

## Chapter 13

### Going with the Flow: Labour Power Mobility and Labour Process Theory<sup>1</sup>

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#### Introduction

This chapter expands discussion on the nature of labour power, building on a recent paper (Smith, 2006) where it was argued that the mobility side of labour power within capitalism had been under-theorized and not sufficiently integrated into assessment of workplace conflicts between workers and managers. That paper suggested that mobility power – securing labour services for capital and securing labour processes for labour – provided a terrain of strategy and tactics, which could influence not only the length of stay in any workplace, but also the nature of work – intensity of work, types of authority regime, nature of tasks and so on ~~ete~~ – as worker controlled exit volition could be used to bargain with employers. This highlighted the more particular nature of labour power within capitalism, that is, the element in the labour process that is uncertain, embodied, external and with an essential duality — the person of the worker is not what the employer actually wants, but rather only the labour services (the metaphorical ‘hired hand’ or ‘muscle’ in manual occupations) which is the ‘property’ stored in living labour and carried into labour process by the worker.

Labour processes are both abstract and empirical; the abstract element is valorization – the process where surplus value is created, which is the dominant function of labour processes in capitalism. The commodity form contains use and exchange value; and the worker as a ‘special commodity’ is hired for both use (their particular skills) and exchange value (their ability to work to create surplus value and profits). The abstract element connects to the capitalist market (for both capitalist products and labour power), ensuring that only firms that remain profitable (and this can have different historical

meanings) survive, regardless of the quality or use value of the products or the skill (or use value) of labour power in the firm. Capitalism periodically destroys the livelihoods of skilled and unskilled workers as well as companies producing products with high utility. Such products and companies are ultimately judged against exchange or market value which is fickle and crisis-ridden.

The idea of labour power as a *flow* evokes action and movement. Capital is not *naturally* fixed, but possesses certain fixity in some forms which can create the impression of stability. Buildings and machinery are capital with spatial fixity whereas money capital flows through the system in seconds with little apparent sense of a home or spatial identity. Factories and offices have to be constructed, project an appearance of permanence as stable natural structures, even though these very physical aspects of capital also embody or represent capitalist social relations (Baldry, 1999; 2010). Labour power can also acquire *fixity*, both through practising one occupation or skill (*task fixity*); or through working for one employer for many years (*temporal fixity*); or through being located in a particular place or community – a sort of *place fixity*. Beynon and Hudson (1993) suggested that capital dominated *space* (something abstract or rootless) and labour *place* – (somewhere with cultural meaning or social community). But as I will argue, this understates both the mobility of labour and the immobility of capital.

It <sup>2</sup>is a misreading of the appearance of such fixity or stability to consider labour as a ‘resource’ for the firm in the same way as fixed capital, as the individual ownership of mobility power by the worker ensures any stay with a particular employer or occupation or skill is always dependent on an exchange bargain – over work effort and mobility opportunities (that is, opportunities to increase the value of labour power, through training, development, career progression etc.) that the exchange facilitates. It is also subject to the human life cycle, which means workers behaving in different ways at different times of their working life – more job changes when young, fewer when middle aged for example. These are qualities that are inherently human, and hence do not apply to fixed capital.

The term *flow* is not used in the sense of an endless and seamless movement of labour power without constraint. As noted in Smith (2006: 407), categories of labour with ascribed differences, ‘women or black workers, for example, or certain types of industry

(mining, agriculture, with location idiosyncrasies) or traditional forms of labour (such as domestic or household workers);<sup>7</sup> witness the continued application of employer's coercive controls over labour mobility because workers can't move as easily. But 'with the growth of the labour market, competition and competitive strategies to recruit and retain labour were devolved to employers and workers freedom to quit expanded, which concomitantly reduced employer coercion in the employment contract (Montgomery, 1993: 39–51).'

But 'a constant flow of different individuals through a labour process creates problems when individual differences have a material effect on productivity or profitability for the employer' (Smith, 2006: 408). Hence, the incentives to regularize labour capture and retention for capital and employment security and 'fixity' for workers exist because of the costs of movement for both. But as is argued here, the costs of flow have been declining, as the availability of a global labour pool expands, competition between workers increases, capital movement and trade grows, education and training levels standardise and shared technologies reduce barriers to movement. But such trends are not unidirectional; and place, institutions and state regulations, continue to both facilitate and block movements. It is also the case as Taylor's chapter (~~this volume~~Chapter 12) on the offshoring of call centres indicates<sup>7</sup> that the increased mobility of services they provide does not negate the fact that such modern forms of fixed capital are located in particular places for particular logics informed by both capitalist competition, and locational and institutional advantages of certain places.

The chapter begins with a discussion of changes within capitalism and how these changes apply to labour power under new conditions within the global economy. This is accomplished through the double indeterminacy of labour power framework – the dual uncertainties around using and retaining the worker for the employer, and accessing and managing utilisation levels for the worker. The chapter concludes by stressing the differences between this view of labour power and that of resource based theory of the firm, and advocating applying a flow perspective to labour process research which has been too workplace or organisation-centred, and disconnected from the very dynamic trends within capitalism and capital labour relations.

## Capitalist dynamism over ~~the~~ past 30 years

### Decentring work from the workplace

We have seen major technological developments since the publication of the *Labour Process Theory* ~~book~~ in 1990. ICTs in particular have increased ‘virtuality’ in work, and stretched the scale and range of communication. Working on the move characterizes many service jobs and a ‘workplace-civic society-home’ reconfiguration has expanded the porosity of the ‘working day’ without extending the working day *within* the workplace. Rather, anywhere with satellite access for mobile devices is facilitating the transforming of civic society space (airports, trains, coffee houses, streets, etc.) into a place for the individual to work, but without the social solidarity of a traditional workplace (Felstead and Jewson, 2000; 2005).

Although most service work remains within management control systems and a *workplace*, the idea of ‘work’ as organization-centred is being undermined — de-centred, stretched spatially and temporally, as services move to 24/7 access and labour reserves are sourced by price on an increasingly global scale (see Taylor’s chapter in this volume) and professional service workers are accessible on a continuous basis. Recent research on ‘train working’ noted that “...office professionals now work away from their desks 50–90% of their time”. Such “mobile teleworkers... spend time travelling and/or working at different locations, use ICTs in work [which] involves some level of knowledge intensity and communication with others either internal and/or external to their organisation” (Axtell et al. 2008: 922) [Authorquery: Axtell et al. 2008 is not listed in references. Please provide complete details]. Other studies of specific devices, mobile phones, for example, have found a gender bias (more men reporting frequent use of mobile phones for work purposes) but also that blue collar workers, especially skilled tradesmen, were significant issuers, thus questioning the bias towards managers and professionals in research on mobile working (Wajcman et al. 2008: 639) [Authorquery: Wajcman et al 2008 is not listed in references]. This research emphasizes, however, the control and pleasure dimension of ICTs, and the ability of the individual to manage or control the transgression of work-related calls into the home.

Some writers have suggested that this process of ‘decentring work’ can be captured in the idea of ‘global work’ (Jones, 2008). This suggests that ‘work’ is becoming a practice infused with mobility imperatives, spatial stretching and temporal openness, and the idea of a fixed place of work where the workers goes everyday is being transformed into a much more open and inter-connected globalized site of work practice. Although not integrated into any idea of capitalism or a capitalist labour process (rather a reified idea of ‘work’ separated from political economy and capitalist social relations) Jones’s empirical work on London’s professional service workers does, nevertheless, highlight the increased mobility of workers and the transience of working space for certain occupations.

**[Authorquery: Felstead 2009 is not listed in references]** In a recent review, Felstead (2009: 3) noted that “... time and space have become more compressed and journeys longer” and that “whereas in 1950 the average person in Britain travelled five miles per day, half a century later it was 28 miles and by 2025 it is forecast to double”. This recent review confirms a gradual move towards work becoming more dispersed, with more intense use of office space (such as hot-desking) and the removal of individual control at work, and continued rise in the use of the home as an extension of the office (see also Baldry, 2010).

