Bengal) and were found to assist doctors in hospitals and nursing homes and eventually became ‘nurses’ without having institutional training. In the wake of increased demand for private healthcare since the mid-1990s, large numbers of small, medium and large bedded hospitals are coming up and there has been a greater demand for nursing attendants. Thus post-1990, women from tribal communities and from nearby hills and dooars (foothills of Eastern Himalayas) are being attracted to this profession. This is mainly because this occupation is one of the most viable options for semi-literate women. The reasons for preferring nurses from these ethnic groups (tribal and also Nepali women) are that they are obedient, can be made to work at very low wages and ready to take up any jobs assigned to them. Bengali and Bihari women on the other hand take up work as ‘ayahs’ (informal care-givers in nursing home premises). Against this backdrop, the study focuses on the changes that are taking place in this profession in terms of employer-employees relationships, nature of work, coping strategies and power dynamics at the workplace.

Methodologically, the study is based on in-depth case case studies and life histories of 50 nurses, nursing attendants and ayahs to understand how nursing and care work are being organised, and about devolution of duties and responsibilities and relations at workplace. For understanding the change in workplace structures, mode of functioning, relations and conditions of work over time, the study additionally draws upon in-depth interviews held with 5 senior as well as retired nurses. The secondary stakeholders such as management of nursing homes and placement agents have been interviewed and their links to nursing homes have been explored.

The core finding of the study include that due to scarcity of qualified nurses in the city, most of the nursing homes have been running with the help of under-qualified nursing attendants. Previously,
women educated up to primary level (4 years of schooling) used to be recruited who worked along with doctors and learned the skills on job. They would accept wages as decided by employers, their working hours, the type of duties and ward responsibilities was decided mutually and the relationship between the owner-manager and the women was based upon mutual trust. These women would rarely leave the nursing home and seek work elsewhere as they would feel ‘empowered’ due to closeness with the owner-management.

Post 1990s, with the growth of nursing homes as private limited companies, demand for healthcare workers including nurses have risen. The preference has now shifted towards recruitment of Nepali and tribal women in sufficient numbers. Entry of Nepali and tribal women to nursing work is aided by social networks and agents at the source places. In current times, employment agencies play decisive role in placing these women in different nursing homes. Importantly, the actual care work is done by junior nursing trainees and ayahs. The workplace conditions have now become more impersonal and women who are now recruited as nurses are educated up to secondary level (10 years of schooling). Additionally they come with some basic training acquired in workshops. The women are now better aware about their rights and demand better wages. They prefer changing their workplace if wages or working conditions do not suit themselves. However their demand for higher wages is weakened by the large pool of available workers (reserve army) which always keep the wage rate low and control remains in the hands of management.

The management control over nurses extend beyond nursing home premises as their living places are provided by employers where their movement is monitored to eliminate resistance at the workplaces. In the presence of multiple levels of nursing staffs in private nursing homes (junior, semi-senior, matrons, Auxiliary Nursing Midwifery and General Nursing Midwifery), understanding organisation of nursing and care work in different institutional setup (nursing homes) becomes central to understanding the labour process. The study points out that class and ethnicity of migrant nurses subject women to greater subordination at the workplace.
Law, Space and the State

Informal Labour in the Light of Marxist State Theory and Legal Geography

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State Theory and Informal Labour are rarely discussed in the same field. What can a legally-spatially informed Marxist State Theory contribute to the debate about Informal Labour? It is obvious that every legal regulation creates boundaries that define what is considered as legitimate and formal work, thus it automatically creates zones of informality and illegitimacy. E.g. regulations of the German state that restrict the access of foreigners to the German labour market and to the German social security system are strong incentives for migrants to take up informal work – which at times benefits specific employers in the meat or construction industry that often employ informal workers.

But the issue is more complex: It is not only the case that every regulation of labour law creates its outside, but also the application and implementation of labour law itself is a highly selective social and political process. There is an uneven and combined application and implementation of law, and of labour law specifically. How this unevenness is realised, is subject to local conditions in many cases. The lack of implementation or its unevenness creates zones of informality in so-called formal employment relationships. On the one hand, the state is creating legal spaces, and the corresponding non-spaces of informality. But also the spaces of the state itself are uneven: the Special Economic Zone as a phenomenon – the State itself is inaugurating exemptions from labour law in a legal space – stands rather as a symbol for a more encompassing logic of how law and space are intertwined. And, within one such space as a factory, or a workshop, often different legal situations overlap one another. So how to make sense out of this mess, that serves to deconstruct the idea of a unitary and equal law?

Legal geography made various proposals to deal with this unevenness of law in the past years. It starts from the idea that every law is located in a place, and every space has a legal significance. I want to go one step further with Daniel Delaney’s notion of the workplace-as-place (2014), as a space under the condition of a radical power asymmetry which is at the centre of most people’s lives. Delaney defines the workplace as a site of “authoritarian territoriality”. Notwithstanding a bunch of empirical variations, I would define five types of legal-spatial zones that circumscribe the workplace-as-place: 1) Highly regulated work, due to a high amount of control of employees and/or union presence, 2) Formal work with low regulation, due to lack of control of employees and/or unions, low resources and/or lack of political motivation of state agencies, containing informal elements within formality, 3) Special Economic Zones as legally regulated lack of labour law, 4) Informal work with almost no regulation, due to lack of legal requirements, or sometimes as the immediate effect of other legal regulation (e.g. on illegal immigration), 5) Informal work that is in contradiction with law, e.g. slavery, prostitution, organised crime, unorganised crime or child labour and that might prompt state intervention.
Obviously, informal work in Zone 4 and 5 cannot be located in this setting without reference to the other zones, and not without reference to the State – even its characteristic is a negative one, since it is only what it is not, not formal, i.e. supposedly not regulated by law. While the informal work in Zone 5 is obviously regulated by the State to some extent, we turn to that informal work that does not seem to be regulated at all: In order to capture its specificity, recourse to another notion of legal geography, legal pluralism and the existence of other legalities beyond the law of the state, might be productive (von Benda-Beckmann et al. 2009) – at least for a country like India in which the bulk of work is defined by a negative definition of not being formal. But, obviously, the 92 % of informal work in India is regulated by some form of legality, even it is not the legality of the state.

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Processes of Control, Possibilities for Resistance:
The State, the Labour Process and Informal Migrant Workers in South India

Jonathan Pattenden
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This paper focuses on labouring class households working at the margins of global production networks as highly segmented agricultural labourers and migrant construction workers in the ‘global city’ of Bangalore. Using a three-way labour control regime framework focused on i) the labour process, ii) how the state shapes the regulatory context to underpin informality and precarity, and iii) the broader dynamics of contemporary capitalist accumulation, the paper seeks to better understand labourer’s socio-economic and socio-political conditions, and the absence/presence of labouring class organisation.

The paper proceeds in four steps. Firstly it provides an overview of the different ways in which labour is controlled in agriculture and on the construction sites that workers migrate to (debt, sharecropping arrangements, and remote control through piece-rate work and intermediaries). Secondly it links poor working conditions and high rates of exploitation not only to informality and precarity, but also to caste-based and spatial aspects of segmentation, and to the global dynamics of capitalist competition. Thirdly it outlines the ways in which the state actively contributes to processes of informalisation by failing to implement labour regulations and social security legislation, and by weakening the scope of existing laws such as the Labour Contract Act and the Factories Act.

