Work Precarity Among Paid Domestic Cleaning (PDC) Workers in Switzerland

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IAEVG Conference 2024,

Riding the Wave of Change Jyväskylä, Finland



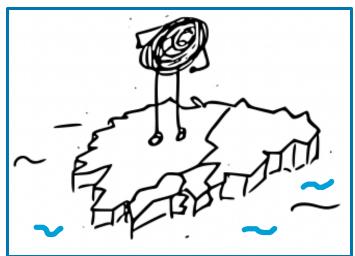




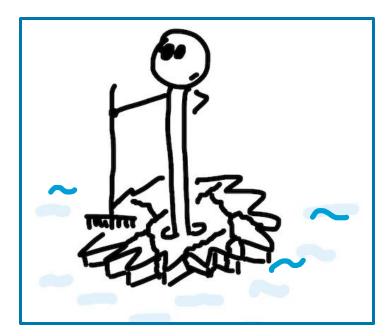
The issue(s) of work precarity: insecurity, instability and powerlessness







Paid Domestic Cleaning (PDC) as an emblematic case

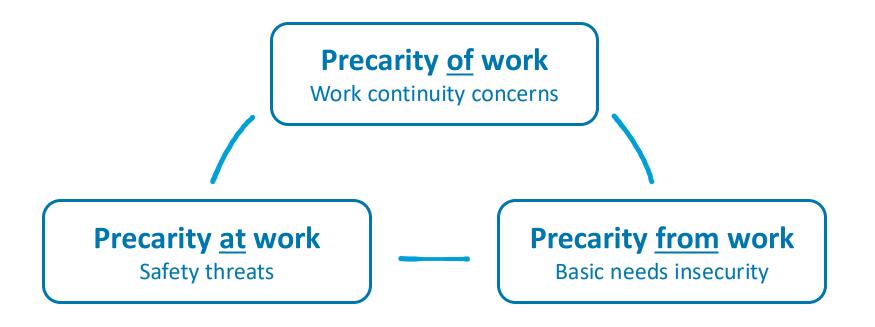


Blustein et al., 2022; D'Souza, 2010; Kalleberg & Vallas, 2017; ILO, 2023

Work Precarity



Work precarity refers to the psychological experience of insecurity, instability, and powerlessness in one's job,



Allan et al., 2021

Gap and objectives



- A psychological conceptualization of work precarity is recent and studies are needed on vulnerable groups of workers facing such precarity.
- It is still unclear if and how the working conditions in PDC translate into experiences of work precarity.
- Switzerland is an intriguing case: economic performance and social policies versus working poor.

Our goal is to investigate:

- (1) PDC workers' perceptions of their working conditions.
- (2) The main challenges they face in accessing protective resources against work precarity.

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Theoretical basis



Social and Economic Marginalization

- Structural racism
- Hiring discrimination
- Intergenerational transmission of wealth
- Access to forms of capital (e.g., economic, social)

Economic Conditions and Policies

- Neoliberal economic policies
- Economic recessions
- Organizational restructuring
- Automation
- Reduced collective bargaining rights

Potential Moderators

- Work volition
- Resources and capital
- Social support
- Social class

Precarious Work

- Temporary work
- Involuntary part-time work
- Economic insecurity or low wages
- Lack of workplace protections, rights, and power
- Physically and psychologically unsafe workplace

Work Precarity

Precarity of work

- Job insecurity
- Employment insecurity
- Workplace uncertainty

Precarity at work

- Lack of psychosocial safety
- Workplace social rejection
- Workplace discrimination
- Alienation

Precarity from work

- Poverty wage employment
- Perceived income inadequacy
- Lack of need satisfaction

Outcomes

Job attitudes

- Job Satisfaction (-)
- Work engagement (-)
- Meaningful work (-)
- Organizational commitment (-)

Job behaviors

- Job performance (-)
- Absenteeism (+)
- Turnover (+)

Identity

- Self-esteem (-)
- Self-efficacy (-)
- Internal locus of control (-)
- Self-concept (-)

Mental health

- Depression (+)
- Anxiety (+)
- Stress (+)
- Burnout (+)

Allan et al., 2021

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Additions to the theoretical framework