## Mobility of capital

Alongside the mobility of labour due to changes within the firm, the period has also seen a heightened mobility of capital. In 2006, the UK was the largest recipient country of FDI, followed by the United States and China. Members of the EU were well represented as recipient countries; while nine of the 20 economies with the largest FDI inflows were to developing or transition economies.<sup>2</sup> While capital flow has accelerated, it remains unevenly distributed and hence the effects of transferring different ways of organizing the labour process are also uneven. This means hybridity of some labour processes (especially within China), but retention of national settlement in others (especially Japan) and greater adaptation in others (for example, e.g., the UK).

The period has displayed considerable borrowing, transfer and learning, signified most strongly within the debate on ‘Japanization’ of production (Elger and Smith, 2005 for

review), but also continued Americanization (Edwards and Ferner, 2002; Royal, 2006; Zeitlin and Herrigel, 2000; ~~Royal, 2006; Edwards and Ferner, 2002;~~) and the limited impact of foreign investment on the Japanese model (Olcott, 2009). As noted by Deeg and Jackson (2007: 171), [Authorquery: Deeg and Jackson 2007 is not listed in references] ‘a growing literature argues that most national economies are actually in a period of hybridization— a process that involves combining institutions adopted from outside a given context with existing ones’. But as Smith (2008: 46–47) has argued, this raises questions about specifying what is being combined, and in the ‘best practice’ literature, what exact combination of institutional practices produces ‘successful’ outcomes for capital. From the perspective of this chapter, however, these debates on capitalism and hybridity, raise important questions about mobility of capital and labour and how this impacts on actual labour processes, such as conflicts between local and imported ways of working; greater heterogeneity to agents — both owners/managers and workers – and the fracturing of conflicts along nationality lines. The mass movement of 120 million Chinese workers into the export orientated manufacturing industries has destabilized developing countries (Freeman, 2006) as well as sucking in labour intensive (and increasingly capital intensive) production operations from the US, Europe and other parts of Asia, and shifting these countries out of manufacturing and into low-wage service work (Thompson and Warhurst, 1998) [Authorquery: Thompson and Warhurst, 1998 is not listed in references].

Market access and cost reduction are the primary motives for FDI; (see Taylor’s chapter in this volume for a discussion of ‘quantity’ versus ‘quality’ strategies in the call centre sector). These strategies not only help shape the international division of labour (Frobel et al., 1990) [Authorquery: The year given in references for Frobel et al. is 1980 in references] between countries, especially between developed and developing states, but they also show up through intra-country differentiation (Smith, 2008). For example, China has principally sucked in FDI to reduce labour costs from high-wage manufacturing firms, but market access has become *the* driver of recent investment, especially in the service sector (see Gamble, 2006 for a review). While first generation workers in export orientated factories remain dominant, the Chinese workforce is also rapidly becoming better educated, fuelled by the state expansion and international

upgrading of Chinese universities, alongside the unprecedented movement of Chinese students into Western universities (especially in the US, UK and Australia) as international educational capitalism expands, with the high fees from overseas students replacing public funding on a huge scale (Slaughter and Lesley, 1997; Slaughter and Rhoades, 2004) **[Authorquery: Leslev is spelt as Leslie in references. Please reconcile]**. The dialectic of this process of internationalizzsation is also producing more fragmentation to *academic* labour – the decentreing of the teacher and introduction of new more market-zfocused functions.<sup>-3</sup>

### Internationalizzsation and ‘globalizzsation’ — more labour and more mobility of labour

When Braverman was writing, it was not really feasible to think of a global labour market. American capitalism was king, and hence there was both an explicit and implicit assumption that American business recipes, such as Scientific Management, were somehow systemic to capitalism, and not **contingent up** certain varieties of the system. At the time, national and local labour markets dominated the *experience* of most workers and the theoretical horizons of labour process writers. Russia and Eastern Europe allocated labour centrally through the state, and migration between firms was difficult, while flow between societies strictly illegal (Smith and Thompson, 1992). China was just emerging from the isolation of the Cultural Revolution, and Japanese and European stocks of capital were tied to respective national territories. Internationalizzsation was hence a largely US affair, which as the dominant global power signified the hegemonic archetype of the international firm.

Now all this has changed, and the global reach of capitalism has raised the possibility of a global labour market. The global labour reserve expanded, from 1.46 billion workers to 2.93 billion workers — doubling the potential labour pool connected to world economy (Freeman, 2006).<sup>4</sup> A recent ILO report on the question of the existence of global labour market said that: “Despite limited actual labour mobility, however, the globalization of trade in goods and services, the existence of international network enterprises using global assembly lines for the production of goods, and their recourse to global sourcing of services are all elements that contribute to the emergence of a more

integrated global market for labour.”<sup>5</sup> The same report noted on the demand side that different levels of regulation (supra-national, regional, national and local) as well as the operation of unofficial norms as networks for the distribution of labour to jobs, meant that access to labour was not as straightforward as access to capital and trade (which have been extensively liberalized) and “therefore... labour mobility is lagging far behind and is still heavily constrained by national regulations.”<sup>6</sup>

Labour flows reinforce patterns of segmentation by race, gender, nationality and citizenship. For example, in oil exporting states, such as the UAE, as much as 90 per cent of workforce are expatriate, non-UAE citizens. In the GCC **[Authorquery: Global Commodity Chain?]** states, the foreign workforce has become the dominant labour force in most sectors of the economy (Kapiszewski, 2006). This adds layers of division; it offers opportunities to capital that can globally source labour at both the high and low ends.

While the global workforce has expanded, not all this labour is available to international markets – with over 1 billion workers within the informal economy, as petty traders on subsistence income and excluded from the limited security of being in *waged work* (Davis, 2006). Much of this labour power is therefore unavailable to the world economy, being tied to highly localized markets and largely for subsistence income – but much is also working through contracting chains on products that are for global markets. Informalization is not always due to national economic action. The global efficiency of Chinese labour power has also moved workers in other countries out of more formal sectors, where reasonable wages and conditions were possible, into the informal sectors, where they are not. As Freeman (2006: 4) has noted: “Employment in Latin America, South Africa and in parts of Asia shifted from the formal sectors associated with economic advancement to informal sectors, where work is precarious, wages and productivity low, and occupational risks and hazards great. The entry of China and India to the world economy turned many developing countries from the low wage competitors of advanced countries to the high wage competitors of China and India.” Such disruption increases migration pressures, moves labour into vulnerable employment and creates labour supply for sectors like prostitution, often tied to parallel expansions of international tourism by countries forced out of manufacturing by global competition.



Thus highlighting the functioning of a global market mechanism, even though the actual labour mobility might be limited[Authorquery: incomplete? Should this be a part of the previous sentence?]; so long as capital and goods can freely move across borders this does not matter.

An interesting feature of the internationalization of Chinese capital (both state and private) is the tendency to bring labour from China to overseas production or extraction sites, thus the firm is acting to retain national labour within its borders, although leakages of labour into local economies are common (Ceccagno, 2003). For example, there are an estimated 750,000 Chinese migrants in Africa – moving with Chinese international firms, illegally or as part of the Chinese government's policy of economic engagement with the continent. Within developing countries, international recruiting agencies are moving labour more extensively than before and hence the labour pool is not only between the sending firm and local workers, but could also be diversified with migrant labour recruited through international employment agencies (Lincoln, 2009; Peck ~~et al.~~, Theodore and Ward, 2005).

