

Employment and the Crisis: Work, Migration, Unemployment

**A Research Symposium
Friday 11 March 2011**

Trinity College Dublin



COLÁISTE NA TRÍONÓIDE, BAILE ÁTHA CLIATH | TRINITY COLLEGE DUBLIN
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The Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI) is one of Europe's leading research centres in the social sciences. Its main focus is research on economic and social change in Ireland in the new global context. The ESRI produces research that contributes to understanding economic and social change and that informs public policymaking and civil society in Ireland and throughout the European Union.

The Employment Research Centre (ERC) is a group of researchers at Trinity College Dublin who focus on interdisciplinary research into employment policies and practices in Ireland and Europe. The ERC is located within the School of Social Sciences and Philosophy and associated with the Department of Sociology. ERC research projects have explored issues such as women's work in the Irish information technology sector, the role of third level education in regional development, the development of labour market flexibility within small European countries and changes in employment and the European social model.

The Policy Institute aims to promote active debate and engagement between the academic and policy communities. Based in the School of Social Sciences and Philosophy at Trinity College Dublin, the Institute's programme of activities has included delivering a range of public events, hosting visiting scholars and publishing a series of *Studies in Public Policy*, which provide short, rigorous, but accessible analyses of policy issues. During 2011 the Institute will host a programme of public conferences and seminars which highlight the contribution of philosophy and social science to current public issues.

Research Symposium Programme

9.00-9.30am	Registration and Coffee
9.30-9.45am	Welcome - Elaine Moriarty, TCD Overview of Day - Philip O'Connell, ESRI
9.45-11.15am	Session 1 - Trade Unions, Industrial Relations and the Crisis Chair: James Wickham, TCD Richard Hyman - London School of Economics and Political Science <i>The European Context</i> Tom Prosser - Trinity College Dublin <i>Trade Union Responses in Ireland and Spain Compared</i> Michael Doherty - Dublin City University <i>Crisis and Collapse of Social Partnership in Ireland</i>
11.15-11.30am	Coffee/Tea
11.30am-1.00pm	Session 2 - Migration and Mobility Chair: Fran McGinnity, ESRI Peter Mühlau - Trinity College Dublin <i>Recession and Newly Arrived Immigrants – Results from the 'Polonia in Dublin' Study</i> James Wickham - Trinity College Dublin <i>Emigration Again – Ireland 1980s, Poland 2000s, Ireland 2010s...</i> Elaine Moriarty - Trinity College Dublin and Torben Krings - Johannes Kepler Universität Linz, Austria <i>"I would go back to Poland and then what?" Migrant Stories in Post-Celtic Tiger Ireland</i>
1.00-2.00pm	Lunch (sandwich lunch provided)
2.00-3.30pm	Session 3 – Employment and Unemployment in the Recession Chair: Peter Mühlau, TCD Elish Kelly, Seamus McGuinness and Philip O'Connell – ESRI, Dublin <i>Training the Unemployed During Recession?</i> Camille Loftus – University College Dublin <i>Better Off on the Dole?</i> Nata Duvvury – NUI, Galway <i>Gender, Employment and Recession: Trends and Impacts</i>
3.30-3.45pm	Coffee/Tea
3.45-5.15pm	Session 4 - The Experience of Recession: Income and Work Chair: Philip O'Connell, ESRI Helen Russell - ESRI, Dublin <i>Over-Indebtedness in Irish Households</i> Fran McGinnity and Helen Russell – ESRI, Dublin <i>Employees in Recession: Working Conditions and Well-Being</i> Brian Nolan - University College Dublin and Bertrand Maître – ESRI, Dublin <i>Poverty and Inequality in the Crisis</i>
5.15-5.45pm	Conclusion: The View From Outside Chair: Tom Prosser, TCD Klaus Dörre - Uni-Jena, Germany <i>Precarious Work – Consequences for German Trade Unions</i>
5.45-6.00pm	Close of Symposium James Wickham - Trinity College Dublin <i>Conclusion and Wrap Up</i>

Welcome

James Wickham

Trinity College Dublin

Philip O'Connell

Economic and Social Research Institute



Welcome to the *Employment and the Crisis: Work, Migration, Unemployment* Research Symposium.