The threats of dirty work

Social stigmatization, exacerbation of work precarity

The specificities of PDC

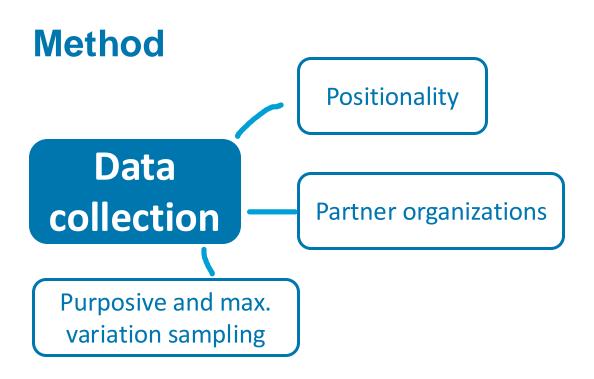
- Work for multiple and dispersed employers
- Groups marginalized workers: women, migrants, fragile legal status.

The specificities of the Swiss context

- Liberal labor-market
- Restrictive migration policies
- Good salaries versus precarity of certain groups

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Ashforth & Kreiner, 1999, Bosmans et al., 2016; Masdonati et al., 2019; Murphy & Oesch, 2018





Reflexive thematic analysis

Braun & Clarke, 2006, 2019; Creswell & Poth, 2018; Crowhurst, 2013; Restubog et al., 2021

Sample



Total and age

- 24 participants (21 women, and 3 men)
- From 30 to 60 years of age $(M_{age} = 43.5)$

Legal status and nationality

- Swiss nationals (4), refugee or work permit (17), undocumented (3)
- Africa (3), Asia (1), Europe (8), South America (8), Switzerland (4)

PDC tenure and number of employers

- 6 months to 22 years of tenure in PDC ($M_{tenure} = 8,5$)
- Working for 2 to 19 employers in PDC only ($M_{employers} = 6.3$)
- 13 participants had additional jobs (e.g., store clerk)

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Findings



Themes	Subthemes
1. Conditions	Insufficient and insecure income Lack of labor protections and rights Lack of social recognition Lack of physical and psychological safety
2. Outcomes	Health impairment Stigma internalization Attitudinal ambivalence
3. Ressources and Vulnerabilities	Behavioral and psychological resources Limited work volition Inconsistent social support Inconsistent institutional support

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1. Conditions



Insufficient and insecure income

Lack of labor protections and rights

Lack of social recognition

Lack of physical and psychological safety



This job is not secure, it's not stable. [...] Here, you don't know if you're going to get the same salary every day.

Claude – 59 yrs – Switzerland

You're not intelligent then you will be cleaning houses, you suck.

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2. Outcomes



Health impairment

Stigma internalization

Ambivalent job attitudes

Lucia – 52 yrs – Brazil, work permit

I don't like cleaning. I have to, it's the way I found to work. But if someone tells me: "Work at the supermarket", I don't want either, because at least cleaning gives me time to get out for some fresh air.

3. Ressources and Vulnerabilities



Behavioral and psychological resources

Limited work volition

Inconsistent social support **Inconsistent** institutional support

Carla – 41yrs – Ecuador, work permit

With employers, if I can't take it anymore, I leave, but I'm always replacing them with someone new. That was how I got paid vacations and sickness leave, even without a working permit.

Now it's too late. I can't see myself as a cleaner when I'm fifty, but I'm sure I'll carry on cleaning because I won't be able to study.

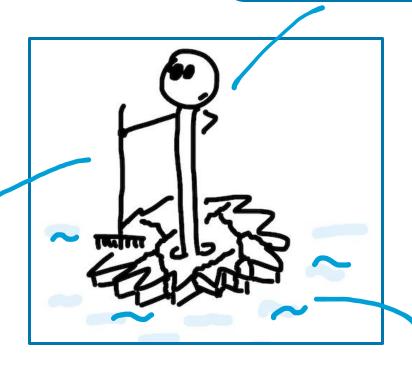
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Discussion

Attractor of vulnerabilized workers



Unsafe and isolated work



Precarity trap

Bosmans, 2023, McWhirther & McWha-Hermann, 2021; Sayre, 2023;

Limitations, avenues and implications



PDC-focused Increasing sample diversity Exploring career trajectories Static Performing dynamic investigations

Implications

- > Policy-oriented developments
- > Holistic career counseling interventions



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Journal of Career Assessment 2024, Vol. 0(0) 1–23 © The Author(s) 2024



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Borges, A., Greve, M., & Massoudi, K. (2024). An investigation of work precarity among paid domestic cleaning workers in Switzerland. *Journal of Career Assessment*, 0(0). https://doi.org/10.1177/10690727241287534

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