But such freedom of movement is not unrestricted. In fact there has also been new Balkanization (Kerr, 1954) of labour markets with “‘fortress Europe” and NAFTA especially policing borders and differentiating labour into legal and illegal categories, with differing implications for labour market access, the segmentation of employment and weakening of unionizing potential, especially in sectors like such as agriculture, hotels, restaurants, food production, construction and garments. In the UK, there are an estimated 430,000 illegally resident migrants (Woodbridge, 2005); in the US 12 mMillion; across Europe 500,000 enter illegally annually (Boswell and Straubhaar, 2004: 4). Illegal labour is concentrated in ethnic enclaves and communities, and illegal labour markets are very structured within such communities (Ahmad, 2008: 856). These workers are often well qualified but operate in labour processes that do not utilize their skill, which offers a conversion (see below) benefit to the employer, and disrupts established labour structures for indigenous workers.

Migrant labour is often unsettling of custom and practice within local labour markets. Newsome et al. (2009: 157) show how a different work ethic between Polish and local workers meant that the effort bargain was challenged through rate busting that was

internalized as marks of status and identity for otherwise insecure migrant workers in a Glasgow assembly plant. Often within the same corporation, segmentation along race or migrant labour lines can lead to different outcomes for workers in terms of pay, conditions and organization. Holgate's (2005: 467) detailed ethnography of two sandwich factories in the UK noted: 'Workers in the London factory were predominantly BME [black and minority ethnic], whereas at the northern factory they were mainly white. In London, workers had lower pay, no premium pay, less holidays, no sick pay – and no union recognition'. **[Authorquery: Datta et al. (2007) is not listed in references]** Datta et al. (2007) researching low-paid migrant workers in a fragmented London labour market, argue that coping or getting-by are the outcomes of survival tactics used by these workers are organizing and their ability to 'strategize' is difficult given fragmentation of labour power and labour markets **[Authorquery: Please check whether the sentence is right]**. Reliance of kin and ethnic community networks is common bulwark against societal exclusion, and has been highlighted as a means of organizing across many countries (Martínez Lucio and Perrett, 2009). But the network nature of migration, however, means migrants operate in parallel and not directly **[Authorquery: in?]** competitive labour markets; which often means organizing is not an option.

In general, new labour power is often more desperate to work – to realize itself – and therefore more willing to enter unregulated areas, accept lower wages, worse conditions and more demanding or dangerous jobs. The segmentation of jobs facilitates this, and migration (whether international — Mexicans to Los Angeles — or inter-provincial migration in China) reinforces patterns of segmentation within labour markets and labour processes.<sup>7</sup>

Within China as well, there is a similar locals versus migrants differentiation based on those with urban and rural household registrations. The massive growth of internal migration in China has been circulatory, but this is changing.<sup>8</sup> In terms that I explain below, the external *mobility power* of the employer is stronger than the mobility power of labour, and is used to increase labour effort and control workers.

## Separation of work relations and employment relations

A final significant trend in the ~~p~~last 30 years has been people doing the same job but on different employment contracts, hence a separation of work relations and employment relations. There has been a systemic growth of different categories of worker on different contracts and the shortening of the length of employment stay within one organi~~z~~sation, although rates of tenure vary between say Europe and US, and within different branches of capital (Doogan, 2003).<sup>9</sup> Although flexible work or precarity in work has been much debated in the US and Europe, contract changes have been more dramatic in East Asian societies (Nichols et al., 2003) [**Authorquery: The year given in references for Nichols et al. is 2004**]. Contract differentiation has also been strong in the public sector. In ~~H~~higher ~~e~~ducation, for example, in the US “in the past 20 years, faculty employment has shifted from being overwhelmingly a full-time position, and on the tenure track, to an occupation in which nearly one-half of the faculty workforce nationwide is part-time, with the majority not being on the tenure track.” (Rhoades and Slaughter, 2004: 50). In the UK ~~approximately round~~ 40 per cent of positions in higher education are non-permanent (Gold and Brown, 2007).

Therefore, in sectors previously characteri~~z~~ed by bureaucratic stability, the value of loyalty (which was typically based on tenure of employment in one organi~~z~~sation and hence *immobility* of labour) has diminished as market rationalism has increased. This is partly a response to market uncertainty, but also to government action, and the reduced transaction costs associated with organi~~z~~sations interacting with the labour market (made easier with the rise of generic skills, growth of education and greater standardi~~z~~sation of jobs). Put another way ‘ownership’ of jobs by workers declines and “employability” and flexibility, the worker as ‘free agent’ (Barley and Kunda, 2004), expands [**Authorquery: This entry is not listed in references. However, there is an entry for Bailey and Kunda, 2004. Please clarify whether the author name needs to be changed. There are several citations for Barley and Kunda, 2004**]. While we can read this as the ownership of mobility increasing — workers can move more freely between employers – mobility is built into many jobs (e.g. high churn in service sector jobs), and such job consumerism can also be interpreted as weakening labour power. Thompson and Smith (this volume) discuss the controversy around flexible labour, the apparent cyclical feature of insecure work in the private sector, but they also highlight the

impact increased mobility power of capital and labour has had on work effort, namely, increased intensity of work as the fear of job loss increases.

These shifts have also changed companies, disintegrating and disaggregating previously integrated companies with stable welfare regimes and relatively well-paid workers with employment security and pension guarantees, and moving them out of organization-dependency which characterized the large firms that Braverman (and Burawoy, 1977) [Authorquery: Burawoy, 1977 is not listed in references] had used to characterize the good jobs (high wage and high security) in what was a hegemonic, welfarist employment pattern of monopoly capitalism, which was constructed throughout the twentieth century (Gospel, 1992; Jacoby, 1984; Montgomery, 1987, 1993;) and now looks increasingly untenable. Final salary pension schemes, the symbolic heart of organization-based welfarism, are now no longer available in most large firms in the US and UK and pressures are increasing on such schemes for public sector workers and even unions, such as Unison in the UK, with 1.3 million local government and NHS members, have moved to abolish final salary schemes for their officers.

## Theorizing these trends

### Back to basics: What is labour power?

Labour process analysis is production centred because it is from within production that labour power starts its conversion into labour and products, before these move into circulation for surplus value and ultimately wages as exchange for the labour power as the ‘property’ of the worker. However, it is not only in production that our attention needs to focus. Labour power does not enter production as a blank sheet or as raw material, but as prepared human material, formed in mature capitalist societies over several centuries of habituation to industrial and bureaucratic cultures; formed through expanded education systems and formed with expectations of employment and citizen rights. In newly industrializing societies, such as China and India, new generations of labourers are being exposed to the market for the first time – converting from peasant-farmer into workers or quasi-workers (Pun and Chan, 2008); yet expectations of fairness

and justice are quickly learnt (Lee, 2007; Pun, 2005).[Authorquery: Please approve addition of punctuations]

In all societies labour power is structured through a life cycle – with young workers having to struggle to get into labour processes, and due to age, they are often less enmeshed in customized working patterns, especially where work cultures are no longer sufficiently robust to socialize new workers due to technological change (as in printing) or fragmentation of work – all of which has been enhanced, as noted above, by global trends in capitalism over the lpast 30 years. Not only is labour power subject to temporal and historical conditioning, it is also subject to different conditions of competition (expanded scales of competition in more globally or regionally stretched labour markets), to different orientations to the market (such as the shift to face-to-face services and extended utilizsation of ‘the whole person’ of the labourer) all of which means different requirements for the reproduction of labour power. This can mean a switch in selection criteria in recruitment, an emphasis on attitudes not technical skills for example (Callaghan and Thompson, 2002); or face or look (Wolkowitz and Warhurst – this volume) or the expansion of services requiring emotional labourers (Bolton this volume); or simply attempts to utilizse the ‘whole person’ of the worker in a more “demanding capitalism” (Green, 2006). But in India and China, entering the labour process can be more intensive *and* extensive – longer working days within more intensive production systems – and exploitation of labour power, especially in the dormitory labour regime, that uses up young bodies, returning broken or damaged ones to society, and replenishing stocks of labour power with new reserves from the countryside **of the whole country** (Smith, 2003; Smith and Pun, 2006).[Authorquery: Please confirm that 'of the whole country' needs to be retained]

If we look at the character of labour power within capitalism, and not simply the animation of labour power in the labour process, we can get a better perspective on the broad trends outlined above. There are a series of questions or processes that emerge from the nature of labour power within capitalist social relations. These are the *embodiment question*, *conversion question*, *duality question* and the *control question*.

