

## AMBS Doctoral Conference Abstract

### **Women Textile Workers in Turkey: An Intersectional Analysis of Workplace Organization and Activism in the Global South**

Women workers, a significant share of the labour force in export-oriented industries across the Global South, actively seek to improve their poor working conditions through collective mobilization and union activism. Yet, women's organizing experiences under challenging conditions remain underexplored in labour mobilization studies. This research examines how women workers organise collectively under conditions of labour market precarity and authoritarian governance. Focusing on women textile workers in Turkey, one of the major textile-exporting countries, the study analyses the strategies women develop to mobilise collective power under Turkey's neoliberal authoritarian labour regime. Existing labour mobilization research has paid limited attention to the multilayered nature of women's struggles, in that it neglects the dynamic relations between production and social reproduction, as well as the tensions and intersections between class-based and identity-based interests. To address this gap, this study expands the analytical scope by examining how women's organising unfolds across multiple spheres of life including the workplace, the household, unions, and community networks, while considering how women's intersecting identities shape their labour activism.

There is a substantial body of research on worker mobilization and collective action in Industrial Relations scholarship. While some studies examine the micro-dynamics of mobilization (Kelly, 1998), others focus on union decline and strategies for revitalizing union power (Frege et al., 2003; Behrens, 2004). Within union renewal debates, Power Resource Theory has emerged as a more integrative framework by examining how power relations between labour and capital, as reflected in workers' and employers' power resources, drive societal change (Refslund and Arnholtz, 2024). However, similar to Marxist and identity-neutral industrial relations approaches (Lee and Tapia, 2021), Power Resource Theory largely confines the analysis of power to relations between economic actors, leaving limited analytical space to examine how gender, race, ethnicity, nationality, and other axes of inequality shape access to power resources and the capacity to mobilise them. On the other hand, although industrial relations scholars have increasingly engaged with intersectionality as a framework for analysing inequality and power (McBride et al., 2015; Rodriguez, 2016), limited attention has been paid to analysing collective action and union organizing through an intersectional lens, with only a few notable exceptions (Pearson et al., 2010; Alberti et al. 2013; Tapia et al., 2017). Therefore, this research seeks to integrate Power Resource Theory with intersectionality to analyse women's collective action and explain how intersecting identities and systems of domination shape women's access to and use of different power resources in organizing processes.

This research adopts a feminist ethnographic approach, combining participant observation through paid employment with in-depth interviews. Ethnography is particularly suited to this project because understanding women's multilayered experiences, the personal and structural challenges they face, and their interactions with other actors during mobilization requires close engagement with their everyday lives. Feminist ethnography is especially appropriate as it foregrounds women's voices and lived realities, offering a "view from below" that challenges male-dominated accounts of workplace relations and collective action (Skeggs, 2001). Fieldwork will span the workplace, unions, and women's neighbourhoods, enabling analysis across interconnected domains of social life. Four months of employment in a textile factory will form the core of the fieldwork, within a broader six-to-eight-month ethnographic study. In addition, approximately 50 interviews will be conducted with women workers engaged in workplace mobilization, as well as union officers, labour organizers, and local NGO representatives. Interviews and fieldnotes will be analysed using reflexive thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006).

By foregrounding women workers' lived experiences and organizing practices, this research contributes to both industrial relations and feminist intersectionality scholarship by offering an intersectional analysis of labour mobilization. It also aims to generate practical insights for unions by demonstrating how gendered workplace conditions and social reproduction dynamics can be better integrated into organizing strategies and collective action frameworks.

## Reconceptualising informality in employment relations – the case of Bulgaria

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### Abstract:

Informality in the literature on management and employment relations is often conceptualised as either illegality or as a managerial tool. It is characterised by the absence of monetary relations, be it wages, social security contributions or taxes. Examples include “envelope wages” and “shadow economy” where informality refers to untaxed or hidden economic transactions. The other prominent framing of informality is as the elimination of bureaucracy relating to tasks and roles. Prominent in the HRM literature, it is viewed in a utilitarian, management focused way to “meet strategic ends”. Just like monetary informality, it is framed as separate from the real, formal employment relations with scholars arguing for either its strategic utility or the dangers of worker exploitation.

This is not how informality is experienced in countries in the Global East. There familial relations, community solidarity, and reputational loss play strong of a role in employment relations. Moreover, formal and informal aspects are enmeshed with each other to produce wholly unique employment relations. Studies, utilising contextually strong methods like ethnography show the importance of culture, the role of trust and nepotism in hiring decisions and how payments are often secondary in explaining informality in the workplace. And these features remain stable, even after thirty-five years of reforms aiming at replicating Western European systems of employment relations.

Despite this, efforts to explain the prevalence of informality in terms of systems often comes with the side-effects of presenting eastern countries as in a perpetual state of transition to western-style capitalism. The legacy of socialism and underdeveloped market institutions are often the explanations given for the state of employment relations in the East. And while this has undoubtedly produced lots of insightful studies on topics like international integration, corruption, and transition, they fail to capture eastern-style employment relations in their entirety. At the same time, the literature on informality has repeatedly called for a more integrated approach in studying this phenomenon.