Finally it provides an overview of where and how construction workers in Bangalore are organising to advance their interests. Although India’s labour control regime constrains informal precarious labour from organising in multiple ways, the uneven tightening of labour markets and pockets of activism offer some possibilities for pro-labouring class organisation. These are enhanced both by the growing size of India’s labouring class (and of the labouring class internationally), and, potentially, by locating construction sites within increasingly globalised processes of accumulation. The paper draws on longitudinal and recent (2016) fieldwork in the state of Karnataka to support its arguments.
Thinking beyond trade unions: Exploring informality, industrial conflict and forms of worker collaboration in the Delhi National Capital Region, India

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This paper proposes to do a close reading of industrial conflict in the Delhi National Capital Region (Delhi NCR) between 2005-2015 and explore the forms of worker collaboration that led to it. Delhi NCR includes manufacturing hubs of Faridabad, Gurgaon and Manesar in the state of Haryana. The paper argues that an analysis of these collaborations suggest that under present conditions of informalisation of organised sector employment the trade union form has limited scope for successful intervention, and is recognised as such by informal workers. Instead, one sees evidence of forms of worker self-activity that not only challenges the assumption that the ‘problem’ of informality can be addressed through unionism, but also allows us to question the power balance which is always already assumed to be heavily skewed against informalised workforces on factory floors.

Within Delhi NCR, especially in Faridabad and Gurgaon, the informalisation of organised sector employment has accompanied the expansion of wage labour in informal enterprises. A study of the history of Maruti Suzuki India Limited (MSIL), the largest manufacturer of India’s passenger cars and one of the earliest big industrial projects pursued keenly by the state of Haryana in Gurgaon (and later in Manesar), reveals that it was the first company to institute structural changes in the production process that set the informalisation ball rolling in organised sector manufacturing. The state of Haryana worked closely with the industry to enable this. Existing academic literature links these changes to the growing industrial conflict in the past decade.

This radical restructuring of workforces and conditions of work by firms led to some turbulence in the terrain of formation of formalised channels of representing workers interests - that is, unions. The vast population of temporary workers lie outside the ambit of the existing legal structure for industrial relations; they cannot be a part of company unions as the Industrial Disputes Act only recognises permanent workers as ‘workmen’. One finds in the mainstream and alternative labour activist media many instances of industrial conflict that have been attributed to companies denying the right to freedom of association and collective bargaining, such as that of Maruti Manesar 2012 and Honda Tapukara 2016.

Scholars have demonstrated the manner in which the informalisation of organised sector labour has shaped the collective response of workers - with many lockouts occurring, along with ‘wildcat’ strikes organised without the involvement of formally-registered trade unions. Literature and activists constantly point out the inability of major trade unions and traditional union movements to grapple with the problem of informal labour. The mode of engagement with labour lies largely restricted to the familiar terrain of permanent workers and their issues. Permanent workers and their unions often side with the management. In deed the relations between permanent and temporary workers remain complex, with instances of solidarity alternating with betrayal being a common story.
How then does one frame the problem of informal labour in factory spaces, so to speak? Framing the problem around the lack of unionisation is common to a lot of labour literature produced by scholars and activists. Indeed, many of the cases of documented industrial unrest seem to be directly related to companies repressing the right to association and collective bargaining, which is seemingly needed to represent workers’ issues to the management and negotiate for changes. And yet this seems to be at direct odds with the conversations overheard in the past few months during fieldwork where not much faith is reposed in unions or organisations of any kind.

It is a richly textured thing, this experience of workers, and experiences seem to have led to a strong disavowal of and suspicion of all forms of formal organisations, including unions. Whilst many of the problems they articulate—such as that of wages and work conditions—fall under the traditional area of intervention of unions, the fact remains that the process of informalisation and contractualisation of labour has introduced several elements that takes ‘problems’ much beyond the scope of unions, even if they functioned ideally. Taking the legal route to address grievances seems to have very little meaning when the industrial sector is characterised by laws that seem to exist in violation, and those that do exist are not relevant to a majority of the workforce. The system of representation, which is what unions are based on, does not encourage collective self-activity and in present times is especially vulnerable to cooption by management.

What makes it even more challenging and interesting is that often the source of workers’ discontent cannot be pinpointed, reduced to demands, and therefore formalised. A workers’ newspaper, the Faridabad Majdoor Samachar (FMS) holds that the question ‘what is it that workers want’ puzzles companies who find that extending concessions do not ‘solve’ the problem. An analysis of some recent riots/mass protests by some labour activists finds that many of them were without clear demands. This challenges the notion of companies knowing exactly how to manage and manipulate informal workers. FMS forces one to contend with the possibility that the concept of unions itself could be bankrupt and meaningless today. There are stories of how workers in Manesar and other industrial zones do ‘make up’ work before a planned strike. And of how unions ask workers to do extra work before a planned action so that production does not get affected. Posited against this are cases of ‘illegal’ worker self-activity on shop floors and across factories that have been far more successful in getting factory management to accede to demands.

This paper will thus attempt to make sense of the seemingly contradictory situation that arises when one the one hand recent industrial conflicts have had at least something to do with the denial of the right to formation and registration of unions, and on the other, where workers communicate distrust in and shun the very form. The paper will look at alternate forms of actual worker self-activity that have not only been more effective in advocating for workers on shop floors but also articulate more effectively the experience of being a factory worker today.
How informality works?

The making and management of urban labour in western India

Maansi Parpiani

How informality works?

The making and management of urban labour in western India

Maansi Parpiani

This paper looks at the figure of the ‘urban informal worker’ as the prism to investigate the relationships between the city, the state and the worker. In other words, it seeks to identify the intersections between city making and labour management processes that particularly define different kinds of informality and their peculiar state – labour relations. Taking the specific case of construction workers in the satellite city of Navi Mumbai, the paper discusses the ways in which informality of the workers comes to be defined in different state institutions – nascent municipalities, erstwhile gram panchayats, district offices, labour commissions and courts.

It makes two arguments: As the city expands to rural landscapes, it variously transforms existing villagers into urban informal workers, while also attracting migrants from other locations to participate in the burgeoning construction industry. In this, not only do the differences of local versus outsider mark social identities and relations, they also define spheres of influence within the large and loosely defined informal workforce. Focusing on the relatively ignored intra-state migration to Mumbai and its surrounding areas, the paper argues that caste, regional identities from within Maharashtra and migration cycles inform the segmentation of the large construction labour market. For instance, while locals often emerge as big contractors or even builders, migrants from western Maharashtra cluster as mathadis (manual workers) at the port. More recent or seasonal migrants (especially from drought-prone districts) form the lowest rung of masons, plumbers, electricians and painters.