### The embodiment question

Labour power is not created by a production process for sale in a market like other commodities. Workers are ‘produced’ through families, and while a ‘labour market’ operates in similar ways to other markets, in that it tries to fix the price at which labour is bought, the market is structured in unique ways because labour power is a unique ‘commodity’. Labour power is a capacity owned by the individual, rented to the buyer. We cannot separate physically the ‘commodity’ labour power from the owner — rather we, as individuals, have to present ourselves, even though what we are selling may only engage a fraction of our being and represent a small part of our actual potential as human beings. Because the employer must negotiate through a living individual to utilize their labour services, the employment relationship necessarily involves the *individual qua individual* and therefore emotional, psychological, motivational and other strategies to obtain a definite amount of work effort at a definite price. Regardless of the type of use value that the employer wants from the labourer – hand, head, sexuality, look, muscle – these fragmented utilities can only come into a labour process within the ‘whole person of the worker’ and as such, alongside these specialist skills, we also have additional potential, will power, volition, difference, thus requiring consent and negotiation on the part of the employer, especially where such use values are in scarce supply.

Marx quoted Hegel when discussing the differentiation of ‘labour power’ from bonded forms of labour, such as slavery:

“I may make over to another the use, for a limited time, of my particular bodily and mental aptitudes and capabilities; because in consequence of this restriction, they are impressed with a character of alienation with regard to me as a whole. But by the alienation of all my labour-time and the whole of my work, I should be converting the substance itself, in other words, my general activity and reality, my person, into the property of another.” (Hegel, *“Philosophie des Rechts.”* Berlin, 1840, p. 104, § 67-)<sup>10</sup>

Although Marx sometimes noted that labour power is the ‘property’ of the worker it is not *like* capital (which has objective, multiple identities independent and external to the individual capitalist) rather labour power is always part of ‘the person of the worker’, and hence the question of the *embodiment* of labour power is a permanent and essential

feature of labour power. The fractioning of labour power into separate elements that match new market demands or segmentations – manual and mental labour, or more recently ‘emotional’ and ‘aesthetic labour’ – does not subtract from the embodiment of labour power in ‘the whole person’; [Authorquery: change ok?] it merely speaks to the specializsation of labour markets and the quality of labour power (its flexibility) within capitalism which is a system that seeks to commercializse or valorizse labour power in an infinite variety of ways. New methods of valorizsation add nothing new to the argument, for as Bolton (this volume) shows the transformation of emotions into ‘emotional labour’ creates the same control and resistance responses from employers and workers as the former seek to extract exchange value through this monetizsed asset.

### The conversion question

Labour power is variable and plastic. When we buy a TV or packet of crisps, these commodities are quite fixed in terms of their utility. When an employer hires a worker, it is possible to train and retrain the worker, and it is possible for the worker to acquire new skills and qualifications, ~~and~~ thereby transform~~ing~~ themselves and their ‘utility’ repeatedly over a working life cycle [Authorquery: OK?]. This makes labour power an altogether different commodity from other commodities that are purchased through sales contracts in markets. The ‘division of labour’ expands the productivity of labour power; it also expands choice for workers – especially in the modern era with greater compression in training, extended working life, wider provision of education and training and enhanced value and reduced barriers of mobility between jobs and careers – in some countries more than others. Of course, labour power gets fixed through institutional inertia, specializsation, market structures, occupational projects, work cultures, habit and the life cycle, some of which are defences for labour power in order to increase valorizsation, others are structures to suit capital – to intensify productivity.

Specializsation creation conversion problems – redundant miners in their 50s might not convert to other jobs, although Elger and Smith (2005) found ex-miners and workers from many other occupational backgrounds working in the new Japanese assembly factories in their Telford research. Thus plasticity of labour power as an asset means there is always a potential *conversion question*, with both labour and capital operating on

labour power to convert it into different skills or trades, which means that as an asset it is not ‘fixed’ or certain (for the employer or worker) – again part of the human quality of labour power.

In the new economy established correspondences are changing – with the graduation of the labour markets pushing graduates into call centres, retail and work previously occupied by less qualified workers – so-called ‘credential inflation’; migrant workers are often over-qualified for the jobs they perform (Ahmad, 2009)[Authorquery: Ahmad, 2009 is not listed in references]; formally unskilled workers in the Western economies are vulnerable to displacement by internationalisation of production (Freeman, 2006); more intense competition within labour markets that are exposed to international migration – including academic labour markets. These changes mean the ‘conversion’ of labour power is increasing as a process, as individuals are forced to consider changes in jobs and occupations on a more continuous basis. It also means that the calculus of conversion – the choice-constraint issue – is changing.

### The duality question

Labour power is the commodity that the worker sells to the buyer – but of course the owner comes with the commodity and this creates empirical confusion that the ‘worker is a commodity’, when it is only his or her labour power that is the commodity. It can also create the illusion on the part of the worker that only certain bodies – male or white, for example – can deliver certain types of labour power, when capitalism constantly proves it is indifferent to the bodily presentation of labour power, it is only interested in efficient or productive labour power. This is slightly different from the issue of embodiment, but also part of the same question. The empirical presentation of labour within the individual creates a *duality question*. The embodiment of labour power in living labour feeds the illusion and confusion that the capitalist is employing ‘people’ rather than variable capital. The fact that the worker as a person travels with his or her labour power into the labour process means that dualism and illusion is always a feature of the capitalist employment and labour processes. Marx, in separating labour power from Adam Smith’s category of labour, is making this distinction in political economy between a system of slave labour and a system of wage labour (capitalism), and the quote above highlights the



difference between selling distinctive labour services and the capitalist demanding more from the ‘whole person’ of the worker because alongside these labour services they **have** perpetually present the ‘person of the worker’ in the labour process [Authorquery: Should 'have' be deleted?]. Hence, within the labour process not only does conflict arise because of different interests between capital and labour and the absence of mutuality in effort bargaining (Edwards, 1990; Thompson, 1989); but also because the availability of the asset ‘labour power’ is not objective or externalized, but requires temporal negotiation through the living person of the worker, who naturally has ups and downs, good ~~days~~ and bad days, but is fundamentally not an objective asset in the same way as fixed capital.

### The control question

Realization or transfer of labour power from seller to buyer, worker to capitalist, requires of contract or exchange relationship, but this is the formal or legal relationship between apparent equals – the ‘noisy’ sphere of exchange relations. Proper realization takes place within the ‘labour process’ – where the skill or effort of the worker meets raw materials, machinery and purpose within a system that can have many forms of labour process organization but within advanced capitalist relations, access to the labour process is controlled by the employer. LPT is centred through the concept of control which is an objective imperative of capitalism. The employee presents him or herself at work as potential. It is up to the employer, through a production or labour process, to extract the labour power or capacity from the worker. Obviously, this process requires consent or agreement, as the worker will not willingly submit to high utilization of work effort without due reward and due respect. Therefore, a management control and consent system is required to extract labour capacity from living labour. The management role is to realize labour power, and this is why management exists as an authority function. If workers were self-managed to produce to the highest productivity levels, the control function of management would disappear, and managers would be left as merely administrative or technical coordinators of work processes. In this role they would be like other workers. But, due to the absence of agreement on the exact relationship between payment and performance, wages and work effort, management as an authority function,

are required to mediate this relationship and ensure that production is maximized or the needs of the business (whatever they might be, but typically increased output and profitability) are achieved.

