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Bundesministerium für
wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit
und Entwicklung

Research Centre Global Dynamics
ReCentGlobe

Employment Biographies in Ghana – Labour and Life Courses

Digital Workshop | January 11, 2021

Welcome and introduction

9:00 – 9:15 | Florian Stoll & Marian Burchardt, Leipzig

Why and how study employment biographies in Ghana?

9:15 – 9:30 | Florian Stoll & Marian Burchardt, Leipzig

Job satisfaction and commitment to employers in Ghana

9:30 – 9:45 | Matthew Sabbi, Bayreuth

Employment, types of work and gender in Ghana

10:00 – 10:15 | Akosua Keseboa Darkwah, Accra

Work as a sociological concept and its contextual implications

10:45 – 11:00 | Mascha Will-Zocholl, Darmstadt

Studying Employment Biographies in the South. Conceptualization and insights from fieldwork in Brazil

11:15 – 11:30 | Thomas Kühn, Berlin

Employability in Ghana. Insights from ongoing research

11:45 – 12:00 | Dmitri van den Berselaar, Leipzig

Final discussion

12:15 – 13:00

Participation

Open on Zoom: [Click here](#)
Meeting-ID: 882 8368 8746
Identification code: 981403

Contact

florian.stoll@uni-leipzig.de

www.recentglobe.uni-leipzig.de

Information

The workshop opens up a dialogue among experts on Ghana, the sociology of work and employment biographies.

The convenors (Marian Burchardt & Florian Stoll, Leipzig University) conduct research for the project "Employment Biographies in Ghana". They examine work arrangements in Ghana and why individuals leave their jobs or stay.



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One of the big contemporary questions is how to bring people into decent work. To a fair degree, living a fulfilled life depends on one's employment situation. A major divide between the Global North and South is that most contexts in the South have under-resourced education and welfare systems and instable labour markets. However, with neoliberal state rollbacks in the North and far-reaching de-regulation this divide is becoming more porous. Furthermore, research on work in the Global South is often limited to aggregated macro-data on employment conditions. While macro-data give significant insights, they struggle to identify crucial particularities on the individual level. For example, studies on individuals' biographies of work and ways in and out of jobs are marginal.

Situated at the crossroads between the sociology of work, sociological studies of life-course and biography, this workshop pursues the following goals: First, it takes Ghana as a case study. Studying the labour markets, legal framework and sociocultural aspects of the West African country allows examining the question of decent work for a selected context. This empirical focus makes it necessary to consider socio-cultural aspects such as the significance of the extended family, urban-rural ties and multiple jobs. It avoids the unrealistic formal employment as the standard working arrangement.

Secondly, by looking at types of work, workshop participants discuss how economic activities are embedded in the lives of Ghanaians. The workshop goes beyond the study of macro-data. It also avoids simplistic concepts such as the dualism of formal-informal. Instead, the workshop is supposed to contribute to a nuanced understanding of job arrangements in Ghana. Who works in which job? Why do people stay in one activity, why do they change it? Third, the workshop shifts the outlook onto the biographical dimension. Who gets which job and why? What are critical junctures in biographies? How do persons' experiences and the societal macro conditions coincide? Which strategies and which ideas of success drive individuals in their search for a good life?

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