These categories of work are further solidified through differential protection and welfare measures extended to the different workers. Combining research from legislative assembly debates and ethnographic material, the paper undertakes a comparative look at the implementation in Navi Mumbai of the Maharashtra Mathadi Hammal & other Manual Workers (Regulation of Employment & Welfare) Act 1969 and the centrally legislated Building & Other Workers (Regulation of Employment and Conditions of Service) Act, 1996. Both were formed on a tripartite framework of ‘the labour-state-employer’, yet the former has witnessed more success, both in terms of state institutionalisation and worker solidarities. The mediations between labour-state relations through the interventions of new unions, NGOs, political parties and religious organisations form the second part of the paper. It argues that the nature of the state’s engagement with those that are characterised as informal, is never direct and necessitates the presence of a range of intermediaries. Furthermore, those employed in these services face a labour precariousness of their own- their work being largely voluntary and/or contractual and poorly remunerated. Discussing the labour activism in Navi Mumbai, the paper argues for analyses of state-labour relations to include labour-intermediary relations, that are instrumental in shaping the terms and content of the former.
Informality and State Policy: An Assessment of Shifts in Legislation, Jurisprudence and Organising in the Construction Sector in India

Rohan Dominic Mathews

(CeMIS, Univ. of Göttingen)

The informal-formal or the unorganised-organised binary has been the basis for assessing the labour force in the country. However, until the formation of the National Commission for Enterprises in the Unorganized Sector (NCEUS), there had been no intensive attempt within the government to determine the quantity and character of informal work in a positive sense, i.e., an evaluation of nature of work in terms of the dynamics of informalisation as a process. However, the scope of legislation and government policy that recognised labour relations, not necessarily the labour force, was directed towards the formal sector, with industrial relations and social security largely focused on the formal sector. However, over the last three decades, a legislative and policy shift has taken place, where there is a realisation of the vast informal workforce, and the nature of labour relations that obtain within these enterprises. This policy shift takes its most clear form in the reports of the NCEUS, which was formed in 2004 under the first Congress-led UPA I Government.

The distinction between unorganised sector and unorganised employment is one significant outcome of the NCEUS, which permitted analysing a continuum of informality across the unorganised and organised sectors. This shift in definition is an important one; it has also led to an understanding, quite often explicitly promoted by the private sector that the vast number of labour laws has in fact been a core reason for the expansion of the informal sector. Further, the argument that informalisation of labour is a general process infecting even the formal sector has been attributed to the ‘archaic’ labour laws. While this realisation of informalisation in the formal sector is a relevant one, it also marks a distinctive break from earlier analyses that saw informal employment as one part of a spectrum towards formal employment. However, if we were to accept Breman’s critique of the dualist economy, and recognise the innate linkages between the formal and the informal sector, the process of informalisation needs to be qualified with reference to particular sectors, and, one important marker in this qualification is the relationship with the state.

This paper seeks to evaluate an understanding of informality in sectors that have been historically seen to contain both an informal workforce as well as informal work relations, albeit in a formal and profitable sector: Building and Construction. The Construction sector in India, in terms of the nature of the workforce as well as work relations, has been seen to showcase informality at several levels, whether in the layers of contracting and subcontracting in terms of recruitment, the lack of active regulation in terms of safety and occupational health measures, the nature of wages and social security benefits available, and the lack of organised unions or collective bargaining mechanisms. Several studies point to exceptions in terms of any of the above mentioned features, whether in terms of decent wages
and working conditions, or attempts at unionisation of Construction workers (Agarwala 2013, Van Der loop 1996). However, over the last two decades, the shift towards social security within state policy has implications for the manner in which construction workers are addressed, and could provide a glimpse in the shift in state policy vis-à-vis the informal sector and informal employment.

The paper seeks to showcase the complexity of informality within the construction sector and shifts taking place, based on the following three aspects: First, to showcase certain legislative shifts from the Contract Labour (Regulation with Reference & Abolition) Act, 1970, to the Building and Other Construction Workers (Regulation of Employment and Working Conditions) Act, 1996 or the Unorganized Workers Social Security Act 2008. While the contract labour Act of 1970 was an attempt at regulating and regularising contractual work, the remaining two acts attempt to recognise the nature of informal work, but, eventually shift towards a state-based social security system, which provides some welfare, in spite, existing working conditions. Second, to indicate shifts in jurisprudence (obviously a reflection of existing legislative shifts) from the ASIAD workers case (1982) which deemed non-payment of minimum wages as ‘forced labour’, to the recent series of Supreme Court judgements on petitions filed by the National Campaign Committee on Construction Labour (NCC-CL), which appear to mark a shift towards ensuring proper provision of welfare benefits under the Building and Other Construction Workers (Regulation of Employment and Working Conditions) Act, 1996 (BOCWA), as opposed to concerns of regulating work at the workplace. Third, to compare (based on available documents) the Tamil Maanila Kattida Thozilalar Panchayat Sangham (TMKTPS), a Construction workers trade union formed in 1982 and the Nirmana Mazdoor Panchayat, which is currently active in Delhi and Mumbai among construction workers, especially with reference to the enforcement of BOCWA, 1996. This comparison will seek to situate these two attempts at unionising in order to assess the relationship between unionising attempts and state policy, especially with reference to the construction sector.

Therefore, informalisation as a process, especially in the formal sector is a concrete reality, and state policy has attempted to ‘streamline’ labour laws to regularise this process of informalisation. However, informality as a feature of the Indian economy precedes this ‘informalisation’ process, and in order to better understand and assess the nature of state policy, it is important to recognise the active shifts in response to already existing informal work and informal work relations that existed in the construction sector. This paper is an attempt in this direction.
The Politics of Entrepreneurship:
Territoriality, Livelihood and Urbanization in Contemporary Rajarhat

Saikat Maitra
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In 1995, the Communist Party of India (Marxist) – CPI(M) – led government in the Indian state of West Bengal acquired over 3500 hectares of wetlands and paddy fields for the New Town urbanisation project in Rajarhat on the north-eastern peripheries of Kolkata. This land, acquired under the ‘Eminent Domain’ provision of the colonial era Land Acquisition Act of 1894, was primarily divided into smallholdings supporting a large subsistence farmer community. The New Town plan documents envisioned a dazzling future city with ‘global living standards’ and clean industries soon replacing the ‘primitive’ agricultural economy of the place. What was, however, left unstated were any definite provisions for re-settlement of the three thousand subsistence farmers who lost their land tenures because of New Town.

The West Bengal government instead emphasised the need for local youth populations to become self-reliant and entrepreneurial through the creation of several co-operative syndicates for supplying construction materials for the upcoming city. In contemporary Rajarhat, however, state visions of fostering entrepreneurship have morphed into pervasive allegations of organised crime against the syndicates who are viewed as controlling the construction material business through a combination of extortion, violence and political patronage. Tracking through the recent history of the New town urbanisation project in Rajarhat, my paper seeks to explore ethnographically how neo-liberal ideologies of entrepreneurship and self-reliance came to be differentially translated ‘on the ground’ through a complex nexus between several factors. Such factors include for instance the political compulsions of governmental agencies in controlling territories, the survival needs of dispossessed farming communities increasingly reliant on precarious and informal livelihood practices, networks of money allied with the construction material transactions and the economic interests of real-estate corporations associated with the township project.