## Rethinking labour power under new conditions

The features of labour power outlined above require theorising under the new conditions discussed above. Central to all these conditions is renewed mobility of labour and capital, and increased supply of labour power. In my 2006 paper, I attempted to capture some of these features by expanding on the nature of labour power through the concepts of ‘mobility power’ (MP) and ‘effort power’ (EP) — being two uncertainties for both capital and labour, requiring both to strategize around the use of labour power, and manage the movement of labour power into and out of any particular labour process. We can look at both MP and EP within the labour process and externally to the labour process — internally is the conventional sphere of labour in production — the animation or realization of labour power through the labour process; externalities relate to reproduction of labour power and attempts by capital and labour to affect MP and EP through institutional action — in the state or market by limiting labour supply, regulating the sale of labour, creating or destroying monopoly rights on labour power (professional credentials around jobs) ~~ete~~and so on. As noted by Ellem (2010), “mobility affects management strategy: firms or operations which are less mobile than others will likely have greater motivation to create conditions conducive to accumulation within particular localities: “capitalists need to develop place-based labour control practices” Jonas 1996, p. 325.”

Mobility power differentials between labour and capital are noted in the literature — the ability of capital to objectify itself in different forms facilitates movement; the embodiment of labour in the person of the worker restricts movement. This creates a power imbalance. But Ellem (2010) notes that “the “rootedness” of labour can, under some circumstances, become a source of power, when working people and their families create distinctive local communities, cultures and organisations.” Places, especially mining areas discussed by Ellem, can create mutual dependencies. But he also shows how capital can, with strategy and motivation, break down the solidarities within

“places” – in his case-study companies, this meant extending the labour market internationally, and using air transport on a “fly-in, fly-out” basis and thus undermining place-fixed labour in industrial communities of solidarity. But this is not simply the mobility differential playing out, as suggested in the mobility of capital and immobility of labour thesis,<sup>11</sup> but rather the mobility of some workers versus the immobility of others, and it is always both. But, more positive or labour community can be established through social networks that can be stretched over long distances – with modern communications available to workers breaking down the ~~limitations of~~ place barriers (Lee, 2007; Milkman, 2006; ~~Lee, 2007~~).

The geography of labour and capital is more an empirical rather than theoretical question, as in an absolute sense, labour and capital are universals which are, therefore, placeless in that creating capitalist social relations produces the structural features of capital and labour as outlined above. But tactically, the movement of capital and labour can produce particular outcomes for both in particular conditions and the labour process always requires a ‘somewhere’ – a real site of accumulation (Elger and Smith, 2005: 97) – see also Rainnie et al. this volume.

Externally, representatives of labour and capital appeal to political bodies to regulate labour flow. There are also campaigns to change (enhance or weaken) regulations around labour markets. In Japan, for example, workers cannot be recruited through private employment agencies in *certain* types of jobs, in construction and longshoring work, or security, medicine, and manufacturing in the case of labour dispatch agencies. The existence of these exceptions is political; the existence of three types of employment agencies to supply temporary labour to the Japanese labour market is also due to political external regulation of the mobility power of workers. It is not just at the national level that lobbying for the regulation or deregulation occurs. The internationalization of recruitment agencies themselves, have pushed the interests of expanded mobility power for capital – especially in ‘actively deregulating economies of the global North — including Spain, Germany, Italy and Japan’ (Peck, Theodore and Ward et al., 2005). The opening up of a niche in the secondary labour market for ethnic Japanese from Brazil to replace stocks of rural Japanese that had historically occupied these positions is also a political process to retain the mobility power of this critical small-firm segment of capital

in Japan, by drawing in new labour reserves that fit the ethnocentric character of the Japanese labour market (Higuchi and Tanno, 2003).

By looking at the differences in the ‘ownership’ of labour mobility comparatively and historically can we appreciate the relative newness of individual controls, that is the devolution of responsibility to the individual worker, who has the freedom and risk to unite his or her labour power with capital in order to convert it into wages. The expansion of wage labour for Marx represented the destructive, de-culturing and de-traditionalizing mission of capitalism, but across capitalist societies there remain cultural or institutional variations in the control of the mobility power of labour. It can be on the side of employers (especially strong in family firms; paternalist employers; company towns and isolated work communities) or the state. In the case of pre-reform China, labour power was a state planned input beyond the control of individual workers. Reform of employment in China, from restricted mobility subject to appeals to supervisory authority, to giving individuals freedom of movement, created profound change. Davis (1992: 1084) noting that: ‘In terms of job mobility, the consequences in urban China after 1960 were low levels of inter-firm transfers, high levels of regional and enterprise autarky, and risk averse strategies of advancement that discouraged firm switching.’ Managers within state socialist enterprises hoarded labour and were reluctant to let people leave especially skilled labour: ‘If individuals at any stage of their working lives could take leave of absence and find employment on their own initiative, the power of the unit to define individual economic and political horizons would greatly diminish’ (Davis, 1992*ibid.*: 1064).

The ‘footloose capital thesis’ is overblown, but it does point to the fact that both developing and developed societies are being remade for new global or regional capital – with export processing zones and service zones and new towns (such as the case of Telford, England or Livingstone, Scotland in the UK, or Tijuana in Mexico or Shenzhen in China, or Prato in Italy). Research by Elger and Smith (2005) on Telford in the UK brings out the way a particular ‘transnational social space’ (Morgan and Kristensen, 2006; Pries, 2001; Morgan and Kristensen, 2006) is made for international firms – but also how workers remake this space and force adaptations and compromises, not through being organized into trade unions, but disorganized through high amounts of quitting.

In this space the social construction of the labour market actively feeds into what is possible in the labour process — how difficult it is for employer to have high selection barriers into firms when finding and keeping workers is a problem; how problematic it is for quality management regimes when there is too much labour churn; and how job enlargements had to be abandoned due to the loss of skills and training caused by high exits and as a result ‘fool-proofing’ jobs became more widespread. In other words, labour mobility has outcomes for work organization and management control.

Smith and McKinlay (2009: 13) show how employers have objectively significant power reserves over effort and mobility in the creative industries sector and workers have difficulty actualizing effort and mobility power in their favour **[Authorquery: Smith and McKinlay 2009 is not listed in references. However, there is an entry for McKinlay and Smith 2009. Is this the one being referred to here?]**. But on the other side of the account, the person-specific nature of creative labour means the substitutability of labour is harder despite excessive labour supply; the use of networks for recruitment advantages workers (‘in the know’), and the perishable nature of creative products give workers bargaining power.

Mobility power can be for the purpose of the preparation or continued extended reproduction of labour power – for education, training or developmental purposes. In this case employers seek to determine MP in their favour by controlling access to resources that most enhance the value of labour power in contemporary capitalism, namely a continuously trained, educated and knowledgeable workforce. Clearly, such training also increases the open market value of labour power for the worker but through company-specific or mediated training, and not generic packages, it is expected that workers **[Authorquery: possessive for workers?]** MP will be more contained. There are struggles between employers and workers over training labour power — workers might want access to training resources in the firm to maintain their labour power for the market; employers might want to get workers engaged in productive work to increase profitability (Barley and Kunda, 2004). There can also be culture clashes in transnational firms – the Japanese managers in Telford cases studies of Elger and Smith (2005) where shocked that local workers did not remain after receiving extended training as would

have been the case in Japan. For the workers, converting training into market opportunity was part of the British way.