Today's symposium is being organised by the TCD Policy Institute and the Employment Research Centre *MSc in European Employment Studies* in collaboration with the Economic and Social Research Institute, Dublin.

Ireland has been in crisis for over two years. This crisis is widely perceived as not just an economic crisis, but a political, social and even moral crisis. What is happening, why it did happen and what solutions exist – all are matters of lively public debate. Nonetheless the social scientific contribution to the discussion was initially restricted almost entirely to economists. More recently, as the political crisis has deepened, there have been a few welcome contributions to public debate from political scientists and contemporary historians. Yet there has been so far largely a public silence about what is happening in the workplace and even the labour market is only discussed in macro-economic terms.

This symposium brings together ongoing research on employment and unemployment in Ireland today; it places the Irish experience in some comparative context; it aims to stimulate more research as soon as possible.

We would like to welcome our distinguished speakers and from Ireland, England, Austria and Germany and to thank them for their contribution to the programme. We hope that you will find today's symposium stimulating and enjoyable.

The European Context

Richard Hyman

London School of Economics and Political Science



Speaker Biography

Richard Hyman is Emeritus Professor of Industrial Relations at the LSE and is founding editor of the *European Journal of Industrial Relations*. He has written extensively on the themes of industrial relations, collective bargaining, trade unionism, industrial conflict and labour market policy, and is author of a dozen books (including *Strikes* and *Industrial Relations: A Marxist Introduction*) as well as numerous journal articles and book chapters. He co-edited the 17-country text *Changing Industrial Relations in Europe* (Blackwell, 1998). His comparative study *Understanding European Trade Unionism: Between Market, Class and Society* (Sage, 2001) is widely cited by scholars working in this field. He is currently working on a book for Oxford University Press comparing trade union strategies in ten European countries.

Overview of Presentation

We should not speak of the crisis in the singular. The financial crisis that unfolded in 2008 generated a more general economic crisis, involving in some countries an employment crisis. Government rescue measures precipitated a fiscal crisis, linked in some cases to a sovereign debt crisis. After brief signs that the recipes of neoliberalism might be abandoned, the policy responses at both EU and national level have created an austerity crisis. An unfolding social and political crisis is a logical outcome.

Though there are some parallels with previous crises, there are also important differences; hence there are no road maps for the industrial relations outcomes. Initially there were two opposing prognoses: one was that trade unions would be driven towards new types of social and industrial conflict; the other was a reinforcement of processes of dialogue and partnership at company and national level in order to reach negotiated outcomes. What we have seen so far is a complex and contradictory combination of both. As the austerity measures bite, consensual solutions seem far less attainable, and we can expect heightened confrontation, as is already apparent in several European countries. But this can take many different forms, and sustaining a coordinated trade union response will be challenging.

Trade Union Responses in Ireland and Spain Compared

Tom Prosser

Trinity College Dublin



Speaker Biography

Thomas Prosser became Lecturer at Trinity College's Department of Sociology in September 2010. Prior to this, he was Research Fellow at Warwick University's Industrial Relations Research Unit, where he worked on the Unit's contract with the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions and taught at undergraduate and postgraduate level. He also completed a PhD at Warwick University in the field of European industrial relations under the supervision of Professor Paul Marginson. Thomas's research interests include European industrial relations and social policy, EU-level 'soft' law, workforce restructuring, and executive compensation regulation. He has expert consultancy experience with the European Commission and International Labour Organization, and has appeared in the international media discussing workforce restructuring. He has also worked as a visiting fellow at the University of Copenhagen and L'Université Catholique de Louvain in Belgium.

