

Conference Panel



2nd International Conference of the Association of Social Anthropologists Greece, Thessaloniki, May 24-26, 2024

“Anthropology, ethnography in/for uncertain times”

POLITICS AND COVERNANCE

Panel title | Labour Precariousness in Uncertain Times: Workers in the Cultural and Creative Industries (CCI)

The panel is part of the research project “Labour Precarity and Social Cohesion: The Case of Cultural and Creative Industries (LaPreSc)” that is carried out within the framework of the National Recovery and Resilience Plan Greece 2.0, funded by the European Union - NextGenerationEU (Implementation Body: HFRI - Project Number: 16313, Beneficiary: University of Crete).

Panel Summary

Coordinators

Aspasia (Sissie) Theodosiou Associate Professor, University of Ioannina

Christina Karakioulafi Associate Professor, University of Crete

Ioannis Tsioulakis Associate Professor, Queen's University Belfast

Work in CCI is characterised by excessive flexibility, as self-employment, freelancing, part-time work, intermittent work, intentional or enforced multi-employment (in other artistic/creative or non-artistic activities) are the dominant forms of its organisation. These forms of flexible employment entail the uncertainty and precariousness of working conditions in CCIs, which are further exacerbated in periods of successive crises, such as the most recent ones. Using the case of the artistic and creative work, which is considered as archetypal of processes happening in the realm of work more generally in contemporary capitalism, the panel aspires to open up a field of research that remains extremely limited in the Greek context: the critical investigation of the experience and practice of labour uncertainty and precariousness in CCI in its multiplicity. At the same time, it aspires to highlight issues related to the broader transformations of work in the highly unregulated work environments of the neoliberal reality, their consequences on social practices, habits and relationships, as well as the potential of workers in the CCIs for collective protection, action and representation.

In this light, we invite scholars, who utilize anthropological thinking and/or ethnography - in combination with qualitative research methods from related fields – to: a) investigate employment conditions in the CCIs as shaped by recent successive crises, b) focus on relevant policies and modes of governance, c) analyze the ways in which different characteristics (gender, class, gender, race, etc. etc.) shape workers' conditions and affect their vulnerability. At the same time, the panel aspires to document and highlight new interconnections and modes of resistance, individual and collective practices adopted by workers and workers' representatives in the face of challenges (e.g. platformisation) and inequalities encountered in the field, as well as potential new forms of political participation and governance emerging on this horizon of uncertainty.

Panel Schedule

1st Session

University of Macedonia, Class16, KZ Building, 18:00 – 19:30, 24.5.2024

Chair: **Ioannis Tsioulakis**

Anna Bonarou: Selling crafts online - Shaping a new identity for the contemporary craft producer

Theodoros Koutros: "Labour acrobats in the city": work in the cultural and creative industries as a precarious field in urban life

Zlatina Bogdanova: Labour precariousness and uncertainty in the creative districts "Kapana" (Plovdiv) and "Talyana" (Varna), Bulgaria
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2nd Session

University of Macedonia, Amphitheater 11, ΘH Building, 12:00 – 13:30, 25.5.2024

Chair: **Aspasia (Sissie) Theodosiou, Christina Karakioulafi**

Aspasia (Sissie) Theodosiou & Eleni Kallimopoulou: "Entrepreneur of yourself": female music work on the Greek popular music stage
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Christina Karakioulafi & Chara Kokkinou: "Labour precarity experiences of actors and actresses in the midst of the economic and pandemic crisis"

Aspasia (Sissie) Theodosiou & Ioannis Tsioulakis: Musicians as precarious workers: sounding out multiple crises
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Abstract

Anna Bonarou

Independent Scholar

Selling crafts online - Shaping a new identity for the contemporary craft producer

Many artisans who create handmade goods are actively using online platforms to sell their handicrafts. One of the most renowned marketplaces for buying and selling such items is Etsy (www.etsy.com). The advantages provided by Etsy to these artisans are of great importance. Craft producers, regardless of their geographical location, can easily set up one or multiple online shops without incurring any costs. By utilizing Etsy, producers can tap into a vast consumer base that would otherwise be inaccessible if they relied solely on physical retail outlets to sell their products. For instance, artisans located in Greece market and sell their handcrafted goods in various countries including the United States, Israel, the United Arab Emirates, and other global destinations.