Mobility can come through types of employment contracts – the growth of agency work increases the movement of labour between employers. The contracting out of work, has been seen as positive for the employer in the ‘flexible firm’ and flexibility debates, which argue, in my terms, that flexibility gave employers more MP by allowing them to determine the employment status of workers and move them off secure contracts into less secure ones or out of the organization altogether – something developed in the 1980s as trade unions lost their power to prevent contracting out work from the firm. The ‘flexible firm’ ideal type has segments of labour on packages of employment contracts, with different claims on the resources of the firm. Ideologically workers might possess ‘freedom’ to work through an employment agency rather than being *dependent* on one organization as an employee, but this is often the consequence of a constrained choice (Forde and Slater, 2005; Hoque and Kirkpatrick, 2006) **[Authorquery: Hoque and Kirkpatrick, 2006 is not listed in references]**. Agency workers experience loss of non-pay benefits and training opportunities, increased insecurity and limited choice over job assignments (Platman, 2004); and the less explicit costs associated with marginalization and the potential experience of being treated as an ‘outsider’.

But contracting also positively affects the MP of workers, especially more skilled workers in industries with high rates of knowledge obsolescence – that is where labour power needs more knowledge for realization. Research on the positives of contracting suggests that managing labour mobility power more directly converts or perhaps reinforces the ‘free agent’ position of waged labour which had been contained through bureaucratization of jobs within internal labour markets of large corporations (see Kunda, Barley and Evans et al., (2002); and Barley and Kunda, (2004) for the best ethnography on ‘itinerant professionals in a knowledge economy’ and the movement between employee and contractor status as labour markets fluctuate). Workers receive greater financial rewards through the external labour market compared ~~to~~ with internal job ladders – markets pay more than internal promotions under certain conditions. ‘Free agents’ have greater choices compared with being tied to one employer, aligning MP and EP more within the determination of the worker, although movements in and out of

employee status as wages and work for contractors fluctuates (Barley and Kunda, 2004: 319) suggests that going back into the bureaucracy was still the outcome for the minority of the Barley and Kunda's sample of engineers. Other positives of 'free agents' is that work-life balance becomes easier, especially for women workers, who may want to work part-time and going solo or through a temporary employment agency might be the only way to get part-time employment (Meiksins and Whalley, 2002: 86 on women engineers).

Contracting out in the public sector has highlighted the interaction between the degradation of work within the public bureaucracy (through obsessive targets of New Public Management) and changes in the original effort bargain (especially for older public sector workers) which provide the preconditions for workers opting for contracting out as 'free agents'. Grimshaw et al.'s (2003: 283) research on supply teachers argues decisions 'to go agency' might be 'interpreted as a form of individualized resistance against the denigration of professional standards'. In my terms using the external labour market means workers getting more determination over their MP, but within a general framework of employers and the state promoting contracting out and deregulations for fiscal and ideological reasons.

Struggles between labour and capital over internal recruitment and selection, is often a balance between an employer recognising that a certain category of worker will move more quickly, but also that they may be more productive or quicker to train when in work – hence a trade-off between efficiency and mobility. Zheng (2009: chapter 6) illustrates this nicely in one of her case studies:

"Let's face it, our employee won't stay long. They are fresh, they are young, and they change their gadgets, their girlfriends and their jobs. But at least they learn things very fast. If we recruit more experienced workers, they will still move but they are much less flexible in accepting how things are done in our factory" (Production Manager, TexA, Chinese, male, 38)

Granovetter's (1995) work on the use of 'job banks' by workers shows how mobility opportunities are accumulated through workplace relationships to help workers navigate through the labour market for strategic purposes.

Skill provides workers with power in the labour process. Hence, when managing skilled workers, employers are forced to confront the *mobility power* of labour in the form of an asset that cannot easily be replaced or removed. Braverman expresses this idea:

*‘The ideal organization toward which the capitalist strives is one in which the worker possess[Authorquery: possesses?] no basic skill upon which the enterprise is dependent and no historical knowledge of the past of the enterprise to serve as a fund from which to draw on in daily work, but rather where everything is codified in rules of performance or laid down in lists that may be consulted (by machines or computers, for instance), so that the worker really becomes an interchangeable part and may be exchanged for another worker with little disruption.’ (Braverman, 1994: 24–25, emphasis added).*

Faced with the mobility power that skill provides, employers counter worker power by: (i) increasing the supply lines through industry-wide or employer-level agreements (along German lines); or (ii) internalizing skill development within the firm, and not within the occupational group or individual, and building competitive barriers between employers (as in Japan). In both strategies, employers are trying to adapt to potential mobility power of skill; and the German and Japanese country level strategies indicate that a zero-sum game suggested by Braverman has too much of an Anglo-American bias, where skills are formed in occupations, accumulated through professions and crafts that act autonomously of large firms and concerted cooperative efforts of employers.

## Conclusion – Putting Mobility into Labour Power

Capital and labour have mutuality in that profits cannot be made without labour power; and wages cannot be made without labour power being realized within a labour process. The imperative of capture and control of labour power falls to management; the imperative of getting labour power into the labour process (put simply, *of working*) is that of the worker. Indeterminacies of effort and mobility power (finding efficient worker who will stay; finding fair employers and jobs that are regular) creates mutualities that ensure circulation of labour and free flow of labour is not continuous – but that



organisations capture, contain and retain for long periods, *particular* workers. Given the scale of capitalism, other agencies develop to institutionalise and facilitate these exchanges (states, large firms, trade unions, employment or labour supply agencies, etc.) but theoretically they act to represent or mediate these two interests and for the purposes of this chapter it has been necessary to retain focus on capital and labour dynamics.

As noted in the introduction to this chapter, labour power acquires *fixity* – by task, temporality and place — by practising one occupation or skill (*task fixity*); or working for one employer for many years (*temporal fixity*); or living in a particular place or community – a sort of *place fixity*. The changes to the labour supply, capital mobility, technological changes and contracts described above have altered these sources of stability or fixity and increased the conversion rates of labour power (the need for job or occupational changes – especially the need to acquire skills to maintain labour power); **a** Altered the length of stay with one organisation – although this remains comparatively uneven; and stretched the linkages of people to places, either through longer travel to work times, or changing work from *a place to an activity*, or moving work across borders at a higher rate.

Figuratively, labour power is variable capital for the capitalist, but not for the worker. The ideas of labour power as ‘capital’ – intellectual capital, skills, assets, resources, property – can only be symbolically capital within capitalist relations of production. The capitalist can liquidate fixed capital, transform it into money and put the money in the bank. Labour power cannot be banked in this way and has utility only in action. Labour power can only be stored at the individual level, in the body of the worker who must actively take it into the world of work in order to secure a wage, or ensure the consumption and valorisation of labour power. Labour power can be ‘stored’ *socially* through occupations (professions with exclusionary rules); organisation (large firms with strong internal labour markets); social networks (family, kin and place networks, typical of migrant labour); industrial districts/communities (mining, company towns, industrial communities); social class – workers store of collective identity and organisations – **e.g. for example**, trade unions (craft/work rules of job boundaries, and transfers of jobs through father-to-son dynasties) – London printers before

computerization, for example (Cockburn, 1983) **[Authorquery: Please approve addition of closing parenthesis]**.

Stores are ‘fictive’ and vulnerable because labour power is not ‘property’ like capital and the need to animate labour power through the labour process in order to secure exchange/realization (and wages) forever requires labour power to seek out capital. Stores are also vulnerable to change as a result of class struggle between labour and capital around the double indeterminacy of labour. A *flow perspective* on the labour process developed in this chapter is at odds with popular ‘resource-based views of the firm’; versions of HRM, with ‘high commitment workplace’ perspectives; and with ‘organization-centric models of capitalism’ **[Authorquery: Are these quotes from any other source?]**. All these approaches represent labour power as fixed, centred and located, rather than moving and dynamic – with mobility-capability that means it is not actually a resource of the individual firm, but the worker. Resource based theories represent the employer’s perspective on containing labour mobility as something positive for both workers (guaranteeing access to work) and employers (securing access to labour). A flow perspective brings in mobility, turnover, migration, employment contracts and challenges the orthodoxy of the ‘resource-based model’ in HR. Future research on the labour process needs to have this broadened conception of labour power.