Overview of Presentation

The economic crisis that has struck Ireland and Spain in the last few years has shaken the economic and political foundations of both countries. One particularly interesting aspect of the crisis from the perspective of employment has been the response of trade union movements in Ireland and Spain to the crisis. Trade unions in both countries have entered into alliances with the public authorities and engaged in social dialogue at the level of the firm in order to promote the competitiveness of the countries and to safeguard jobs and the quality of employment. In this presentation I will ask what institutional, political, and economic factors explain the differing responses of Irish and Spanish trade unions to the economic crisis and will also outline an agenda for future research.

Crisis and Collapse of Social Partnership in Ireland

Michael Doherty

Dublin City University



Speaker Biography

Michael Doherty is a lecturer in law in the School of Law and Government and a member of the Socio-Legal Research Centre at Dublin City University. He attended the Honourable Society of Kings' Inns from 2000-2002 and was called to the Irish Bar in October 2002. He has lectured, primarily, on Employment Law and Policy and EU Law at DCU since 2004 and was the Director of Undergraduate Studies in the School of Law and Government from 2007-2010. His research interests are in the areas of employment and labour law and policy, industrial relations (especially the role of trade unions) and social partnership. He has published widely in national and international journals on these topics and is a frequent media contributor on labour market issues. He is co-author of *Principles of Irish Employment Law* (published in 2010 by Clarus Press). He is also a National Rapporteur on Employment Law to the International Academy of Comparative Law and has recently completed an EU-funded project on the working and living conditions of posted workers.

Overview of Presentation

Ireland has always been categorised as one of the unlikely countries to engage with a corporatist strategy and much academic attention has focused on 'accounting for the Irish case' since the renewal of social partnership in the late 1980s. Given the absence of many of the 'institutional preconditions' for corporatist deals, and Ireland's Anglo-Saxon IR tradition, many were surprised at the seeming durability of the Irish partnership process.

However the cosy consensus of partnership has been rocked by the economic crisis and resulting recession, which has impacted more seriously, in terms of unemployment and economic decline, on Ireland than many of its European partners. In late-2009, the process effectively collapsed in the light of State and employer withdrawal from the Partnership Agreement signed in 2008 and the imposition of swingeing cuts to public sector pay, public services and social welfare in the most recent budget.

This presentation examines the key factors behind the collapse of the Irish social partnership process in 2010 and looks at some of the broader implications that can be drawn. It categorises the process as being driven by extreme pragmatism, rather than ideological conviction, on the part of the main actors and looks at how the shifting positions of the State, labour and capital, as well as the focus on processes over outcomes, led to the demise of the much-admired Irish model. The presentation also looks at the likely future development of Irish IR in the context of the crisis and the end of the partnership era.

Recession and Newly Arrived Immigrants – Results from the ‘Polonia in Dublin’ Study

Peter Mühlau

Trinity College Dublin



Speaker Biography

Peter Mühlau is Lecturer in European Employment Studies in the Department of Sociology at Trinity College Dublin. He joined the Employment Research Council in 2006. Peter has researched and published on employment and organisation issues. Main interests include comparative labour market and employment studies, the economic and social integration of immigrants and the changing organisation of work and its implications for social inequality and employee well-being.

Peter obtained a PhD in Social and Behavioural Sciences from the University of Groningen in 2000 and a MA in Sociology from the University of Bielefeld in 1988.

Overview of Presentation

Based on the analysis of a unique sample of Polish migrants, the paper examines the risk of job loss, the determinants of unemployment spells and occupational and earnings mobility of Polish migrants during the recession. It is also explored how different experiences shape work attitudes and well-being of migrants.

Emigration Again – Ireland 1980s, Poland 2000s, Ireland 2010s...

James Wickham

Trinity College Dublin



Speaker Biography

James Wickham is Associate Professor of Sociology at Trinity College Dublin where he directs the Employment Research Centre, chairs the Policy Institute and is Head of the School of Social Sciences and Philosophy. His current research focuses on employment and different forms of mobility, from migration to business air travel. He has just completed a research project on 'Migrant Careers and Aspirations' focusing on Polish migrants in Dublin. He is the author of *Gridlock: Dublin's Transport Crisis and the Future of the City*.