Nevertheless, despite the potential advantages offered by online marketplaces, there are significant challenges and impediments. The competition among producers and sellers is enormous. Let's consider a scenario where a customer visits Etsy to purchase a woolen scarf. When they enter keywords such as "scarf" or "wool scarf," they are presented with an overwhelming number of suggested products, amounting to tens of thousands. The challenge of driving traffic to an online store and successfully converting those visitors into actual sales is a significant hurdle for individuals who rely on creating and selling handicrafts as their primary source of income. Therefore, the contemporary craft producer will need to develop a diverse range of skills beyond craftsmanship alone. For example, he will need to acquire skills in accurate product photography, understand customs clearance protocols, write descriptive texts in English, run online advertising campaigns, implement search engine optimization strategies, and protect himself from online fraudulent activities, among other tasks. In this paper, I will attempt to outline this new identity that is constituted for contemporary craftspeople through their activity on online marketplaces, like Esty, drawing on ethnographic research data.

Theodoros Koutros

PhD Candidate, Department of Sociology, University of Crete

Labour acrobats in the city": work in the cultural and creative industries as a precarious field in urban life

The productive transformations of the last decades, expressed mainly in the shift from the secondary to the tertiary sector of the "new economy" of services, have marked numerous changes in the world of work. The employment in given factory spaces is gradually being replaced by new forms of work, which are becoming "intangible" because of their intellectual content, forming new areas of fluidity for work and living. The modern worker as a source of "intellectual capital" is called upon to evolve in a new working environment, which is becoming increasingly flexible and competitive. The massive entry of women into the workforce, while meeting social demands for equality, seems to have contributed to the transfer of gender stereotypes and discriminations from the sphere of reproduction to that of work, creating conditions of precariousness and new divisions to the detriment of the most vulnerable, who are further exposed to risk and danger. Under the above outline, the workers of the cultural and creative industries appear as a "creative class", which possesses all those desirable characteristics of the current model, that can potentially run through all professions in the context of the generalized promotion of "creativity" as a necessary skill at work, constituting the new "factory of the Creative Age". However, multiple researchers have highlighted a number of dimensions that make creative workers a precarious counter-example. Drawing on the lessons of social anthropology, the presentation will attempt to highlight and extend qualitative research findings at the urban realm, understood as the field within which the labour practice of cultural and creative industries takes place, given new forms of urban politics, such as that of the "creative city". In this process, it will be attempted to present the perceptions of these workers in a peripheral centre, concluding with the collaborative forms of employment, which can emerge as a socio-political stake against precariousness, due to their democratic and inclusive forms of governance, or at least as a historical context of recent crises that can cultivate the "sociological imagination" for contemporary work.

Zlatina Bogdanova

Senior Assistant Professor, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences

Labour precariousness and uncertainty in the creative districts "Kapana" (Plovdiv) and "Talyana" (Varna), Bulgaria

The formation of the “creative districts” "Kapana" (Plovdiv) and "Talyana" (Varna) is the result of local governance and cultural strategies related to the valorization of the historical and architectural heritage in the city centers. In the course of “European Capital of Culture – Plovdiv 2019” campaigning, the district "Kapana" has become a center of attraction for cultural operators from the country and abroad, who, with the assistance of "Plovdiv 2019" Municipal Foundation, managed to revitalize this desolate urban space since 2014. Unlike "Kapana", where the project started with financing project proposals with a focus on "creative industries", the concept of "Talyana" in Varna is to promote self-generated business initiatives that set a good example of "economic accessibility to cultural heritage", as they are mainly developed inside buildings certified as cultural values. In relation to these urban cores, the paper will present examples of cultural entrepreneurs, artists, representatives of the cultural and creative industries who carry out their projects and activities within these districts. The accent is placed on labour precariousness and uncertainty characterizing the work in the CCIs. The issues of relevant policies and modes of governance are also considered. The ongoing research is based on a long-term ethnographic field work in the mentioned districts in Plovdiv and Varna; the methods include participant observation, digital ethnography, multi-sited ethnography, anthropology at home.

