

Rotterdam School of Management  
Workshop on International Developments  
in Management and Organization of Temporary Agency Work

What supports the individualised employment relationship?  
Experience from the creative industries

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# Structure

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  - New Models of the Employment Contract
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2. Milieus and Lifestyles
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# Contractual Dimensions of the Employment Relationship

- Legal
- Economic
- Psychological
- ...
  
- **Contract Perspective:**
  - Exchange
  - Mutual expectations and obligations
  - Freedom of choice and acceptance

# Network Economy and Models of the Employment Contract

- **Employment System Perspective** (Marsden 1999, 2004)  
inter-firm rules and institutions regulating the employment relationship
- **New / other legal, economic and psychological contracts**
  - Social networks as bearers of 'psychological contracts' (reputation)
  - Deferred rewards (royalty-type incomes; stock options)
  - Employment stability and training within an occupational community
  - Representative institutions, credible commitments and contract enforcement
- **Strengths**
  - Goes beyond purely economic perspective
  - considers different dimensions and inter-organisational structures

# Shortcomings

- Economic and psychological contracts: Focus on contracts between **individuals** and organisations (employers)
- Employment systems: **functional explanation**
- ? Where do expectations and preferences regarding work arrangements come from? How can they be explained?
- ? Why do (some) workers accept flexible (precarious) forms of employment?
- **General trends:** individualism, enterprising selves, Postfordism, cité par projets, network society, immaterial labour ...
- **Work identities, relationship between 'work' and 'life'**

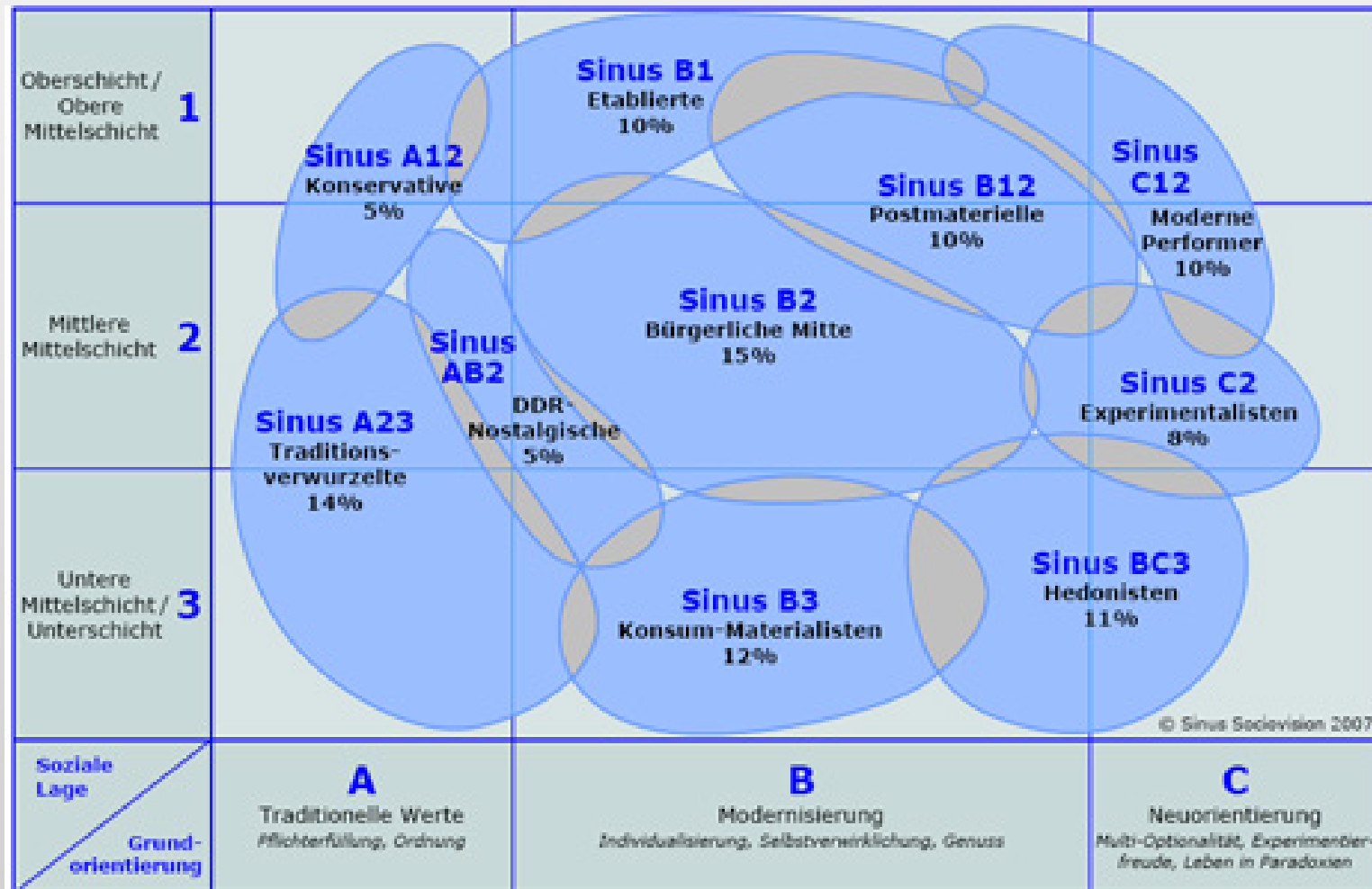
# The Constitution of Work Identities

- Destiny / societal position by birth
  - Education / craftsmanship / profession / devotion
  - Duties, commitment and loyalty (old psychological contract)
  - Workplace community / networks / reputation
  - Solidarity and class consciousness
  - Social status / symbolic capital (e.g. career steps, ranks, privileges, uniforms, awards, medals)
  - Instrumentalism, clear boundary between work and life
- 
- **Collective patterns** of cognition, perception and behaviour that shape preferences regarding work and employment
  - Societal subgroups (milieus, lifestyles)