Overview of Presentation

This presentation questions the current national *moral panic* about emigration. Since the 1980s one feature of emigration is the relationship between education and emigration, and it is usually ignored that this continued through the Celtic Tiger years. In those years Polish immigration to Ireland showed features that are now common across Europe: new forms and motives for mobility amongst the well educated. In policy terms Poland's experience suggests strong lessons for what Irish governments must not do when confronted by mass emigration.

'I would go back to Poland and then what?' Migrant Stories in Post-Celtic Tiger Ireland

Elaine Moriarty

Trinity College Dublin

Torben Krings

Johannes Kepler Universität Linz, Austria



Speaker Biographies

Elaine Moriarty is Lecturer in Sociology at Trinity College Dublin. Elaine's teaching and research interests include migration, mobility, labour markets, qualitative research methods and race and ethnicity. Elaine recently completed a three year study of Polish migrants in the Irish labour market (2007-2010) as part of the Trinity Immigration Initiative. She is currently working on 'Work and Mobility in the New Europe: Polish migration to Ireland Post 2004' (with Wickham, Krings, Bobek and Salamonska), to be published by Manchester University Press, Spring 2012. Elaine has a B.Soc.Sc from UCC, an M.Phil in Ethnic and Racial Studies and a PhD in Sociology from TCD. She previously worked for Comhlámh, Development Workers in Global Solidarity and served as director of AFRi (Action From Ireland) amongst other NGOs.

Torben Krings is a lecturer and researcher at the Department of Economic and Organisational Sociology, Johannes Kepler University Linz. He previously worked as post-doctoral researcher at the Employment Research Centre at Trinity College Dublin. His main research interests include migration, industrial relations, work and employment, and European societies.

Overview of Presentation

The current economic crisis has instigated a new work environment for migrants who came to work and live in Ireland during the Celtic bubble of the 2000s. Now that Ireland has gone from 'boom to bust', there is evidence of a far more precarious situation for migrant workers with employer recruitment becoming more cautious and Irish nationals now willing to take on what were once perceived as 'migrant jobs'. Using data from a two-year qualitative panel study of Polish migrant workers in the Irish labour market, we demonstrate how the employment relationship has become more precarious at the micro level – through reduced working conditions, an intensification of work, an extension of work duties, and a greater propensity among employers to issue flexible contracts. Arguably, the choices of migrants are more constrained in a downturn. However, we also show that even in the context of a crisis, Polish migrants continue to see opportunities as they are not bound by a work permit and are more mobile than previous generations of European immigrants. For some migrants, the crisis precipitated an opportunity for diversification and entrepreneurship. Effects of the crisis have also manifested beyond the individual with social policy adjustments occurring which challenge social rights.

Training the Unemployed During Recession?

Elish Kelly,
Seamus McGuinness and
Philip O'Connell

*Economic and Social Research
Institute, Dublin*



Speaker Biographies

Elish Kelly joined the Economic and Social Research Institute as a Post Doctoral Fellow in September 2006, working in the Education and Labour Market Division. She received her Bachelors and Doctorate degrees in Economics from Trinity College Dublin. Her research interests include migration, the impact of education and training, school to work transitions, and equality and the labour market. Elish has undertaken extensive research on the socioeconomic determinants of professionals' migration. She is currently a Research Analyst investigating the impact of the recession on the labour market, and is also conducting research on sports participation in Ireland.

Seamus McGuinness joined the ESRI as a Research Officer in July 2007. Prior to this he held posts at the Northern Ireland Economic Research Centre, The Economic Research Institute of Northern Ireland and the Melbourne Institute of Applied Economic and Social Research (University of Melbourne). He obtained his PhD in economics from Queens University Belfast in 2003. His research interests relate primarily to the labour market and the economics of education, however, he has also published work on small business economics and regional economics.

Philip J. O'Connell is Research Professor and Head of Social Research at the ESRI. He received his doctorate from Indiana University, Bloomington and taught at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. He has been a consultant on human resource development and labour market issues to the European Commission and the OECD.