## Notes

1. This chapter was first presented as a rough set of power point slides at the 26th Annual International Labour Process Conference, 18–20th March 2008, University College, Dublin, Ireland **[Authorquery: Changed the italics for the conference name to roman]**. I am very grateful to the comments received from those that attended my presentation at that conference. The ideas within the ~~paper–chapter were built~~ upon my 2006 ~~Work, Employment and Society~~ article, “The dDouble iIndeterminacy of lLabour pPower: lLabour eEffort and lLabour mMobility” in *Work, Employment and Society* (2006). That ~~article~~ in turn grew out of projects and debates on labour turnover in the UK and elsewhere with my long-standing research partner, Tony Elger. I have applied the ideas of labour power as having two elements (labour effort and labour mobility) that both workers and employers seek to manage and dominate in a sector analysis through my 2009 joint chapter with Alan McKinlay “Creative Industries and Labour Process Analysis”. I have also applied it at a national level with work on Chinese migrant workers with Ngia Pun (2007). The aim of this chapter is to restate the utility of the analytical framework for the study of the workplace in the twenty-first century. A *flow perspective* is in contrast to ‘resource-based’ theories of the firm that seek to make normative judgements about the value and possibility of fixing labour to the firm and employer for the good of both, rather than more dispassionately identifying the permanent tensions between capital and labour over the freedoms of effort and mobility power.
2. <sup>‡</sup> <http://www.unctad.org/Templates/webflyer.asp?docid=7456&intItemID=1465&lang=1>

3. <sup>±</sup> “According to a recent paper by Rhoades and Slaughter “the structure of professional employment on campus is changing in ways that move faculty away from the center of academic decision making and unbundle the involvement of full-time faculty in the curriculum. For example, other professionals (e.g., in teaching centers) are increasingly being identified as “the experts” with regard to pedagogy; the emphasis is on learning, not teaching (making the teacher less central to the process); and the curriculum is being divided into a set of tasks performed by various personnel rather than all being performed by the single faculty member who is developing the course.”

[http://www.aft.org/pubs-reports/american\\_academic/issues/june04/Rhoades.qxp.pdf](http://www.aft.org/pubs-reports/american_academic/issues/june04/Rhoades.qxp.pdf)

4. <sup>±</sup> “The global labour force comprised over three billion workers. Of these, 84 per cent lived in the developing countries of Asia and the Pacific region, Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, as well as the transition countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) and south-eastern Europe (ILO, 2006b). **[Authorquery: None of the ILO entries are listed in references. Are they inside the quote?]**

- Women represented around 40 per cent of the world’s labour force (1.22 billion).
- 2.85 billion individuals aged 15 and above were employed. However, about half did not earn enough to raise themselves above the poverty line of two U.S. dollars a day. These figures are the same as those of ten years ago. Agriculture had the highest employment share (40.1%) as compared to industry (21%) and services (38.9%) (ILO, 2006a).
- The global unemployment rate was 6.3 per cent (ILO, 2006a), affecting some 191.8 million people, with young persons accounting for approximately half of the unemployed, a relatively high proportion given that they represented only 25 per cent of the total working age population (ILO, 2006a).
- 86 million persons were identified as migrant workers (ILO, 2006c).
- TNCs comprised 77,000 parent companies with over 770,000 foreign affiliates, the latter employing some 62 million workers (UNCTAD, 2006).

66 million workers were employed in Export Processing Zones (EPZs), mainly women (Singa Boyenge, 2007).

- 565,000 jobs were offshore (Farrell et al., 2005). **[Authorquery: Please approve the addition of closing quote]**

{source: **[Authorquery: Is this source for the above quote or should it be inside the quote?]** [http://www.iom.int/jahia/webdav/site/myjahiasite/shared/shared/mainsite/published\\_docs/studies\\_and\\_reports/WMR2008/Ch1\\_WMR08.pdf](http://www.iom.int/jahia/webdav/site/myjahiasite/shared/shared/mainsite/published_docs/studies_and_reports/WMR2008/Ch1_WMR08.pdf)

5. <sup>±</sup> [http://www.iom.int/jahia/webdav/site/myjahiasite/shared/shared/mainsite/published\\_docs/studies\\_and\\_reports/WMR2008/Ch1\\_WMR08.pdf](http://www.iom.int/jahia/webdav/site/myjahiasite/shared/shared/mainsite/published_docs/studies_and_reports/WMR2008/Ch1_WMR08.pdf)

6. <sup>±</sup> “Currently, the only free movement regime operating on a large scale is found in a regional setting, i.e. the EU. While labour mobility is covered in bilateral labour or trade agreements or regional integration frameworks, such movement occurs mainly on the basis of unilaterally devised immigration policies.” page 40:  
[http://www.iom.int/jahia/webdav/site/myjahiasite/shared/shared/mainsite/published\\_docs/studies\\_and\\_reports/WMR2008/Ch1\\_WMR08.pdf](http://www.iom.int/jahia/webdav/site/myjahiasite/shared/shared/mainsite/published_docs/studies_and_reports/WMR2008/Ch1_WMR08.pdf)

7. <sup>±</sup> “Circular migration is largely driven by labour market segmentation, as populations in prosperous destination areas are, or become, reluctant to perform low-wage, low-status, seasonal or physically demanding work. More often than not, the dirtiest, most dangerous and most difficult jobs (“3D” jobs) are performed by migrants who belong to the lowest segments of society; lower castes and tribes in the case of India, and ethnic minorities elsewhere. Segmentation is best captured through in-depth case studies that gather detailed information on ethnicity, occupations and seasonal movements.”  
<http://www.odi.org.uk/resources/details.asp?id=2600&title=managing-labour-mobility-evolving-global-economy>

8. <sup>1</sup> “In 2005, China had the fastest growing economy in the world and also the highest level of economic inequality in East Asia (Balisacan et al., 2005). Such internal regional differences have been an important cause of migration, especially since the mid-1990s (Song, 2004). The number of internal migrants has increased dramatically over the past two decades from about 26 million in 1988 to 126 million in 2004, a majority of whom are circular rural-urban migrants who retain strong links with their rural family. Current projections suggest that between 12 and 13 million migrants will move to urban areas each year over the next two decades, and the actual numbers will depend on the extent to which the household registration (*hukou*) system is relaxed. Around 70 per cent of migrants are aged between 16 and 35, and they generally view migration as an intermediary period in their life between leaving middle school and settling down to marry and having children (Murphy, 2006). Roughly a third of Chinese migrants return to their native homes as it is extremely difficult for them to find permanent white-collar jobs on which they would be able to retire (Murphy, 2006).” <http://www.odi.org.uk/resources/details.asp?id=2600&title=managing-labour-mobility-evolving-global-economy>.
9. <sup>1</sup> In the United State, the proportion of the workforce employed long-term [more than 10 years with current employer] is approximately 31% but in the European Union it is approximately 45% (Bureau of Labour Statistics, 2001) **[Authorquery: Bureau of Labour Statistics is not listed in references]**. Unlike the US where the increase in long-service employment occurs only in women, in the European Union long-term employment has increased for both males and females. (Doogan, 2003: 6) **[Authorquery: Is the note a direct quote from Doogan?]**
- ~~10.~~<sup>1</sup> 10. Marx, Vol 1 Capital at <http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1867-c1/ch06.htm#n2> **[Typesetter: <http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1867-c1/ch06.htm#n2> is a part of note 10 and not a separate note]**
11. <sup>1</sup> Ellem uses Beynon and Hudson to highlight this dichotomy: “capital seeks “a (temporary) space for profitable production” whereas for workers spaces are different from and more than this. They are “places in which to live, places in which they have considerable individual and collective cultural investment” (Beynon and Hudson 1993, p. 182). Beynon and Hudson suggest that “space [is] the domain of capital” while places are “the meaningful situations established by labour” (Beynon and Hudson 1993, p. 182).” I would suggest this reading of the power imbalances is rooted in an older industrial era of relative labour immobilities – with increased migration within and between countries, with extended travel-to-work times, with improved communications, with the application of ICTs to disperse work away from a fixed point, there is a displacement of labour from place, but nevertheless the possibilities of social solidarities developing through these communication devices and through social networks that become more significant in modern work forms. See Elger and Smith (2005: 97–98).