Research overview: There are currently over thirty co-operative syndicates spread over New Town Rajarhat with each co-operative consisting of three to four hundred registered members of primarily unemployed young men. These members share yearly profits on supplying construction materials in proportion to their paid-up capitals in the co-operatives. Informal affiliations with either of the two major political parties in Rajarhat – the CPI(M) or the Trinamool Congress – is critical for the everyday functioning of these syndicates. Political loyalties are, however, transitory depending on how helpful they are in procuring contracts and shielding the co-operatives from the police and governmental institutions in the frequent cases of legal violations while garnering supply orders. These switching of political ties by the co-operatives are primarily strategies for what I describe in the paper as ‘organised networks of territoriality’ whereby syndicates maintain distinct spaces for controlling networks of
money and livelihood resources for its members within New Town. Such networks of territoriality are moreover never stable or fixed but are often affirmed through cycles of negotiations and even violent confrontations between various syndicates, state agencies and real-estate corporations. This instability and violence linked to real-estate and livelihood rights in Rajarhat today is an ironic contrast to the original New Town master-plan which predicted a vibrant growth of clean industries like ITES and Call Centers in a perfectly designed, middle-class urban conglomerate. The future of the city seems far less certain now with flagging buyer interest in the New Town housing stock amidst an atmosphere of political instability, fear and violence.

The current fate of New Town highlights two intersecting but distinct processes characterising capitalist accumulation in contemporary India. On one hand, recurrent appropriations of land resources for mineral extraction or urbanisation have been undergoing in ‘underdeveloped’ regions populated by communities like indigenous groups or subsistence farmers. These has led to a vast and increasingly precarious community whose livelihood now depends on informal forms of daily wage labour. On the other hand, the pastoral power of neoliberal governmentality in India tries to mitigate the social costs of such dispossession through welfare and restitution of affected regions. Critical to the ‘ameliorative’ politics of governmentality are not only compensatory schemes like guaranteed work-days but also the re-molding of marginalised subjects into economic citizens by inculcating principles of entrepreneurship and flexibility for surviving social precariousness. This combination of dispossession/governmentality today intervenes primarily at specific regional levels on the basis of their strategic advantages (like of natural resources) and statistical parameters of development/underdevelopment.

For instance, the Rajarhat-New Town project itself is a nodal point in a more expansive process to transform the agrarian economy in the entire deltaic region in southern West Bengal from the 1990s. The distinct wetland ecology and land resources of the delta which had fostered this economy for centuries was now perceived by the state and corporate entities as ‘unproductive’ and in need of modernisation through systematic urban development programmes. But what happens when subject populations slotted to be modernised in a place like Rajarhat prove reluctant to embrace the ‘benevolent’ advances of a caring governmentality promising social progress? In Rajarhat a neat fit between dispossession and recompense by the state seems empirically untenable today. Dispossession has rather prompted affected bodies to redress their grievances through forms of appropriations of territorial rights and networks of money circulated as real-estate capital.

In this paper, I foreground how entrepreneurship – as a central tenet of neoliberal ideology – has not only permeated subaltern populations in the context of land dispossession but has also re-configured their relationship with both state and corporate agencies. Discourses of entrepreneurship, proximity to large capital investments and ability to negotiate with political groups have now terms of informality in the context of Rajarhat – albeit a violent and predatory one. In terms of methodology, this paper emerges from on-going ethnographic fieldwork in Rajarhat-New Town. Interviews and participant observation research amongst dispossessed farmers and current co-operative syndicate members have been the main research method.
Ushering in the New: A View from the pages of Faridabad Majdoor Samachar

Sheena Jain

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Basing itself mainly on reports and analyses that have appeared in the monthly workers’ broadsheet published in Hindi called Faridabad Majdoor Samachar (FMS), this paper argues that there has been a certain ripening of conditions conducive to the creation of radical social transformations within the milieu of the industrial working class, which is often overlooked by mainstream discourses.

By engaging seriously, from a political economy perspective, with the political contents of the struggles of the global working class taking shape on the ground, one finds that challenges to the power of capital seem almost to be becoming the norm, rather than exceptions. Moving away from calls by parties and unions to capture the state in order to cater to the needs of workers, there are several instances of what may be called workers’ self activities, minus leaders and unions, often questioning the very existence of a system of wage labour and the status of being ‘majdoors’, and sometimes almost mysteriously coordinated without any apparently visible means (perhaps by what some have called a ‘morphic resonance’ emanating from the fact of the workers’ very being, as proletarians, or as products of an orchestration of class habitus: the performance of an orchestra without a conductor: in terms borrowed from Pierre Bourdieu’s theory of practice). This paper will include specific examples of such events and activities, from various factories in and around Delhi, as well as from Nagpur, Bangalore, and also from Bangladesh and Kampuchea.

The structural transformations or restructurings in the arena of industrial production that have occurred concurrently with the introduction of electronics in the production process, have been accompanied by significant changes in the composition of the work force, including an incremental rise in the percentage of temporary workers, who by now constitute an overwhelming majority relative to the rapidly dwindling numbers of permanent workers, the world over. This paper will try to unravel the links between the predominance of what may be termed ‘informal labour’ in the work force - a central concern of this conference – and the new forms of working class activities noted above, since the changes in the composition of the labour force seem to be conducive to the appearance of certain forms of struggle and their actual and/or potential efficacy. Further, while specifying the particular features of structural transformations or restructurings, the paper suggests that they be regarded as an important dimension of the dynamics of the process of the development of capitalism in our times, underlining the fact that it is this process that has, in turn, influenced policy makers and shaped certain policies introduced by states and/or managements, which form the core of what is termed neo-liberalism in current literature. This argument will therefore seek to modify the way in which certain features of contemporary working class and capital relations are viewed - that is, not primarily as consequences and effects of the adoption of certain policies, but rather as agents within a dynamic process of the development of capitalism that has influenced the formulation and adoption of certain policies.
The structural transformations will be viewed within the context of the two main categories usually invoked to describe the process of the reproduction of the system, namely, of labour power itself, including its deployment, reproduction, and ultimate replacement, and of the space of work, referring to the question of labour at the point of production. As regards the first, the emergence of an increasing number of temporary workers has already been noted. Among the other new elements with consequences for the nature of the deployment etc. of labour power, is the appearance of smaller and more dispersed units of production and of other related industrial processes; the frequent movement of workers from one unit or factory to another; the rapid turnover of new entrants and entries in companies; as well as the frequency and rapidity of the migration of workers, between villages, towns, and cities, as well as from one country to another.

Significantly, as the reports in FMS suggest, it is in part due to these changes that we find in the growth of ‘informal labour’ a greater rather than lesser potential for the emergence of struggles that are a positive contribution to processes of radical social transformations. That workers are no longer hemmed in and restricted by considerations of loyalty to particular companies and managements, and often, in fact, especially among the younger workers, have a devil-may-care attitude towards their work and the rules imposed by the management; that the possibilities of horizontal links between workers are strengthened by their frequent movements in space and time to workplaces which are geographically dispersed and involve numerous interactions with a greater number of co-workers than was previously the case; the exposure to varied environments and cultural contexts, conducive to the creation of better social skills of communication and adaptation (further enhanced by the ease of using current technological means such as computers and mobile phones): these are some of the relevant changes.

Significant, too, is the evidence amongst workers of a growing disillusionment with vanguardism and with various forms of representation, including the role of leaders and trade unions, and towards a questioning of the very basis of their existence as wage workers within a system of wage labour, as if it is an inviolable fact of life. This paper will attempt to convey these trends, by giving examples drawn from FMS reports of what are termed ‘deoccupations’ as have taken place in the Maruti-Suzuki factory in Manesar as well as in several other factories in the NCR region; of leaderless initiatives and their successes, including, very significantly, a growing spirit of audacious anti-authoritarianism among women factory workers in particular; and an overall rejection of a limited economistic perspective which unions continue to try to prop up in defence of their own existence, but in a milieu of their actual and perceived irrelevance, even as issues of economic betterment and improvements in working conditions, having an immediacy which cannot be ignored, are being addressed by workers, but more likely than before, without managements successfully deploying intermediaries to manipulate negotiations and outcomes.