Most of his work focuses on the labour market. He has an enduring interest in equality at work and in access to employment, publishing papers on wage inequality, on working conditions and workplace practices, on the transition from unemployment and non-employment to work, and on the experience of migrant workers in Ireland. He has been particularly focused on education and training in the labour market. He has written several books on the determinants and effects of work-related education and training, and published papers on this and other labour market issues in the leading peer-reviewed journals.

Current research interests include: continuing education and training of employed workers; active labour market programmes for the unemployed, equality in the labour market; working conditions and work-place change; and migration and integration.

Training the Unemployed During Recession?

Elish Kelly,
Seamus McGuinness and
Philip O'Connell

*Economic and Social Research
Institute, Dublin*



Overview of Presentation

Given the startling rise in unemployment in Ireland since 2008, an increasing amount of attention has been focused on the most appropriate form of unemployment activation policy. This paper uses a unique dataset, which tracks the labour market position of a cohort of unemployment claimants for almost two years, to consider this issue. The data contains information on both the individual characteristics of claimants and their experiences of activation measures. Previous research¹ based on this dataset revealed that while job search assistance had no positive impact on improving exit rates from unemployment, individuals who participated in FÁS training programmes were substantially less likely to be unemployed at the end of the two year study. This paper extends this analysis further by considering the differential impact of various types of training programme on successful labour market entry. We find that over three-quarters of FÁS training provision² is centred around low-skill or general training, with the remaining quarter focused on equipping claimants with medium-to- high level skills. Our provisional results suggest that the previously observed positive overall training effect is driven exclusively by the medium-high skill components of the training regime with little or no benefit deriving from low skill training provision. The results suggest that in an environment where reducing unemployment has become the primary policy concern, there are potentially substantial benefits to re-orientating current unemployment training provision more towards medium-to-high skill end of the market.

¹ McGuinness, S. P. J. O'Connell, E. Kelly and J.R Walsh. (2011). *Activation in Ireland: An Evaluation of the National Employment Action Plan*. ESRI Research Series, Dublin: The Economic and Social Research Institute (forthcoming).

² Measured in terms of training days.

Better Off on the Dole?

Camille Loftus

University College Dublin



Speaker Biography

Camille Loftus specialises in policy on welfare-to-work transitions and the labour market, with a focus on poverty and inequality, principally gender. Her experience includes front line service delivery, policy advocacy, and research and consultancy services. She has worked with a number of national social partner organisations including the Irish National Organisation of the Unemployed, OPEN (national lone parents network), Mandate trade union and the National Women's Council of Ireland; as well as with the WRC (social and economic consultants). She is a former member of the National Economic and Social Council, and has participated in social partnership deliberations on social welfare and tax reform, labour market policy, and the National Anti-Poverty Strategy. Currently, Camille is pursuing a Social Policy PhD on flexicurity and its application in the Irish context.

Overview of Presentation

That unemployed people are 'better off on the dole' is a view frequently expressed in media debates about the current crisis in the Irish labour market. It is a common conclusion that more cuts to welfare payments are required to preserve financial incentives to employment.

But the issue is a complicated one. Low paid workers frequently work less than 'full time' hours, and in sectors such as retail and hospitality, the flexibility demanded by employers can mean hours vary. For a significant minority, reliance on 'secondary benefits' further complicates the assessment of returns from employment. Medical card eligibility and childcare costs can be important considerations for those with children. In addition, the conditions governing eligibility for different welfare payments may shape participation decisions. The interaction of these various factors can mean that income security is far from guaranteed for low paid employees.

This presentation will consider financial incentives for low paid workers, what issues arise, and are likely to arise, given the current direction of policy on social welfare, tax, and low pay.

Gender, Employment and Recession: Trends and Impacts

Nata Duvvury

NUI, Galway



Speaker Biography

Nata Duvvury is Co-Director, Global Women's Studies Programme, at National University of Ireland, Galway. An economist by training she has extensive experience in international development with research interests in gender, livelihoods, governance and social mobilisation. She has done considerable work on gender inequality, women's work participation, economic consequences of gender based violence, and social protection. Her current research interests include gender impacts of the economic crisis, gender and pension reform, and gender inequality and economic growth.