This paper aims to answer these calls by re-examining informality as a culturally and functionally embedded way-of-doing-things, using studies on Bulgaria as an example. It leans away from the monetary and taxation focused explanations and argues for the abandonment of the “transition” rhetoric in favour of embracing ambiguous employment relations as a research subject in their own right. It suggests a practical way forward via the process of contextualisation in order to bring the wider cultural and institutional effects into view. Further suggestions with the same aim include adopting the extended case method. This will hopefully answer the calls for a more integrated approach when discussing informality by examining it where it has a long history as an organising mechanism – the countries from the Global East.

## **Decent Work Standards in Nigeria's Platform-Based Informal Gig Economy: A Qualitative Research Approach**

**Chinaza Nwosu**

Nigeria's informal economy accounts for approximately 65% of the nation's GDP and employs over 90% of the labour force. Within this, the platform-based gig economy is expanding rapidly, driven by the proliferation of digital platforms offering ride-hailing, delivery, and freelance services. This growth has created new employment opportunities, particularly for young people facing limited prospects in the formal labour market. However, it has also raised pressing questions about labour rights, working conditions, and whether platform work meets the International Labour Organisation's (ILO) decent work standards (productive work in conditions of freedom, equity, security, and human dignity).

Existing research documents significant shortfalls. Wood et al. (2019) demonstrate that platform workers face algorithmic control, income insecurity, social isolation, and irregular hours, even as platforms present the work as offering genuine autonomy. The Fairwork project's evaluations across multiple countries reveal persistent failures, including earnings below minimum wage and inadequate physical protections (Heeks et al., 2021). In Nigeria, the legal classification of gig workers as independent contractors (like decided by the National Industrial Court in *Oladipo Olatunji v Uber* (2018)) strips workers of fundamental protections including minimum wage guarantees and social security entitlements. This compounds vulnerability within a context where social protection systems are already weakly developed.

Despite the scale of Nigeria's platform economy and the specificity of its regulatory environment, comprehensive qualitative research examining decent work standards across multiple platform types and stakeholder perspectives is lacking. This study addresses that gap directly.

The research employs two complementary qualitative methods: in-depth semi-structured interviews and critical qualitative policy analysis. Interviews will be conducted with 25 to 35 gig workers across ride-hailing, delivery, and freelance platforms in Lagos, Abuja, Port Harcourt, and Kano, alongside 8 to 12 platform representatives and 8 to 10 regulatory officials and policy experts. Purposive sampling ensures representation across platform type, geography, gender, age, and employment background. Data analysis follows the Gioia Methodology, a rigorous inductive approach that builds theoretical insights from participant-generated concepts. The critical policy analysis examines Nigerian labour legislation, platform terms of service, and key legal decisions to illuminate gaps between formal provisions and practical application. Triangulating these methods strengthens validity and enables examination of decent work as a multi-level phenomenon.

The principal challenges anticipated include securing access to platform representatives, who may be reluctant to engage with research examining their regulatory compliance, and managing social desirability bias when participants discuss sensitive aspects of platform governance. These challenges are addressed through purposive recruitment strategies, rapport-building, and methodological triangulation across data sources.

This study makes an original contribution to understanding how platform work shapes labour rights in an African context. Its findings are expected to carry policy relevance across West Africa, given shared common law heritage and comparable regulatory conditions, and to contribute to broader international debates on the governance of platform work in developing economies.

## **Beyond Endorsement and Rejection: Ambivalent Responses to Employee Voice in Gender-Typed Contexts – Mahya Sepehrinia**

Contemporary organizations increasingly promote diversity, equity, inclusion (DEI), and psychological safety. However, gendered role expectations continue to shape how employees are evaluated, often limiting the effectiveness of these initiatives. Stereotypical assumptions about men's and women's suitability for gender-typed roles may influence how coworkers and leaders respond to workplace behaviors. One important behavior affected by such perceptions is employee voice, defined as the expression of work-related suggestions, concerns, or ideas intended to improve organizational functioning (Morrison, 2014).

Although voice is widely recognized as essential for learning, innovation, and error prevention, reactions to voice depend not only on the quality of the message but also on characteristics of the speaker. Prior research shows that gender influences competence attributions, emotional responses, and support for employees who speak up (McClellan et al., 2018). However, voice research has largely treated reactions as either positive or negative, overlooking the possibility that observers may experience ambivalent responses. Ambivalence arises when positive and negative evaluations are activated simultaneously, producing psychological tension (Rothman et al., 2017). In the context of employee voice, this may occur when a suggestion is perceived as valuable, yet the speaker is perceived through stereotype-based doubts about competence.

This study examines whether voice elicits ambivalent emotional and behavioral responses when the speaker occupies a counter-stereotypical role, such as a woman in a male-typed occupation or a man in a female-typed one. For example, observers may recognize the quality of a woman's suggestion in a male-dominated setting while simultaneously experiencing discomfort, threat, or doubt rooted in gender stereotypes. Such mixed reactions may produce not only direct endorsement or rejection, but also more complex balancing responses, such as partially supporting the idea while distancing from, minimizing, or subtly undermining the voicer. In addition, this study examines whether perceived threats to the self, the group, and the organization moderate the extent to which observers rely on these balancing strategies when responding to emotional ambivalence.

