The Evolving Workplace

Emerging Health & Safety Issues from Changing Workplaces
= A Canadian Discussion =

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Overview of Presentation

- Some significant changes to work, employment practices and workforce composition
- Evidence on health effects of flexible work
- Policy challenges/impacts on vulnerable groups
- Evidence of weakened regulatory protection and problems for employers, unions, community
- Potential remedies for policy makers, employers and unions
Global Changes to Business Practices and Regulation

- Repeated downsizing/restructuring
- Privatisation/new public sector management
- Offshoring/outsourcing and comp tendering
- Growth of franchising and labour leasing
- Corporate veil and elaborate supply chains
- Neo-liberal policies-price/markets and trade
- Commerce law subordinates social protection
Changes to Work Organisation and Labour Markets

- Shift from manufacturing to service sector
- Fall in permanent jobs and job security
- Growth of:
  - temporary, agency, fixed-contract work
  - micro business and own account subcontractors
  - part-time, home-based work & telework
  - multiple job-holding and unpaid overtime
- Growing shiftwork/stalled trend to shorter hours
Changes to Population and Workforce

- Aging population-ex baby boom/birth-rates
- Increased female workforce participation
- In-sourcing/foreign worker arrivals:
  - Immigration (business, special skills)
  - Temporary (students, tourists, guestworkers)
  - Refugees and illegal immigration
A Short Profile of the Changing Canadian Workforce

- In 2005 13% of Canadians over 65 (22% by 2026) & 8.1% worked (compared to 6.7% in 2002)
- 2004 – 39% of paid workers had registered pension plan (45.4% in 1983)
- Percentage of workforce within 10 years of retirement (1987 – 11%; 2002 – 20%)
- Not working due to health reasons increases with age, especially for women (Pyper 2006)
Labour force participation of women with children increased from 39% in 1986 to 45% in 2005.

Also increase in dual income couples and more equal income share (Marshall, 2006).

Earnings instability far higher amongst families in lower third of income scale - government transfers critical offset (Morissette & Ostrovsky 2006).
A Short Profile of the Changing Canadian Workforce cont...

- 18% of Canadian population foreign born in 2001 and by 2017 20% could be ‘visible minority’ (Berlanger & Malefant, 2005)

- Chronic low income feature of recent immigrants and has profound family effects (Picot et al 2007)

- 2007 15.4% of Canadian workforce self-employed (increasing faster than total employment)
A Short Profile of the Changing Canadian Workforce cont...

- 2007 11.9% of employees held a temporary job (earning 79.5% of perm. employees hourly rates)

- Work hours instability affects substantial part of workforce (Heisz & LaRouchelle-Cote, 2007)

- Firm closures/mass layoffs cause earnings loss especially for senior males (Morissette et al 2007)
A Short Profile of the Changing Canadian workforce cont...

- In March 2007 18.4% of Canadian labour force worked part-time

- Unemployment fell between 2000 & 2006 but rate remained 2.5 times higher amongst Aboriginals

- 2005 – 31.8 of workforce unionised (1981 – 38%)
What is Precarious Employment/Contingent Work?

- Precariousness connotes insecurity, marginality.
- Contingency connotes variable timing/spot purchase.
- Overlapping concepts (former favoured in Europe, latter in North America) but former is broader.
- Other ‘markers’ of precariousness:
  - Low or variable income (bifurcated).
  - Short or very long hours (bifurcated).
  - Multiple jobholding.
  - Less likely to be unionised.
What is Precarious Employment/Contingent Work cont...

- Types of work viewed as precarious:
  - Temporary, on-call, casual work & day labour
  - Fixed term contract work
  - Dependent self-employed (subcontractors, small business)
  - Agency/leased work
  - Home-based work

- Disputed categories:
  - Ongoing part-time work - contingent not precarious?
  - Small business
Extent of Contingent Work/Precarious Employment

- Australia – over 40% of workforce temporary or self-employed (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2006)
- Canada – 27.3% of workforce held temporary job or self-employed (Statistics Canada)
- United States – 31% of workforce contingent (42.6 million – US Government Accountability Office, 2006)
Overall: Useful Concept Capturing Changes to Work but Has Limitations

- Categories have been validated by research in some countries but more needed here
- Inconsistent international use of terms (e.g., casual work)
- Categories don’t capture relational effects:
  - Permanent workers experience job insecurity
  - Perm. part-time workers experience contingency
  - Spillover effects (need longitudinal studies)
International Review of Studies of OH&S Effects of Work Changes

- 106 publications filtered from 188 for quality (refereed, clear data, robust method) & no double-counting

- Studies by country (USA 30; UK 14; Sweden 13; Canada 11; Aus 9; France 7; Finland 6; Denmark 5; Germany 3)

- Studies by industry (manufacturing 22, health 16, public sector 12, transport 6, mining 6, retail 4, construction 4, other services 7)
International Review of Studies of OH&S Effects of Change

- Studies by method (secondary data analysis 19, longitudinal 18, cross sectional 32 and qualitative 11)

- Studies by indices (subjective health measures 62, objective health measures 32, injury measures 20, OHS law compliance/awareness 11 and perceived risk 5)
# Research Review Findings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Work Change</th>
<th>Adverse Effect</th>
<th>Mixed Effect</th>
<th>Positive Effect</th>
<th>No Effect</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Downsizing/restructuring</td>
<td>53 (87%)</td>
<td>3 (5%)</td>
<td>1 (1.6%)</td>
<td>4 (6.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outsourcing/home-work</td>
<td>22 (95%)</td>
<td>1 (5%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Temporary work</td>
<td>15 (68%)</td>
<td>4 (18%)</td>
<td>2 (9%)</td>
<td>1 (4.5%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>91 (86%)</td>
<td>8 (7.5%)</td>
<td>3 (2.8%)</td>
<td>5 (4.7%)</td>
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Some Observations

- Small business – most studies found worse OHS outcomes similar to those just mentioned

- Ongoing/permanent part-time work (few studies but majority find nil or positive health effects although few look at injuries)
Some Observations cont...