In so far as these new forms of struggle are emerging within an overall context of a system whose dysfunctionality and weakness is evident in more ways than one, permeating not just the realm of industrial production, but the entire social fabric, and manifest in attempts to control various segments and sections and classes by stepping up repressive measures (witness the commandos stationed at the Maruti factory, the fondness for CCTV cameras in all imaginable spaces, and the desperation that lurks behind the phenomenon of moral policing), - they seem to be just the kind of crystallisation of energy that is capable of ushering in something new, and very welcome.
Regulation, Informalisation and Female Work Participation in the Colonial and Post-Colonial Period: A Case Study of Beedi Rolling Industry in Malabar

Suramya T.K.
(IIT Madras, Chennai)

The umbrella term informal sector covers a wide variety of labour relations and conditions of work. Within the informal sector, certain group of workers are less visible and more vulnerable than other categories. Home based workers fall into this category, mainly because of the fact that a large chunk of this group are 'women and work in not very clearly designated business places' (Unni and Uma 2003). In traditional industries such as weaving, beedi rolling, coir making, cashew processing etc., subcontracting has become the major production strategy through which the employers reduce the cost of production. This has become a prominent method of extracting cheap labour from women and children. Low levels of educational qualification and skills, prevalent social taboos, burden of domestic work and care activities, lack of access to markets and resources etc. are some of the major reasons for women’s participation in home based work.

Beedi rolling is one of the oldest traditional industries in the Malabar region of Kerala, which is spread across some major centres of present day Palakkad, Kannur, Malappuram, Thalassery and Kasaragod districts. When we trace back the origin of this industry in the early 20th century, it started in the factory-based organised sector. But with the introduction of the Factories Act of 1937, in Malabar, this kind of factory-based production began to change and slowly the beedi rolling started shifting to the unorganised sector, mostly to small branches which are decentralised production units. This shift in the beedi production from factories to the decentralised branches resulted in the non-applicability of labour laws in regulating the capital-labour relation. But at the same time in other parts of the erstwhile Madras presidency, with the commencement of the Factories Act of 1937, the production shifted to household units. The houses of the workers became the new production units and the intermediaries became the mediators between the factory owners and the workers.

This led to the increased female work participation in beedi rolling and also new issues emerged such as the exploitation of workers by the contractors, extended working hours, abysmal wage levels etc. This class of middlemen in the home-based beedi production refused to provide any kind of legally compulsory protection to these workers. Thus we can understand that the whole idea of home-based beedi production is primarily to reduce the production cost through extracting cheap labour from the vulnerable groups such as woman and children. Having talked about these general developments in the Madras presidency, in Malabar, this phase of home-based production came into existence only in the much later period, as an outcome of the post-independence pro-labour legislations, mainly the enactment of the Kerala Beedi and Cigar Workers (Conditions of Employment) Act of 1968.
This paper attempts an analysis of the process of informali
sation in the beedi industry in Malabar, starting with the enactment of the Factories Act of 1937 and the process of feminisation in the post-independence period with the introduction of industry specific legislation – the Kerala Beedi and Cigar Workers Act of 1968. This study primarily tries to unravel the factors behind the transition of beedi industry from an organised factory based structure to a more unorganised home-based working style as a result of the legal intervention of the state. Further, the study will be also focusing on the challenges and issues of home-based work in the beedi rolling industry and the impact of state intervention on the working conditions. Along with some primary field level data the paper will be largely based on the secondary sources such as the various reports of the labour commissions and government records, Acts, memoirs of workers and trade union leaders, newspaper articles, trade union records, other relevant books and studies in this area.

The first section of the paper will be dealing with the origin, growth and factory-based working structure of the beedi industry in Malabar. The next section of the paper will be analysing the introduction and impact of the Factories Act of 1937 and how it led to the disintegration of factory system in beedi rolling. The interest here is to explore the reasons behind the branching out of the workshops and its continuation as male work, while in other parts of the province women were employed and the production was organised in households to maximise profit. Then the following section will deal with the post-colonial industry specific legislation – the Beedi and Cigar Workers Act of 1968, which eventually resulted in the female dominated home-based production structure. The last section of the paper will analyse how the shift in the beedi production from factories to the households had resulted in the feminisation of work in the beedi rolling and the major challenges faced by this industry. In other words, the attempt is to explore the links between the increased participation of women in homebased beedi rolling and the poor wage and working conditions.

References
Domestic Workers – Informality, Flexibility, and Mobility

Samita Sen
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In the past few decades, there has been increasing visibility of domestic workers in many countries across the world. In India, numbers of domestic workers has been increasing and there is increasing emigration of women domestic workers to other countries. Moreover, India has been among countries resistant to regulation in this sector.

While most sources agree that the numbers are increasing, the informal nature of employment has rendered any accurate estimate difficult. In 2009-10, the NSSO counted 2.52 million domestic workers, this increased in 2011-2012 to 3.9 million out of which 2.6 million were women and 1.3 million were men. There are other estimates, of which ILO, NGO and trade union figures vary between 7 to 50 million and all sources agree that the majority are women. One recent estimate suggests that 23 per cent of women workers in West Bengal are domestic workers (Chakravarty and Chakravarty 2016). Various studies have shown that for poor urban women, domestic work is an immensely significant occupation. In part as a result of the intervention of the ILO and in part because of expected political dividends, domestic workers have very recently begun to command the attention of policy makers and trade unions. This paper will focus on West Bengal, specifically the city of Kolkata, and is based on a recent research project conducted at the School of Women’s Studies, Jadavpur University (2013-2015).

The twin aspects of feminisation and informality - the nature of the worker and the work- has in recent years defined the contours of paid domestic work. Generally speaking, domestic workers could be defined as either informal or formal depending on the characteristics of employment in different contexts. For instance, in some countries, such as South Africa, certain categories of domestic workers are counted in the formal sector, even though they are distressingly ill paid. They are enumerated in employment statistics, often covered by labour laws, not regarded as illegal and are not included in campaigns against the informal sector (Potts 2008). In the Indian context, most of paid domestic work is in the informal sector, which is to say, contracts are verbal, perceived as unskilled, commanding low wages, unregulated working conditions, with low entry and exit barriers, not covered by labour laws or social security measures.

There has been some movement in the last few years- domestic workers have been covered by minimum wage legislation in nine states; there has been sector-specific legislation in three states; the growth of placement agencies has led to some measure of organisation; in one state there is law in place to regulate the agencies; in most states, there is the beginnings of associations and trade unions and increasing lobbying for more state regulation. Kundu and Mohanan suggest a process of ‘formal informalisation’ given the decline in the rate of casual employment and the simultaneous increase in the rate of self-employed and regular workers. The greater availability of regular employment, they argue,
indicates some amount of formalisation of informal activities. Many of the rapidly growing sectors in urban economies such as small scale manufacturing, trade, commerce and entertainment activities have shown this trend of ‘formal informalisation’. There is also a trend towards an extension of the net of state regulation, which is witnessed in several sectors within the erstwhile somewhat undifferentiated informal sector such as construction, vending, transport sector workers and so on.

