

## **Precarisation as a daring venture? Towards a precarious „flexicurity“-concept**

It is difficult to get quickly get to the central point which the workshop touched in me. It wasn't just a single one, after all. All in all, it was a wonderful experience to get to know very diverse motivations to work on the topic of precarisation – on the one hand, people that come from an academic background but also share and connect through political activities. There are quite a few so-called “leftists” and “queer” people in the university system. However, I have not encountered such an open, transparent and motivated exchange like ours yet. In this structure, support, tensions, validation and differences became apparent. However, I managed not to lose a red or other-coloured thread throughout. I keep fingers crossed that we can work together again in circumstances like this.

At first, I was directly confronted with my own precarious situation. Admittedly, I didn't think of this attribute for my own circumstances of my life up to that point. I still choose the jobs I work myself, which my education allows me. However, my working contracts are only temporary and of marginal relevance on the market, and they only allow to muddle through from month to month. Even though, I have a migration background, I am not confronted with racist exclusions: I am not conspicuous and I have “the right passport”. Being socialised and living as a woman I am discriminated against structurally but I was able to take my life in my own hands and was even partially able to work on strategies against these discriminations with others. At first I found it really difficult to assign myself the role of precarised “junior academic”, “political and cultural activist, which are roles we are assigned quickly. How massively does this form of precariousness differ from the situation of migrants from Eastern Europe that I have made the subjects of my research.

The differences are obvious: the national affiliation and the rights and options connected to a life full of perspectives in the FRG create moments of exclusion for these women. Against these, they can only resist partially with means that force them into increased conditions of exploitation. This is where we differ drastically from each other and I would make eyewash if we did not acknowledge this in our analysis. Ergo: Precarisation does not equal precarisation. The question remains: is it about the same form of precariousness only differing in quality or are there entirely different forms that shape our lives?

This is relevant in sight of possibilities of mutual strategies on how to deal with precarisation and how to transform them for ourselves. This is also relevant for me in order to answer the question of myself: Do I analyse the situation of people that I place somewhere completely different to myself by my research and interviews and, therefore, write about them or does my interest and my analysis take a different legitimacy and relevance because the basics of our precariousness are fundamentally the same?

In our discussions it was acknowledged to myself that in front of the background of shifting markets the shifting conditions for labour and identity create the basics for various forms that create precariousness. It backs up my approach to investigate on the strategies and self-evidences of migrating sex workers or migrants that migrate here through the so-called trafficking in women from Eastern Europe. This I will do under aspects of perspectives of labour, comprehension of and concepts of labour: From my present point of view, I expect answers about which options come up for women in this precarious situations.

The female migrants that I have studied choose certain forms of the precariousness, just as I have chosen certain forms of labour and employment that grant me certain options on the service market and in my everyday life. Even though they leave me in constant uncertainty continuously. In the discussion, a justified question was whether the conscience or the expertise of one's own life implies empowering moments. Are these women, which are partly affected to physical violence, more empowered structurally if they know what they get involved with or if they use their sex work strategically and try to gain capital from performativity of difference? Unfortunately, this question could only be negated and could only be followed by the central aspect of the question of representation of gender and positions of ethnicity.

A very decisive point for me was the encounter with the concept of "flexicurity", which came up in the discussion marginally several times. It seems to hit the point that both concerns me in my research, as well as myself: Are the altered living and working conditions to be fundamentally understood as social discrimination or a threat to the status quo of gained rights? Or do we have to realise that there are aspects and flexibilities which these conditions bring us that come in handy in our planning of life, self-images/identities and departures from fixed structures? It is not about talking smooth and idealise these precarious unreasonableness but also not to wipe out the acceptable aspects of it, either. To me this is very central for the situation and self-image of migrating sex workers in the FRG. I will carefully look at the concept of "flexicurity" more closely but also comment on the neoliberal tendencies of this already hyped concept.

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