Aspasia (Sissie) Theodosiou* & Eleni Kallimopoulou**

*Associate Professor, University of Ioannina

**Assistant Professor, University of Athens

"Entrepreneur of yourself": female music work on the Greek popular music stage

The shift towards the study of creative and artistic work has highlighted artistic professions as emblematic of new forms of work that are now tending to become established in the wider labour field. Artists and other workers in the creative industries embody, according to this view, the situation faced by all workers, a situation that is summarised in excessive flexibility, the resulting precariousness, but also the need for entrepreneurial action and self-promotion. These characteristics tend to be identified in the literature with the dominance of neoliberalism, but in terms of popular/folk music they seem to have an age-old presence. The majority of musicians in the folk/popular music scene have always been self-employed freelancers, working in precarious conditions, which they coped with through “more or less successful micro-entrepreneurial efforts” (Weber 2004). If historically entrepreneurship has largely characterized the working experience in the folk/popular music scene, to what extent and in what versions does it remain central today, in the context of what scholars have termed “authoritarian” neoliberalism?

This paper takes these considerations to the highly fluid working landscape of the live music nightclubs (“pistes”). Through ethnographic research, we examine how young female singers experience and talk about their working experience in the early stages of their musical careers. What it means today to be an “entrepreneur of yourself”, and what investments of subjectivity, on and off the stage, are implied and prescribed by the goal of a successful career. In light of the work strategies and practices adopted and developed by these women, we reflect on the condition of “affective capitalism” (Illouz 2007), where entrepreneurial risk is matched by the imperative for “passionate work” (Mc Robbie 2016).

Christina Karakioulafi* & Chara Kokkinou**

*Associate Professor, Department of Sociology, University of Crete

**Kokkinou Chara, PhD candidate, University of Crete

"Labour precarity experiences of actors and actresses in the midst of the economic and pandemic crisis"

This paper focuses on the working experiences and paths of actors in recent years and especially during the periods of economic and pandemic crisis, drawing on the findings of a qualitative research (based on semi-structured interviews) conducted in the framework of the ELIDEK-funded Research Project "Labour Precarity and Social Cohesion: The Case of the Cultural and Creative Industries (LaPreSC)." Already before the outbreak of the economic crisis, the actors' labour market showed evidence of deregulation, as well as employment precariousness and economic insecurity. However, during the economic crisis, these phenomena intensified, and the situation worsened after the breakdown of the collective agreement (CBA) for actors in the independent theatre, resulting in: the introduction of individual agreements, daily, or at best three-month contracts; the generalisation of undeclared and unpaid work; the diminution of wages; the extension of payments per hour or per performance; the highly common situation of unpaid rehearsals; payment as a percentage of the performance's tickets, all this in combination with increasing unemployment within the profession. The first lockdown of March 2020 and the closure of theatres brought to the fore the above-mentioned long-standing labour problems in the sector, amplifying them and intensifying actors' labour and economic uncertainty, while many actors (as other artists) were not able to benefit from the support measures. Although experiences of precarious work and economic insecurity are considered commonplace and seem to form the 'normality' of artists' working lives, the pandemic has challenged even this 'normal insecurity' by provoking a layered or additional precarity. In addition to the experiences of precarious work, strategies of individual and collective coping with precarious work (multi- and hetero-employment, cooperative schemes, social networking, trade union activation and collective action, etc.) are also examined.

Aspasia (Sissie) Theodosiou* & Ioannis Tsioulakis**

*Associate Professor, University of Ioannina

**Associate Professor, Queen's University Belfast

Musicians as precarious workers: sounding out multiple crises

Musicians create and work within intersections of multiple industries with diverse and often contradictory employment regimes. But one constant attribute of all those domains of cultural work is the persistent and debilitating role of precarity in its different manifestations: undocumented work, seasonal employment, unregulated labour frameworks, lack of social insurance, and the weakening of collective bargaining. These conditions have been exacerbated in the past 15 years in Greece, first as a result of the Greek 'economic crisis' and then by the emergence of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Based on research over the past two decades in Greek urban centres and the periphery, and powered by the new project [Labour Precarity and Social Cohesion in the Cultural and Creative Industries](#), in this paper we will examine how musicians in Greece articulate their careers, creativity, and experience within a context of piling crises. Based on ethnographic observation, interviews with musicians, and collaboration with unions and campaigning collectives, we will trace the changing circumstances of music labour and its implications for livelihoods, and cultural production and consumption. The paper will specifically address the following questions:

- How is precarity experienced, conceptualised and narrated by musicians?
- What are the unifying and diversifying factors of that experience based on musicians multiple and intersecting identities? (gender, ethnicity, age, career length, location, class background, employment circumstances etc.)
- How does the emergence of different crises (economic, political, public health, etc.) affect collectivity, unionisation, and campaigning?
- Can concepts of 'voice' and 'sound' (as well as their reversals of 'muting' and 'silence') that have particular bearing with regards to musical creativity, help us make ethnographic sense of the predicaments and agencies of precarious musicians?

