



The great transformation of trade union action in Industry 4.0: proposals and “deconstruction” within the ILO

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L`impact des normes del`OIT sur la scène internationale

The great transformation: changes in Industry 4.0

- ▶ Technology has made possible the linkage of two disconnected areas: the physical and the digital world
- ▶ This transformation affects people and the new way of working in a world whose main raw material is now data (and not the materials or goods produced)
- ▶ Fourth Industrial Revolution: the intelligent factory

What role does union action play in this context?

- ▶ The activity of the unions has been developed both at the level of labor relations themselves (collective bargaining, participation in the company or the adoption of conflict measures) and at the level of political or governmental relations and decisions (dialogue and consultation social, etc.)
- ▶ Art. 7 Spanish Constitution: "Workers' unions and business associations contribute to the defense and promotion of their economic and social interests."

The union action before the new social realities

- ▶ The "precarious": poor workers
- ▶ The "useless class": unemployed and non-employable people
- ▶ Does the social contract (work for pay) still make sense?
- ▶ Existence of gaps: gender, salary, digital.
- ▶ Working on economic platforms: are the platforms employers? Are "riders" workers?

Alternative associative models to the traditional unions

- ▶ **Argentina. Confederation of workers of the popular economy (CTEP):** It is a trade union organization with no connection to any political party, representative of the workers of the popular economy and their families (e.g. excluded from the formal labor market such as “cartoneros” (cardboard collectors), peasants, artisans, street vendors, traders, social program workers, motorcyclists, cooperatives, micro-entrepreneurs and workers of recovered companies).
- ▶ **Spain. Professional Association of Autonomous Riders (APRA):** Non-profit association, formed by messengers who carry out their work in the territory of Spain, in order to benefit their members in everything that has to do with economic, contractual and legal advantages, through agreements with service or useful goods providers, and with the companies that are their clients or contractors, in order to improve their work conditions.
APRA has signed an agreement of professional interest with the company RooFoods Deliveroo (July 16, 2018)
- ▶ **Germany. Youtubers unions:** Alliance between Youtube Union (approx. 1000 video producers) with the IG Metall union in Hamburg (which has 2.3 million members) called FAIRTUBE (they seek to start negotiations to improve the labour relations of the video platform with its creators)

Role of the ILO in the future of work

- ▶ The Declaration of June 21, 2019, centered on the human being, focuses on increasing investment in three priority areas:
 - People's capabilities
 - The work institutions
 - Decent and sustainable work

Recommendations to invest in labour institutions

- ▶ **Establish a Universal Labour Guarantee** (for all workers, regardless of their contractual or employment status)
- ▶ **Revitalize collective representation** (all workers must enjoy the recognition of their freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining, with the State as guarantor of these groups).

Workers' and employers' organizations must strengthen their representative legitimacy through innovative organizational techniques that reach those who are involved in new business models that .

Likewise, they must resort to their convening power to gather diverse interests around the negotiating table.

Assuming responsibilities

All interested parties must assume their responsibility in building a future of fair and equitable work. It is essential to pay attention to:

- ▶ **Revitalizing the social contract**

- ▶ **ILO responsibilities**

Special attention should be given to the universality of the ILO mandate. This means increasing the scope of their activities to those excluded from decent work and social justice (informal economy). This also implies taking innovative actions to address the growing diversity of situations in which work is presented (digital work in platform economics.) A Universal Labor Guarantee is an adequate tool to respond to these challenges, and the ILO should pay urgent attention to its implementation

- ▶ **Responsibilities of the multilateral system**

Meaning of “deconstruction”

- ▶ Etymological meaning of the word deconstruction (deconstruct):
 - Prefix “de”, which can be translated as “from top to bottom”
 - Particle "with", which means "globally"
 - The verb “struere”, which is equivalent to “join”
- ▶ The idea of deconstruction is used in philosophy and literary theory with reference to the act and the result of deconstructing (deconstructing), that is, disassembling, through an intellectual analysis, a certain conceptual structure
- ▶ Deconstruction is carried out by demonstrating the ambiguities, weaknesses and contradictions of a theory or a discourse (evidence that there are multiple possible readings)

Conclusion

As the ILO has stated, the transformation in the world of work has a global dimension and therefore the responses must be global. The action of international organizations and all the institutions in each state are necessary, but not in order to elaborate or rebuild the Law but to deconstruct it, that is, disassemble, review, analyze and question it to find new formulas for the role of unions in the era of Industry 4.0