Call for papers to the session

Work and Cities: Debating new forms of work and employment and work organization in cities

Urbanization has been and remains deeply entrenched with forms of economic organization and of work. Nevertheless, the interdependencies of cities and work have created little dialogue between the fields of urban studies and the sociology of work. Even though work has such a structuring function for everyday lives in cities, we hardly look into cities through the lens of ‘work’, how this structures everyday movements and experiences, the exercise of collective power, or the production and reproduction of social life in the city. This panel aims at bringing together and interrelating these subject areas in order to discuss changing forms of production and work relations in cities.

For example, in the current transformation towards a more global, knowledge-based and digital economy, what we understand as “employment” and “work” is rapidly changing (Castells, 2009; Doody, Chen, & Goldstein, 2016; Neff, 2013, Merrifield, 2000; Ross, 2010) and more often people have to create employment for themselves (Broughton & Richards, 2016; Langevag & Gough, 2012). Furthermore, work takes place in multiple sites and spaces (Brennan-Horley, 2010; Steyaert & Katz, 2004), creating new interlinkages and communities in cities, redefining notions of centrality, proximity etc. This has consequences for the way we live together in cities, for the access to resources in cities, and for the way cities are organized. Especially the spheres of production and reproduction do not remain clear cut realms. This blurring of boundaries is retraceable on a spatial level but also in terms of practices and socialities that traditionally defined these two spheres (such as caring, cleaning, housekeeping or mothering) (see e.g. McDowell, 1997; Ekinsmyth, 2011).

The panel aims at discussing the changing perception and manifestation of work in order to understand its spatial implications but also new challenges for distributive policies and global urban justice. Our main aim is to discuss issues of global urban justice in the sense of urban inequalities arising around the changing spatial and practical manifestations of work. For this paper session, we especially welcome conceptual and methodological accounts as well as detailed empirical illustrations from cities around the world that address different aspects of work on cities such as materialities, global networks, organization, exclusion/inclusion as well as new socialities and spaces.

We welcome abstracts of between 300 - 500 words, which should be sent to the conference organisers: rc21@leeds.ac.uk AND to ourselves: workincities@gmail.com.

The deadline for abstract submission is Friday 10 March 2017.

Further details can be found on the conference website: https://rc21leeds2017.wordpress.com/.

We are looking forward to your contributions!

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References (Selection):