Resumes

Coordinators

Aspasia (Sissie) Theodosiou is a social anthropologist and Associate Professor at the Department of Music Studies of the University of Ioannina. She obtained her MA and PhD from the Dept of Social Anthropology (University of Manchester). She was a member of MC of the international research network "Remaking eastern borders in Europe" and participated in the "Crosslocations" project of the University of Helsinki, as well as in numerous other international research projects, while she has also served as an evaluator in European projects. She is also a co-founder of the initiative [dēcolonize hellás](#). Her research experience includes long term fieldwork with Roma/Gypsy musicians in Epirus (Greek-Albanian border) and more recently with Mizrahi people and the policies and practices related to "Greek" music in Israel. Her research interests revolve around the anthropology of music, issues of nationalism and sovereignty, borders and ethnic groups, cultural racism and the legacies of ethnic purity and white supremacy, as well as critical Romani studies; furthermore, she studies the politics of culture and affect around popular music, and issues related to artistic labour. Her current ethnographic projects focus on female music labour and artistic labour in migratory contexts. Finally, she is currently co-writing an ethnography on Glykeria's artistic career in Israel since the 1990s.

Christina Karakioulafi is Associate Professor at the Department of Sociology, University of Crete. She has graduated from the Department of Social Policy and Social Anthropology (Panteion University) and completed her postgraduate and doctoral studies in France (CNAM, Université Paris 1). She also teaches at the Hellenic Open University and is a coordinator of the unit "CONTEMPORARY SOCIOLOGICAL APPROACHES IN EUROPEAN SOCIETIES" (EPO42). Her scientific publications concern: work precariousness, unemployment, sociology of professions (with emphasis on artistic professions), psychosocial risks in the workplace, theories of industrial relations and trade unionism). She is the author of the monographs *The Art Workers. The profession of the actor in Greece in times of crisis* (Papazisis, 2023), *Workplace bullying in the public sector. The role of Trade Unions* (Koinoniko Polykentro ADEDY, 2023), *European social dialogue: institutions of representation and categories of interventions. Proposals for upgrading the role of the GSEVEE* (IME-GSEVEE, 2020) and *Industrial Relations: Theoretical approaches and empirical issues* (Papazisis, 2012) and coauthor of the monograph *Unemployment and labour precarity. Dimensions and impacts in times of crisis* (INE-GSEE, 2014). She has also co-edited (with M. Spyridakis) the collective

volumes *Labour and Society* (Dionikos, 2010) and *Unemployment, Society and Social Reproduction* (Gutenberg; 2017). She is currently investigating the effects of the pandemic on labour relations and the collective action of artists, focusing on the profession of the actor. She is the Principal Investigator in the research program *Labour Precarity and Social Cohesion: The Case of the Cultural & Creative Industries (LaPreSC)* funded by HFRI (No. 16313) (Host Institution: University of Crete (KA-11454)].

Ioannis Tsioulakis is Reader in Anthropology and Ethnomusicology at Queen's University Belfast, which he joined in 2013. He has previously lectured in ethnomusicology at University College Cork and University College Dublin. Ioannis completed his undergraduate studies in the Department of Music Studies at the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens. Following this, he specialised in ethnomusicology and social anthropology, completing his MA (2006) and PhD (2011) at Queen's University Belfast. Ioannis's first monograph, *Musicians in Crisis: Working and Playing in the Greek Popular Music Industry* was published by Routledge in 2020. The book looks at the diverse socio-cultural worlds of music-making in the Greek capital with an emphasis on precarity and economic austerity. Ioannis's research has also focused on cosmopolitan aspirations among local music practitioners and the way that they affect social relations, markets of musical labour, and discourses of value and aesthetics in popular music. Since 2020, Ioannis has been conducting research on the impact of Covid-19 and other piling crises on performing artists, with a number of publications and collaborative projects released and more under development. A full list of publications can be found [here](#).

Speakers

Anna Bonarou holds a PhD from the Department of Social Anthropology and History of the University of the Aegean. Her current research interests focus on the field of material culture and the anthropology of arts and techniques, focusing in particular on contemporary crafts and the DIY culture. Her interest in material culture and crafts began during her studies in architecture and her involvement with various crafts. She currently works as a technology teacher in secondary education. She has taught fine and applied arts courses at almost all levels of education in the public and private sector; from primary school to higher and adult education. For her doctoral research, Anna focused on the arts of weaving, embroidery, and knitting in contemporary Greek society. She received a full scholarship from the State Scholarships Foundation (IKY) to conduct her research. Anna has also authored several books on design, crafts, and architecture. Her research work has been presented in conferences and academic journals.