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## Notes

<sup>1</sup> This chapter was first presented as a rough set of power point slides at the 26<sup>th</sup> Annual *International Labour Process Conference* 18–20th March 2008, University College, Dublin, Ireland. I am very grateful to the comments received from those that attended my presentation at that conference. The ideas within the paper build upon my 2006 *Work, Employment and Society* article, "The double indeterminacy of labour power: labour effort and labour mobility". That in turn grew out of projects and debates on labour turnover in the UK and elsewhere with my long standing research partner, Tony Elger. I have applied the ideas of labour power as having two elements (labour effort and labour mobility) that both workers and employers seek to manage and dominate in a sector analysis through my 2009 joint chapter with Alan McKinlay "Creative Industries and Labour Process Analysis". I have also applied it at a national level

with work on Chinese migrant workers with Ngia Pun (2007). The aim of this chapter is to restate the utility of the analytical framework for the study of the workplace in the twenty-first century. A *flow* perspective is in contrast to 'resource-based' theories of the firm that seek to make normative judgements about the value and possibility of fixing labour to the firm and employer for the good of both, rather than more dispassionately identifying the permanent tensions between capital and labour over the freedoms of effort and mobility power.

<sup>2</sup><http://www.unctad.org/Templates/webflyer.asp?docid=7456&intItemID=1465&lang=1>

<sup>3</sup>According to a recent paper by Rhoades and Slaughter "the structure of professional employment on campus is changing in ways that move faculty away from the center of academic decision making and unbundle the involvement of full time faculty in the curriculum. For example, other professionals (e.g., in teaching centers) are increasingly being identified as "the experts" with regard to pedagogy; the emphasis is on learning, not teaching (making the teacher less central to the process); and the curriculum is being divided into a set of tasks performed by various personnel rather than all being performed by the single faculty member who is developing the course." [http://www.aft.org/pubs-reports/american\\_academic/issues/june04/Rhoades.qxp.pdf](http://www.aft.org/pubs-reports/american_academic/issues/june04/Rhoades.qxp.pdf)

<sup>4</sup>"The global labour force comprised over three billion workers. Of these, 84 per cent lived in the developing countries of Asia and the Pacific region, Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, as well as the transition countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) and south-eastern Europe (ILO, 2006b).

- Women represented around 40 per cent of the world's labour force (1.22 billion).

- 2.85 billion individuals aged 15 and above were employed. However, about half did not earn enough to raise themselves above the poverty line of two U.S. dollars a day. These figures are the same as those of ten years ago. Agriculture had the highest employment share (40.1%) as compared to industry (21%) and services (38.9%) (ILO, 2006a).

- The global unemployment rate was 6.3 per cent (ILO, 2006a), affecting some 191.8 million people, with young persons accounting for approximately half of the unemployed, a relatively high proportion given that they represented only 25 per cent of the total working age population (ILO, 2006a).

- 86 million persons were identified as migrant workers (ILO, 2006c).

- TNCs comprised 77,000 parent companies with over 770,000 foreign affiliates, the latter employing some 62 million workers (UNCTAD, 2006).

- 66 million workers were employed in Export Processing Zones (EPZs), mainly women (Singa-Boyenge, 2007).

- 565,000 jobs were offshore (Farrell et al., 2005).

(source: [http://www.iom.int/jahia/webdav/site/myjahiasite/shared/shared/mainsite/published\\_docs/studies\\_and\\_reports/WMR2008/Ch1\\_WMR08.pdf](http://www.iom.int/jahia/webdav/site/myjahiasite/shared/shared/mainsite/published_docs/studies_and_reports/WMR2008/Ch1_WMR08.pdf))

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[http://www.iom.int/jahia/webdav/site/myjahiasite/shared/shared/mainsite/published\\_docs/studies\\_and\\_reports/WMR2008/Ch1\\_WMR08.pdf](http://www.iom.int/jahia/webdav/site/myjahiasite/shared/shared/mainsite/published_docs/studies_and_reports/WMR2008/Ch1_WMR08.pdf)

<sup>6</sup>"Currently, the only free movement regime operating on a large scale is found in a regional setting, i.e. the EU. While labour mobility is covered in bilateral labour or trade agreements or regional integration frameworks, such movement occurs mainly on the basis of unilaterally devised immigration policies." page 40: [http://www.iom.int/jahia/webdav/site/myjahiasite/shared/shared/mainsite/published\\_docs/studies\\_and\\_reports/WMR2008/Ch1\\_WMR08.pdf](http://www.iom.int/jahia/webdav/site/myjahiasite/shared/shared/mainsite/published_docs/studies_and_reports/WMR2008/Ch1_WMR08.pdf)

<sup>7</sup>"Circular migration is largely driven by labour market segmentation, as populations in prosperous destination areas are, or become, reluctant to perform low wage, low status, seasonal or physically demanding work. More often than not, the dirtiest, most dangerous and most difficult jobs ("3D" jobs) are performed by migrants who belong to the lowest segments of society; lower castes and tribes in the case of India, and ethnic minorities elsewhere. Segmentation is best captured through in-depth case studies that gather detailed information on ethnicity, occupations and seasonal movements." <http://www.odi.org.uk/resources/details.asp?id=2600&title=managing-labour-mobility-evolving-global-economy>

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<sup>8</sup> "In 2005, China had the fastest growing economy in the world and also the highest level of economic inequality in East Asia (Balisacan et al., 2005). Such internal regional differences have been an important cause of migration, especially since the mid 1990s (Song, 2004). The number of internal migrants has increased dramatically over the past two decades from about 26 million in 1988 to 126 million in 2004, a majority of whom are circular rural-urban migrants who retain strong links with their rural family. Current projections suggest that between 12 and 13 million migrants will move to urban areas each year over the next two decades, and the actual numbers will depend on the extent to which the household registration (*hukou*) system is relaxed. Around 70 per cent of migrants are aged between 16 and 35, and they generally view migration as an intermediary period in their life between leaving middle school and settling down to marry and having children (Murphy, 2006). Roughly a third of Chinese migrants return to their native homes as it is extremely difficult for them to find permanent white collar jobs on which they would be able to retire (Murphy, 2006)". <http://www.odi.org.uk/resources/details.asp?id=2600&title=managing-labour-mobility-evolving-global-economy>

<sup>9</sup> In the United State the proportion of the workforce employed long term [more than 10 years with current employer] is approximately 31% but in the European Union it is approximately 45% (Bureau of Labour Statistics, 2001). Unlike the US where the increase in long service employment occurs only in women, in the European Union long term employment has increased for both males and females. (Doogan, 2003: 6)

<sup>10</sup> Marx, Vol 1 Capital at  
<http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1867-c1/ch06.htm#n2>

<sup>11</sup> Ellem uses Beynon and Hudson to highlight this dichotomy: "capital seeks 'a (temporary) space for profitable production' whereas for workers spaces are different from and more than this. They are 'places in which to live, places in which they have considerable individual and collective cultural investment' (Beynon and Hudson 1993, p. 182). Beynon and Hudson suggest that 'space [is] the domain of capital' while places are 'the meaningful situations established by labour' (Beynon and Hudson 1993, p. 182)." I would suggest this reading of the power imbalances is rooted in an older industrial era of relative labour immobilities — with increased migration within and between countries, with extended travel to work times, with improved communications, with the application of ICTs to disperse work away from a fixed point, there is a displacement of labour from place, but nevertheless the possibilities of social solidarities developing through these communication devices and through social networks that become more significant in modern work forms. See Elger and Smith (2005: 97-98).