Ritajyoti Bandopadhyay (2015) prefers the term ‘un-informalisation’ to distinguish this process from the very different formalisation undertaken in large-scale industry in late colonial and early independent India. It has been argued that such processes are mutually beneficial- registration and taxes benefit the state and facilitate governance, legal and social protection and support services, however rudimentary, can only improve the lot of low paid informal sector workers. According to Martha Chen (2012), for informal wage workers, formalisation could mean obtaining a formal wage job or formalising their current job with a secure contract, workers’ benefits, membership in formal trade union and social security. For domestic workers, minimum wages, registration and social security will mean an extent of formalisation (Kundu and Mohanan n.d.).

The paper proposes to examine these changes in the context of Kolkata and there are clearly major implications. The paper focuses on three elements of work as the title suggests: informality, flexibility and mobility. Informality: In case of state regulation and collectivisation, West Bengal, far from leading the way, lags considerably behind. Successive state governments have refused to include domestic workers in the minimum wages schedule, despite directives from the central government. At present, several trade unions have applied for registration, but the Labour Department is quoting the definition of ‘trade’ in the Act to refuse all comers. Nevertheless, wages have improved, claims to annual bonus more widely recognised, although the number of holidays may vary, the principle is now accepted by many employers.

Flexibility: Even though it is impossible to find data that disaggregates different arrangements within domestic work, our micro-study suggests that the increase in numbers have been disproportionately in the segment variously called ‘part-time’ or ‘live-out’, which indicates workers, who live in their own homes, and work for part of the day in one or more employer households. For the purpose of this paper, these are called ‘day workers’, who tend to be less susceptible to the values of dependent relationships and are therefore willing to bargain for better conditions. In this segment, despite the high degree of informality, there are also some contrary tendencies.

Mobility: There is considerable mobility within the different segments within domestic service. Workers appear to shift between live-in and day work depending on availability of jobs, level of wages and their own living arrangements. Very young girls (as young as 7 years age) may come from villages to work as live-in workers in the city and they move between village and city, in and out of domestic work jobs several times in their lives. There are multiple migrations and multiple shifts across segments of the domestic work market. The demand for flexibility (and perhaps the rising wages) has also given rise to changing arrangements within specific segments.
Service Transactions and the Locus of Labour

Questions Concerning the Monetisation of Mobility and Location


(Univ. of California, Berkeley)

In this paper I will focus on four processes emerging as significant to public transport in New Delhi. First, the significance and import of the underlying technical aspects of the systems on which these new labour organisation and deployment processes are built – here, I will discuss the import of GPS and GPRS signal drop within commercial transactions around the measurement of distance travelled. Second, deployment of new technologies of measurement give rise to new questions of how to determine what constitutes fairness and what constitutes cheating, and how the space of work is shaped to address these – here, I will discuss the distinction between odometer and GPS based measurement for trip fare calculation. Third, new possibilities of hailing vehicles from longer distances, hailing through broadcast to a number of vehicles simultaneously, and tracking their movement and estimate time of arrival present certain issues for the representation of the relation of the one seeking service to those obligated to provide it – here, I will discuss how the design of apps aggregates a number of providers as equally subject to the call of the client, and how it differs from a system in which the client approaches providers serially. Lastly, where monetisation of app based interactions is common, especially through advertisement and promotions, interesting efforts to combine commercial and social goals are emerging – here, I will look at the “de-monetisation” of social mobility issues usually linked to income levels or social entitlements through the creation of institutional linkages between small-scale commercial enterprises and a variety of organisations working on education and social welfare broadly conceived, to secure access to social entitlements for those who participate in the commercial activity.
List of participants (and contact details)

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Bio sketches of Participants

a) The organisers:

**Bino Paul** is the host of this International Workshop at the Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS). He has been based at TISS as a full professor from 2011 onwards, after having been an Associate Professor and an Lecturer there (from 2004-07 and 2001-2004 respectively). For a few years (2004-2007) he was Assistant Professor at the TA Pai Management Institute, Manipal.

His education includes a Ph D in Economics (2005) at the Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Bombay and an M. Phil (Planning and Development), at the Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, Indian Institute of Technology, (IIT) Bombay in 1997, as well as an M.A. in Development Economics (1995), at the Department of Economics, University of Calicut, India.

**Nicole Mayer-Ahuja** is a German labour sociologist and university professor at the University of Goettingen, and Director of the Sociological Research Institute (SOFI). During the last years, her research has focused on the history of precarious employment in West Germany, with a special emphasis on women cleaners in private companies, private households, and the public sector; on new forms of work organisation and control in the cultural industries; or on Indo-German project work in IT-companies, between transnational corporate strategies and localized scenarios of reproduction. In theoretical terms, she explores historical and transnational perspectives on work and on labour regulation, at the corporate as well as the political level.

b) The Module Coordinators of CIAS:MP TM 2

Ravi Ahuja is Module Coordinator of CIAS:MP Thematic Module 2: Labour as a Political Category and one of the core initiators of the ICAS:MP research network. He is the head of the research group ‘Modern Indian History’ at the Centre for Modern Indian Studies (CeMIS) of Georg-August-University at Göttingen, where he joined as a founding member in 2009.

Ravi Ahuja has worked on various aspects of India’s social history from 18th to 20th century including urban history, the history of infrastructure and the social history of war. His research interests have increasingly moved towards contemporary history. Current research projects examine the social history of South Asian seafarers and the emergence of a labour-centred social policy in mid-twentieth century India.

After teaching at the South Asia Institute in Heidelberg and conducting research at the Centre for Modern Oriental Studies in Berlin he was appointed Professor of Modern South Asian History at the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) in London.

Ravi favours research-oriented modes of teaching. CeMIS’s Modern Indian History research group offers a broad spectrum of courses that reflects the vivid and diverse historiography on South Asian societies. Apart from historical survey courses for first-year undergraduate students, our teaching covers themes of social and economic history like urban history, gender history, the history of technology and medicine, the history of social movements or the social history of war.

Rana Beha taught history at Deshbandhu College, University of Delhi. He also held teaching assignments at Cornell University, Syracuse University and Oberlin College, USA.

Rana also was a Fellow at the Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, New Delhi; at the South Asia Centre at Cambridge University, Re:Work, Work and Human Life Cycle in Global History, Humboldt University, Berlin; Centre for Development Studies, Free University, Berlin. Also India coordinator Labour Module ICAS:MP.

Aditya Sarkar is a social historian working on the history of modern South Asia, with specific expertise and interest in the social histories of labour and capitalism. Since September 2013 he is an Assistant Professor of South Asian History at the University of Warwick. Before he was a Lecturer and Postdoctoral Researcher at the Centre for Modern Indian Studies (CeMIS), University of Goettingen (2009-2013), and a Teaching Assistant at the Department of History, School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), London (2008).