- Evidence strong/consistent over time, no affect of method/location/indices.
- Other reviews similar (Benach, Muntaner et al).
- Workers compensation data trends suggest improvement but sectoral shifts & significant non-reporting.
Adverse Safety & Health Effects

- Increased injury rates (exposure weighting)
- Increased poor health indices (eg CVD)
- Increased hazard exposures (subcontractors)
- Effects on mental health (stress, GHQ)
Adverse Safety & Health Effects cont...

- Worse work/life balance outcomes
- Some evidence (occupational violence, burnout)
- Breaches of safe work practice/weakened OHS management
- Non-compliance with legislation (routine and high hazard risks)
Why the Adverse Effects?

- Demand/control imbalance – job strain model
- Effort/reward imbalance
- Employment strain model
- Three factor model:
  - Effort/reward pressures
  - Disorganisation
  - Regulatory failure
Implications for Social and Health Policies

- Shifts work/unemployment health offsets and health costs of intermittent work
- Externalities in healthcare, training, transport, safety/security, environment & food standards
- Cost shifts in protection regimes (e.g., workers comp to social security) and to state/community
Implications for Social and Health Policies cont...

- Exposure reporting, access, treatment problems
- Worker voice and minimum labour standards
- Pensions, education, poverty and social capital
Specific Challenges: Is Contingent Work Gender/Family Friendly?

- Clear OHS protocols (eg home-based work)
- Unpredictable and split shifts
- Adequate/accessible childcare
- Work/non-work demand imbalance (presenteeism)
- Gender breakdown of precarious employment
Specific Challenges: Flexible Work and Aging

- Post retire work and graduated exit options but:
  - Job/income security vital to budget, family, retirement planning
  - Increased work intensity - burnout and premature retirement
  - Need to modify ‘fitness for work’ models/parameters
  - Recalibrate hazard exposure limits (longer hours)
  - Retrenched older workers find it harder to get jobs
Specific Challenges: Other Vulnerable Groups

- Young workers concentrated in temporary and part-time jobs and less regulated service sector (small business and homes)
- Newly arrived, refugee, illegal immigrants and temporary visa residents/guestworkers
- Indigenous workers in seasonal tasks
- Seasonal declining industries (eg cod)
Implications for OHS Legal Regimes

Coverage:
- Who is who and who has obligations?
- Multiplicity and obligations
- Safe systems of work & OHSMS
- Worker awareness/access

Inspection/enforcement:
- Guidance material
- Resources and logistics
Implications for Workers’ Compensation Legal Regimes

- **Coverage:**
  - Who has cover and who pays?
  - Who has cover but doesn’t claim?
  - Determining income support
  - Rehabilitation and return to work

- **Inspection/enforcement:**
  - Premium manipulation/avoidance
  - Targeting risk/systems viability
Implications for Employers and OHS practitioners

Difficulties managing contingent workforce:
- Identifying risks/poor communication
- Logistics of induction, training, supervision
- Flexible work/flexible commitment?
- Fractured OHS management systems
- Competitive pressure/race to the bottom
Implications for Employers and OHS Practitioners cont...

- Will older workers ‘survive’ intense work regimes even if jobs are more flexible?
- How small business rehabilitate injured workers?
- Outsourcing of OHS management and occupational health services
Implications for Unions and Community Groups

- Recruiting/representing contingent workers?
- How to negotiate OHS of workplace change?
- How to lobby governments/changes to seek?
- Identifying collaborative approaches
- How to deal with government inspectorates?
Policy Responses: Government

- Revise OH&S laws (duties, codes and access)
- Revise workers compensation laws (cover, premiums, access/entitlements, return to work)
- Inspectorate logistics and compliance strategies
Policy Responses: Government cont...

- Integrated labour standards
- Supply chain regulation/procurement policies
- Evaluate policy impacts and externalities
Employer Responses/Risk Minimisation

- Prior risk assessment/costing and remedies (training, supervision, controls)
- Expect/plan for additional hazards
- Involve contractors, etc. in OHSM
Employer Responses/Risk Minimisation cont...

- Strategic balance in workforce composition
- Preferred subcontractors
- If major contractor ‘take control’
Union Responses

- OHS as core business (build evidence and expertise as well as advocacy)
- Collaborate, negotiate, publicize and lobby at once
- Build links with inspectorates
- Look to international success models (exchange information)
References


Heisz A & LaRochelle-Cote S, (January 2007), ‘Work hours instability’ *Canadian Economic Observer*, Cat. No. 11-010 3.1-3.6


References cont...


Statistics Canada, labour market statistics downloaded from website

Thank You

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