Theodoros Koutros is a PhD candidate at the Department of Sociology of the University of Crete. He graduated as an architect engineer from the School of Architecture of the National Technical University of Athens and he is a member of the Technical Chamber of Greece. He has completed two Postgraduate Specialization Programmes (Master's Degrees), Social and Solidarity Economy at the School of Social Sciences of the Hellenic Open University, "Social Innovation and Development Strategies" at the Department of "Social and Educational Policy" of the School of Social and Political Sciences of the University of Peloponnese and the National Centre for Social Research. He has attended courses in fine arts and design at Central Saint Martins College of the University of Arts London. He recently participated as a lecturer in the 27th Panhellenic Postgraduate Intensive Seminar-Conference "Issues in Research Methodology in the Social Sciences," organized by the Department of Sociology of the University of Crete and the Laboratory of Social Analysis & Applied Social Research. He has been involved in several art projects and architectural competitions and has been awarded an Honorable Mention (Redemption Award) in the Panhellenic Student Architectural Competition for the Visitor Centre of the Stavros Niarchos Foundation Cultural Centre. His research interests focus on industrial sociology, the sociology of work, the cultural and creative industries, the social economy or other forms of cooperative employment and urban sociology.

Dr. **Zlatina Bogdanova** is a senior Assistant Professor at the Institute of Ethnology and Folklore Studies with Ethnographic Museum – Bulgarian Academy of Sciences. She obtained her doctoral degree in ethnology from the Martin Luther University Halle-Wittenberg after a successful defense of her thesis - Studying the Processes of Exclusion and Inclusion in Rural Bulgaria: the Significance of Kinship and Social Networks. She has earned a MA degree in Cultural Anthropology of Southeastern Europe from the Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski". The topic of her Master's thesis is: Intercultural aspects of the youth short-term labour migration within the frameworks of the "Work and Travel" program. Dr. Zlatina Bogdanova holds a BA degree in Political Science - International Relations from the American University in Bulgaria (AUBG). She has published studies in the field of urban anthropology, cultural policies and heritage.

Eleni Kallimopoulou is an ethnomusicologist and Assistant Professor at the Department of Music Studies of the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens (PhD, MMus, SOAS, University of London). She is author of *Paradosiaká: Music, Meaning and Identity in Modern Greece* (Routledge, 2009), co-author of *Learning Culture through City Soundscapes – A Teacher Handbook* (University of Macedonia, 2013), and co-editor of *Counter-Archives: Rethinking Oral History from Below* (Gree Oral History Association, 2021), *Music Communities in 21st-century Greece: Sonic Glances in the Field* (Pedio, 2020), and *Introduction in Ethnomusicology* (Asini, 2014). Her research interests span the fields of Musical performance and ethnography, Popular music and artistic labour, Nationalism, public folklore and the politics of culture, Oral history, Auditory culture and urban space,

Epistemology and methodology of research, Applied ethnomusicology, Critical pedagogy. She is a founding member of the research team sonorCities, and a member of the International Advisory Board of Ethnomusicology Forum.

Chara Kokkinou (female) is a PHD student in Sociology of Work (University of Crete) holds an MSc in Sociology (University of Crete, School of Social Studies) and an MA in Philosophy (University of Crete, School of Letters) and has a Bachelor in European Culture (Hellenic Open University, School of Humanities). She has been research associate in research projects at the National Center of Social Research, the Social Analysis and Applied Social Research Laboratory (Department of Sociology, University of Crete) and the Research Center for the Humanities the Social and Education Studies (University of Crete). The projects Chara has participated in focused on Social and Solidarity Economy initiatives, on the deprived urban and rural areas of Crete, on the European Transnational Solidarity in times of crisis, and on youth political participation in times of increasing inequalities. During 2013-2015 she was research associate in research projects at the University of Manchester (Law School and Alliance Manchester Business School), where she focused on issues related to employment precariousness and the effects of austerity reforms on collective bargaining. She also participated in the research as part of the technical assistance provided by the International Labour Office (ILO) on the effects of the austerity measures on collective bargaining in Greece during the period 2010-2015.