He holds a PhD in History from SOAS, where he wrote a thesis on Regulated Labour, Unruly Workers: The Making of Industrial Relations in Late Nineteenth-Century Bombay. His PhD dealt with the establishment, elaboration and crisis of a regime of industrial relations in late nineteenth-century India, specifically in the context of Bombay’s cotton mills. His current research focusses on two different areas; firstly the social history of bubonic plague in late nineteenth-century Bombay, and secondly the long history of labour movements and the changing place of industrial labour in the politics and discourses of twentieth-century India, with a special focus on post-colonial transformations.

c) The Key Note speakers

Prabhu Mohapatra was appointed as Associate Professor at the Department of History, University of Delhi in February 2002. After his PhD his academic career began with a Fellowship at the Nehru Memorial Museum and Library (1989-1993), followed by Post Doctoral appointments at Yale University (1993-94), the School of Oriental and African Studies, London (1994) and at the University of Amsterdam (1994-1997). After returning to India he was Visiting Fellow at the V.V Giri National Labor Institute between 1998-2002, where he established the Integrated Labor History Research Programme and set up a fully digital and online Archive of Indian Labor, first of its kind in India. His teachings include courses in Economic History of Modern India, History of Labour and Labouring Poor and Working Classes, National Movement and Strategies of Imperial Control. Other stints as Visiting Professor include the Ecole Normale Superiore (Cachan) in 2008, at the University of Göttingen (2010-11), the L.M Singhvi Senior Fellowship at University of Cambridge (2006), and the Fellowship at the International Research Centre on Work and Lifecycle in Global History Perspective, at Humboldt University Berlin (2011). He has also been involved in the establishment of the Association of Indian Labour Historians(AILH) and actively promoted international academic cooperation around issues of history of labor and Global History.
Naveen Chander has completed his PhD in 2014 from the Department of Political Science, University of Delhi, based on a thesis on “The Language Politics in North India”. Over the past 15 years, his other core interests have included city and labour, both in the form of research and activism, focused largely around migrant construction workers in Delhi, on the displacement of workers and slum dwellers, and the condition and politics of contract labour. As a researcher, Naveen has been interested in looking at the history of working class in shaping the landscape of urban politics in Delhi, and the way informality is historically produced. During his ICAS fellowship, his research looks at the contemporary history of working class lives.

Chitra Joshi teaches history at Indraprastha College, University of Delhi. She has been actively engaged in writing and researching the many histories of Indian labour. Her publications include, Lost Worlds: Indian Labour and its Forgotten Histories (New Delhi: Permanent Black, 2003, London: Anthem, 2005) and various book chapters and essays in journals like Indian Economic and Social History Review, International Review of Social History, and Studies in History.

Her current research is on the history of roads and labour (late 18th and 19th centuries) in the making of colonial modernity and on histories of work in contemporary India using ethnographic and oral sources.

d) paper presenters

Anna Sailer studied History, History and Society of South Asia, and Sociology at the Humboldt University, Berlin. Between 2010 and 2015 she has undertaken her PhD research, based at the Georg August-University Göttingen. In her thesis she worked on the history of the Bengal jute industry in colonial India, and traced the changing organisation of work between the 1870s and the 1930s. Since 2016 she is working as a research fellow and lecturer at the Centre for Modern Indian Studies (CeMis) at Göttingen University. Her main research interests include labour & social history; history of political movements; and history of racism.
Aninditia Tagore is currently pursuing her Ph.D in Sociology from the Centre for the Study of Social Systems, at Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU). Her thesis is titled “Women in Public Spaces: A study of Gender Negotiations in North and South Delhi”, where her focus is to understand the facilitators and barriers to women access to public spaces in North and South Delhi. In the past, she has worked with organisations such as the National Council for Educational Research & Training (NCERT), Jagori and Development Alternatives as a Research Associate. Her primary areas of interest include- gender, women studies and urban sociology. Previously her papers have been selected for presentation in conferences at IIM – Bangalore, NLSIU and the Indian Sociological Society.

Ana Paula Melli is a sociologist, graduated in Social Sciences and a law degree, with specialisation by the Berlin School of Economics and Law. Since 1992 she has worked as a researcher and professor at CUT Brazil, the largest National Trade Union Organisation in Latin America, at the Department of Education. There, she is responsible to development of training programmes for union members, based on research into new forms of capital organisation, trade union and labor law, international cooperation in union training area, among other topics. She is also responsible for monitoring the participation of the CUT Brazil in the Global Labour University activities and GLU Brazil, which participates in the programmes steering committee in Brazil.

Christa Wichterich is a sociologist and currently lectures at the Center for Gender Studies of the University of Basel having previously served as a visiting professor of gender politics at the University of Kassel. She also works as a freelance publicist, author, and as a consultant in development cooperation. She spent several years in India and Iran working as a university lecturer and in Kenya as an Africa correspondent. Her areas of expertise are globalisation and gender, international women’s policy, women’s movements as well as feminist ecology. Her areas of geographic expertise are South and South-East Asia, East and South Africa. She is actively involved in the Scientific Advisory Board of attac Germany and in the Europe-based network "Women in Development Europe" (WIDE+).
Debdulal Saha is Assistant Professor at the Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS), Guwahati Campus. Prior to joining TISS, he was post-doctoral fellow at the International Center for Development and Decent Work (ICDD), University of Kassel, Germany. He obtained his M.A. in Economics from the University of North Bengal and his Ph.D. from TISS Mumbai. He has (co-)authored and (co-)edited several books, including *Informal Markets, Livelihood and Politics: Street Vendors in Urban India* (Routledge, 2017), and *Financial Inclusion of the Marginalised: Street Vendors in Urban Economy* (Springer, 2013), in addition to several articles in peer reviewed journals. He was also engaged as research coordinator in many major projects on street vendors supported by the United Nations Development Program-mes (UNDP), the Ministry of Housing and Poverty Alleviation (MoHUPA), and several other. His areas of interest include work and employment, labour market and its institutions, informal economy, and state and labour.

Elvira Graner holds the position of Deputy Director of ICAS:MP in New Delhi (2015-2017). She has been a teaching faculty at Heidelberg University’s South Asia Institute (SAI) since 1995 onwards. She was also the Resident Representative of Heidelberg University’s Branch Offices in Nepal (1996/97 and 2003-2005) as well as in New Delhi (2013-2014). Her research interests include political and economic geography and development policies in the fields of environment, education and labour markets in South Asia. Her empirical research was based in Nepal (1992 onwards) and Bangladesh (2009-2013), where she held research and teaching positions at Tribhuvan University (Kathmandu) and at the Institute of Governance Studies (IGS) of BRAC University in Dhaka.

Hemantika Basu is currently a Ph.D. scholar at TISS Guwahati Campus, registered in Social Sciences. She holds a DAAD (German Academic Exchange Services) doctoral fellowship from the International Centre for Development and Decent Work (ICDD) at the University of Kassel, Germany. She completed her Under-Graduate (UG), Post-Graduate (PG) and Master’s in Philosophy (M.Phil.) in Economics from the University of North Bengal (West Bengal). For her M.Phil. dissertation, she explored the working life of domestic workers in Siliguri, West Bengal. Prior to joining the doctoral programme, Ms. Basu worked as a Lecturer at the undergraduate level at the University of North Bengal for about three years. Her areas of research interest include Macroeconomics, Development Economics, Indian Economy, Urbanization, Sociology of Work, Employment, Informal Economy, Labour Market and Decent Work.
Jörg Nowak is currently based at the City University of Hongkong, Department of Asian and International Studies as a Visiting Assistant Professor. He holds a Ph.D. in Political Sciences from Kassel University on Marxist and Feminist State Theory. From 2007-2010 he was a research coordinator at Kassel University for the project ‘Public Governance and weak actors’, and in 2013 he was a Visiting Professor at Kassel University, Department of Political Sciences.