To investigate these dynamics, this study adopts a mixed-method design. First, qualitative interviews with employees will identify balancing strategies as a response to voice and support the development of a measurement tool. Second, an event-contingent study will capture coworkers' and leaders' emotional and behavioral reactions to naturally occurring voice episodes and testing the model. Third, an experimental video-based design will manipulate voicer gender, job gender-typing, and voice quality to test causal relationships under controlled conditions.

Several challenges must be addressed. First, ambivalence is difficult to capture because individuals may unconsciously recognize mixed emotional responses. Second, the voicer's subjective experience of the situation's objective ambivalence should be present. Third, the study must isolate the effects of gender stereotypes from related influences such as occupational status. Despite these challenges, this research has theoretical and practical relevance. It advances employee voice literature by moving beyond a binary model of endorsement versus rejection and by identifying ambivalent and balancing responses to voice. More broadly, it shows how workplace contributions may be acknowledged at the surface yet still be devalued because of stereotype-based tensions, offering implications for gender-typed organizations, leadership, and enactment of DEI policies.

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Rothman, N. B., et al. (2017). 'Understanding the Dual Nature of Ambivalence: Why and When Ambivalence Leads to Good and Bad Outcomes' *Academy of Management Annals*, 11 (1), pp. 33-72 <https://doi.org/10.5465/annals.2014.0066>.

# **Why Study Indian Business History: Evidence and Implications for Indian Business Schools**

**Sourav Sinha**

## **Abstract**

This paper demonstrates that the incorporation of business history in management education will benefit Indian business schools. To prompt change, it calls on Indian business schools to integrate business history into their curricula and research. While the paper gives a call to action, it aims to contribute empirically to debates about history in management education (Decker, Hassard, & Rowlinson, 2021; Maclean, M., & Harvey, C., 2025; Starkey & Tempest, 2025) and the broader future of business schools (Khurana, 2007; Starkey & Tempest, 2009; Sadler-Smith & Cojuharenco, 2021). For this, it explains why the field has been less researched in India, and it provides empirical insights and impacts of the inclusion of business history for business schools in India. This paper shows that business history will assist students, managers, and leaders as an analytical tool for decision-making, learning from failures, and spotting past patterns to predict the future. It will help them understand how history shapes corporate cultures and how they can use it to strengthen their corporate cultures during crises and mergers. It will help businesses create narratives based on history to engage consumers more effectively. The field also encourages long-term thinking, supporting more effective corporate participation in CSR and sustainability.

## **Keywords**

Business history; Indian business schools; management education; corporate world

## **Abstract – Natacha Socias Salas**

The adoption of new technologies is reshaping organisational work by requiring the integration of multidisciplinary teams that combine established functional roles (e.g. marketing/project management/finance) with emerging data-driven occupations such as data scientists and machine learning engineers. Although organisations recognise the strategic value of these roles, they frequently struggle to integrate them effectively within existing structures, cultures and multidisciplinary teams. This research aims to explore the inter-team dynamics, and team working practices as these existing and new occupations collaborate on new technology implementation in project teams.

Prior research shows that technologies do not produce uniform effects but instead reconfigure work in context-specific ways. While technological change has long been associated with organisational challenges, contemporary intelligent technologies, such as artificial intelligence (AI), introduce new dynamics characterised by learning, autonomy, and opacity. These features amplify existing challenges and make technology adoption an increasingly complex organisational process rather than a purely technical implementation.

Rather than replacing human labour, AI redistributes tasks and decision-making across humans and machines, creating new forms of collaboration and coordination. At the same time, knowledge and effective technology use depend on situated interpretation and collective practices, as organisational actors actively make sense of and adapt technological systems in everyday work. These developments are accompanied by the emergence of hybrid and boundary-spanning roles that connect technical expertise with business knowledge, highlighting the importance of collaboration across occupational groups.

This study adopts a qualitative single-case study design to examine how multidisciplinary teams collaborate during AI-driven technology adoption. The research is based on an in-depth case study of a multinational financial organisation operating in Chile, where digital transformation unfolds alongside legacy systems and established practices in a traditionally non-digital sector. By examining multiple teams within this complex organisational setting, it highlights how adoption varies across contexts and working practices. A multiple-methods approach is employed, combining interviews, participant observation, and organisational documents to capture situated practices and participants' interpretations. Triangulation enhances analytical depth and credibility, although challenges are expected in managing researcher reflexivity, positionality, and access.

This research is of interest as organisations continue to invest in digital transformation while facing persistent challenges in integrating emerging digital roles with established forms of expertise. By adopting a practice-based perspective, the study provides empirically grounded insight into how technology adoption is enacted through inter-team dynamics and everyday collaboration. The findings are particularly relevant for human resource management (HRM), informing work design, capability development, and coordination, while contributing to a more integrated understanding of technology, teamwork, and organisation.

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