Overview of Presentation

The current global financial and economic crisis is popularly labelled as a "hecession" given the sudden and dramatic decline in male employment across the globe, particularly in the industrialized countries and in Ireland. There is has been less attention in academic, policy and popular discourses on the trends for female employment/unemployment. This paper is concerned with the following questions: To what extent has the current economic crisis resulted in sharp increase in female unemployment relative to male unemployment in Ireland? What have been the gender shifts among those continuing to work? Has there been an increase in vulnerable employment? Is there a shifting gender order with more households relying on female income, i.e. an increase in female maintained households?

Over-Indebtedness in Irish Households

Helen Russell

Economic and Social Research Institute, Dublin



Speaker Biography

Helen Russell is an Associate Research Professor at the Economic and Social Research Institute. She is the Programme Coordinator for research on Social Inclusion and Social Cohesion and the Quality of Life, and is joint Programme co-ordinator for Equality Research. She is also a member of the management team of the Growing Up in Ireland study, a major longitudinal study of children in Ireland. She holds a D.Phil. in Sociology from the University of Oxford. Before joining the ESRI in 1998 she was a Junior Research Fellow at Nuffield College, University of Oxford. Her research covers a range of inter-connecting issues relating to equality, the labour market, the family and poverty/social inclusion.

Overview of Presentation

This presentation will draw on the new publication *Financial Exclusion and Over-indebtedness in Irish Households* (Russell, Maitre & Donnelly, 2011). While access to credit is an important element of modern economies the unprecedented growth in personal debt in Ireland in recent years is a cause for concern, since it is now coupled with severe economic recession, high levels of job loss and significant cuts in household income. Using data from the special module of 2008 EU SILC Survey carried out by the CSO this presentation will examine over-indebtedness in Irish households. We adopt the following definition of over-indebtedness “*People are over-indebted if their net resources (income and realisable assets) render them persistently unable to meet essential living expenses and debt repayments as they fall due.*” (Stamp 2009). Using EU recommendations, a composite measure of over-indebtedness is constructed based on persistent arrears, payment burden and illiquidity (inability to raise resources from other sources). The paper will present analysis of the characteristics of households that are over-indebted as well as the factors that trigger over-indebtedness.

The analysis shows that there is a strong connection between low income, poverty and over-indebtedness. Over-indebted households also have a higher rate of basic deprivation (which includes a lack of basic consumption items such as clothes, food and heating as well as social participation), secondary deprivation (which includes a lack of household durables, car, ability to take a week’s holidays away from home), environmental deprivation (which includes pollution, crime) and health deprivation (which includes limited activities due to health problems). These results suggest that income inadequacy rather than a high level of personal consumption is a key factor in over-indebtedness.

Employees in Recession: Working Conditions and Well-Being

Fran McGinnity and Helen Russell

Economic and Social Research Institute, Dublin



Speaker Biography

Frances McGinnity is a Senior Research Officer and joint programme coordinator, with Helen Russell, of Equality Research at the ESRI. She received her doctorate from Nuffield College Oxford in 2001 and came to the ESRI in 2004 from the Max Planck Institute for Human Development in Berlin, Germany. Most of her research to date has examined labour market inequality - unemployment, temporary employment, part-time work, gender and racial discrimination, often from a comparative perspective. She is also interested in work-life balance, time-use and migrant integration.

Overview of Presentation

While the recession has understandably re-established unemployment as a central labour market issue, it is also of interest to understand how the economic downturn has affected the working conditions and well-being of those who remain in jobs. Not only is this important for measuring the impact of recession on individual well-being, but the welfare of employees has wider economic implications, as their productivity is essential for recovery. Using data from the *NCPP/ESRI Changing Workplace Surveys* 2003 and 2009 of over 5000 employees this paper explores the impact of the recession on employees' working conditions and on work pressure, as a key indicator of well-being.