Current research interests include Labour and Development in the Global South, South-South Investments, China’s impact on Latin America, Labour Geography, Althusserian Marxism. Recent publications are "The Spatial Patterns of Mass Strikes: A Labour Geography Approach", in: Geoforum (2016), 270-273, and DOI information: 10.1016/j.geoforum.2016.08.004.

Jonathan Pattanden is Lecturer in Politics and International Development at the University of East Anglia, UK. He is a political economist/political sociologist focusing on labour and class relations. His research analyses processes of accumulation, exploitation, and resistance through a focus on rural-based labour, circular migration, state-society relations, government poverty reduction programmes, pro-labouring class government regulations, and organisations of the labouring class.

Jonathan holds an MSc and PhD in Development Studies from London University’s School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS). Before joining the University of East Anglia’s (UEA) School of International Development in 2008, he taught International Political Economy and Development Studies at SOAS, and was a Post-Doctoral Research Fellow at the University of Mysore in Karnataka, South India. He has also worked at the Institute of Development Studies (University of Sussex) and was active in an international social movement network from 1999-2004.

Koyel Lahiri is a PhD research scholar in her third year at the Centre for Studies in Social Sciences Calcutta (CSSSC). The provisional title of her dissertation ‘Politics of Organising Urban Work: a study of two sites in India’s transforming economy’. Her two case studies include the politics of a national street vendor federation in two cities (Delhi and Kolkata) and that of factory workers in the Delhi National Capital Region.

Prior to her PhD, she wrote an MPhil dissertation titled ‘Aachhi aar thhakbo: Towards a Reading of the Politics of the Hawker Sangram Committee’. This was a study of an umbrella organisation of hawkers unions in Kolkata, West Bengal.
Maansi Parpiani is a PhD Fellow at ToRS. Her research interests lie at the intersections of labour informality, urban transformations and caste identities in contemporary India. She holds a Masters in History from the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), University of London. Her M.A. thesis focused on the discourses of urban planning and ‘failed’ schemes of development in early 20th century Bombay.

Maansi’s doctoral project looks at the figure of the informal labour as a site of contestation on which the concepts of work and city are constantly being re-defined. At ToRS, she is co-teaching a spring semester BA course on ‘Globalisation and Development in South Asia’, that historically traces the subcontinent’s experiences with questions of land, labour, gender, migration and poverty.

Rohan Dominic Mathews is currently a PhD student co-affiliated with the Centre for Modern Indian Studies (CeMIS) and the Institute for Sociology at the University of Göttingen, Germany. His PhD focuses on understanding the linkages between labour processes within the construction industry and processes of social association in Mumbai, India. He holds a M.A. degree in Political Science from the Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU), New Delhi. He is interested in the linkages between labour process and labour relations under contemporary capitalist development in India.

Saikat Maitra is currently affiliated with the Centre for Modern Indian Studies (CeMIS) at the University of Göttingen. Before joining CeMIS, he completed his PhD in Cultural Anthropology at the University of Texas at Austin.

He is currently finishing an ethnographic monograph on the fashioning of a new labour subjectivity amongst underclass youth populations employed in the emerging post-industrial service industries in Kolkata, India. In addition to the book project, he is interested in how the post-industrial regime of ‘soft-skill’ training in urban centres like Kolkata are creating a cheap, disposable and flexible work force. Finally, he is developing a new research project on the historical and ideological processes of skill development in post-colonial India through the institutional spaces of Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs).
**Samita Sen** is professor and at present Director, at the School of Women’s Studies at Jadavpur University. She served as the First Vice Chancellor, Diamond Harbour Women’s University (2013-2015). Her monograph on women’s employment in the jute industry in colonial Bengal was published in 1999 and won the Trevor Reese Prize in Commonwealth History. She is at present working on women’s migration in relation to tea and overseas plantations. Her various research publications include issues such as education, the women’s movement, marriage, domestic violence, domestic workers, women in governance and women’s land rights. Her recent publications are: jointly written Domestic Days (OUP, 2016); and an edited volume, Passage to Bondage (Stree, 2016). She is a member of a Calcutta-based voluntary women’s association, Sachetana and of the Governing Body of the Mahanirvan Calcutta Research Group.

**S.K. Sasikumar** is an economist by training and holds a Ph.D. degree in the discipline. His main areas of professional interests include: labour migration, labour market analysis, globalisation and labour, and research methodology. He has nearly 25 years of research and training experience in the area of labour studies. Sasikumar has been associated as a Member of major National Level Commissions/Committees, such as the Study Group on Globalization, Second National Commission on Labour (2002), Committee on Emigration Act, Government of India (2003), Working Group on Labour Force and Employment Projection for the Eleventh Five Year Plan (2007-2012), as well as Member, Technical Group on Second Employment-Unemployment Survey, Labour Bureau, Ministry of Labour & Employment (2011). He is also in the Editorial Advisory Board of the journals, *Migration and Development* (Published by Routledge) and *Labour & Development*. V.V. Giri National Labour Institute (VVGNI).

**Sheena Jain** studied Sociology at Miranda House, University of Delhi, and at the Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi. Sheena commenced her research work on Bourdieu’s Social Theory as a Commonwealth Scholar at the University of Cambridge, UK, in 1987, and completed her PhD on Bourdieu’s Theory of the Symbolic at Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi. She is currently engaged in independent study and research in with special reference to industrial wage workers; has been translating articles published in Faridabad Majdoor Samachar from Hindi into English; and is reflecting and writing on the interface
between social theory and contemporary society. Before, she has taught in Miranda House and was Professor at the Department of Sociology, Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi, until July 2014. Her publications include, among others, the book entitled Practising the Symbolic: Pierre Bourdieu’s Contribution (New Delhi, Aakar Books, 2013); the articles: ‘Bourdieu’s Sociology: A Post Positivist Science’ in Thesis Eleven, August 2013; and several chapter in books.

**Suramya T.K.** is a PhD research scholar at the department of Humanities and Social Sciences at the IIT Madras. An economist by training, from Hyderabad Central University, her present research areas of interest include labour history, economic history and modern Indian history.

Her specific topic of interest for the PhD dissertation is the role of the state in determining the capital labour relations within the beedi rolling industry of 20th century Malabar. She was formerly Policy Researcher at the Centre for Good Governance, an institute under the Telangana Government.

**William F. Stafford Jr.** is based at the Department of Anthropology, UC Berkeley. His research focuses on the auto-rickshaw meter in New Delhi, as a way to engage with classical questions concerning the relationship between measurement, quantification and delimitations of domains of labour. His prior work has focused on forced and bonded labour, the jurisprudence and metrology of the minimum wage and the poverty line in India, and caste in relation to conceptualisations of labour. William's general interests concern the analytics of labour and the reconfiguration of what are often taken as its axiomatic aspects.

Before joining Berkeley, he studied Sociology at the Centre for the Study of Social Systems at Jawaharlal Nehru University and the Department of Sociology at the Delhi School of Economics.
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Map 2  Chembur (with Hotel and TISS)