In this paper we first explore changes in working conditions by comparing key results from the 2003 and 2009 surveys, and examining employees' perception of change in their organisations and jobs. We then focus on changes in work pressure. The potential impact of recession on work pressure is somewhat ambiguous. While staff cuts and job insecurity may lead to increased work pressure, if there is a reduced demand for services and produce, workers may be under less intense pressure. Finally we model work pressure among employees in 2009, and test the impact of organisational level change (staff cuts, organisational change) and factors such as perceived insecurity.

Poverty and Inequality in the Crisis

Brian Nolan

University College Dublin

Bertrand Maître

Economic and Social Research Institute, Dublin



Speaker Biographies

Brian Nolan is Professor of Public Policy in the School of Applied Social Science, UCD, Dublin. He studied for a doctorate in economics at the London School of Economics. He was previously Head of the Social Policy Research Division, in the Economic and Social Research Institute, and worked as an economist in the Central Bank of Ireland. His main areas of research are poverty, income inequality, the economics of social policy, and health economics and inequalities. Recent publications include studies on social inclusion in the EU, equity in health service use, long-term trends in top incomes, child poverty, deprivation and multiple disadvantage, tax/welfare reform, and the minimum wage. He co-edited the *Handbook of Economic Inequality* (Oxford University Press, 2009).

Bertrand Maître is a Research Officer at the Economic and Social Research Institute, Dublin. He has been at the Economic and Social Research Institute since 1997. His main research interests focus on multidimensional approaches to poverty, social exclusion, quality of life as well as the distribution and packaging of household income. Working on these issues throughout various projects, he has gained extensive experience in the use of a wide range of large European and Irish data sets. He has published articles on these issues in various international journals: *The European Sociological Review*, *The Journal of European Social Policy* and *Social Indicators Research*.

Overview of Presentation

Ireland experienced unprecedented economic growth from the mid-1990s to late 2007, before entering into the current deep recession with dramatically rising unemployment and falling incomes. This presentation focuses on the impact of this macroeconomic roller-coaster ride on poverty and inequality. It will give an overview of the main trends in income inequality and poverty up to the crisis, including which groups benefited most from the period of growth, before focusing on the immediate impact of the crash, highlighting the specific groups of the population that are now most exposed to increasing vulnerability.

Precarious Work – Consequences for German Trade Unions

Klaus Dörre

Uni-Jena, Germany



Speaker Biography

Klaus Dörre is Professor of Work, Industrial and Economic Sociology at Friedrich Schiller University, Jena, and Director of the Research Institute for Labour, Education and Participation at Ruhr University, Bochum. He is Director of the Institute of Sociology and Scientific Advisor to the “Committee for Innovation” in the Federal State of Hesse. He is also a peer reviewer and provides expert opinions for various leading academic journals. His main research interests are theories of capitalism/ finance capitalism, flexible and precarious employment, employee participation, industrial relations and strategic unionism, trade union renewal, green new deal, labour market and demographic change.

Overview of Presentation

The German employment wonder has a downside, namely a deeply segmented labour market. Reality is following the model that Robert Castel projected a decade ago. In fact, the new regime of labour market policy aims at fighting unemployment by increasing the zone of vulnerable, unprotected and precarious employment. However, wage trends suggest that the new regime results in a changing power balance on the labour market. The lowest quartile of wage earners has experienced a real wage loss of 14% in the last decade (1997-2007); wage earners in somewhat secure employment were barely able to stabilize their living standards or had to accept moderate losses. Data suggests that the stylized model of diversified quality production guaranteeing skilled workers high wages and secure workplaces is no longer typical for the German economy. In the precarious sector, the price of labour is forcefully pressed under its real value, subsidized by the state since wages are below the living wage. Unsurprisingly, the expansion of precarious work and the low wage sector constitute major challenges for German trade unions. Klaus Dörre discusses unions’ attempts to organize precarious workers and new forms of inclusive interest representation.

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