# Class, Milieus and Lifestyles

- **Class** (Marx):  
Objective conditions (education, economic capital)
- **Style of Life** (Simmel: Stil des Lebens; Weber: Lebensführung): Subjective values, conduct of life
- **Milieu** (Bourdieu):  
Subgroups in social space, characterised by objective life conditions, habitus (incorporated life conditions) and style of life

# Sinus Milieus



Source: <http://www.sinus-sociovision.de/>



# Creative Industries

- **Cultural** work / industries: music, theatre, fine arts, dance, opera, literature; film, publishing
- **Creative** work / industries: design (fashion, web, advertising, games, perfumes etc.), architecture, entertainment (incl. film, print etc.)
- **Properties (Caves 2000)**: uncertainty of demand, infinite variety of products, intrinsic motivation, A-/B - list, project work / motley crews, time flies
- **Challenge** prevalent ideas about
  - Core- periphery structures / strategies
  - ‘Best‘ HRM practices
  - Precarious employment
  - Psychological contracts

# 'Laddish' Lifestyle of Digital Visual Effects Workers

- **Self-perception**

- Fascination for technology, entertainment and 'cool' projects
- Creatives, not artists

- **Milieu**

- Mainly independent, mobile young men
- Middle class, suburban or provincial values
- Fairly middle class activities like playing pool or darts, watching football and 'hanging out with your mates' ('liberal' consumption of alcohol)

- **Global clusters, work and mobility**

- Work as part of lifestyle
- London (Soho), Los Angeles (Burbank and Santa Monica), Canada (Montreal and Vancouver), perhaps New Zealand
- Sleeping, eating, drinking at work
- Hotel-like function of facilities, stylish

**(Pratt, Gill & Spelthann 2007; Eikhof, Haunschild & Spelthann 2008)**



Pixar HQ, San Francisco – central atrium

# David, a young creative professional visits Pixar

"Oh yeah, by the way...did I mention that Kate works for Pixar?"

This was a dream come true. Pixar, as anyone who has known me for more than five seconds probably knows, is undoubtedly the single biggest influence on my creative work (followed closely by Nintendo and the Indiana Jones movies). As luck would have it, the movie on the plane ride over was *Cars*, so I was all Pixar-crazy even before stepping through the front doors. If you've seen the DVD extras in movies like *Monsters Inc.*, then you have an idea of what a cool and innovative facility this is.

The pictures above are of the large central atrium - connected to this is a movie theater, cafe, kitchen, game room and mail room. There was much, much more to our little tour that I was fortunate enough to explore sans camera. Needless to say, I don't think my smile broke for the entire duration of the visit.

Thank you so much Kate. This was an inspirational experience that I will never forget."

Source:

[http://images.google.de/imgres?imgurl=http://www.okaysamurai.com/blogvisual/blog102706a.jpg&imgrefurl=http://www.okaysamurai.com/cardboard/2006\\_10\\_01\\_cardboard.html&h=345&w=460&sz=45&hl=de&start=147&tbnid=s8nNERHoCMFk8M:&tbnh=96&tbnw=128&prev=/images%3Fq%3Doffices%2Bcreative%2Bworkers%26start%3D140%26gbv%3D2%26ndsp%3D20%26svnum%3D10%26hl%3Dde%26sa%3DN](http://images.google.de/imgres?imgurl=http://www.okaysamurai.com/blogvisual/blog102706a.jpg&imgrefurl=http://www.okaysamurai.com/cardboard/2006_10_01_cardboard.html&h=345&w=460&sz=45&hl=de&start=147&tbnid=s8nNERHoCMFk8M:&tbnh=96&tbnw=128&prev=/images%3Fq%3Doffices%2Bcreative%2Bworkers%26start%3D140%26gbv%3D2%26ndsp%3D20%26svnum%3D10%26hl%3Dde%26sa%3DN)



Pixar HQ – central atrium

# Bohemian Lifestyle of Actors

- **Bohemian Lifestyle:**

- Offends bourgeois (middle-class) conventions, norms and values
- Deliberate neglect of economic logics
- Spontaneity, improvisation, joy of life, provisional accommodation
- Selfishness and narcissism + social belonging / collectivism
- Role of public space

- **Theatre Actors:**

- Distinction
- Devotion
- Communication in public spaces
- Artistic perception of work
- Subordination of private life to work

**(Eikhof & Haunschild 2006)**

# Lifestyle as Social Contract

- **A bohemian lifestyle helps artists**
  - to perceive themselves as artists being fully dedicated to *artistic* production processes
  - to accept a work-dominated life, mobility and transient relationships
  - to combine individualism (unique artist) and collectivism ('family')
  - to bring one's whole personality to market
  - to disguise economic rationales and market forces
  - to integrate artistic and management activities
- **A bohemian lifestyle helps organisations / the industry**
  - to keep work arrangements temporary and flexible
  - to delimit extrinsic incentives
  - to benefit from devotion and creativity

(Eikhof & Haunschild 2006)

➔ **Social Contract between workers and organisations**

# Social Contracts...

- ┌ ...link collective (but group-specific) cognitive, perceptive and behavioural schemes (and resulting work preferences) to organisational / industry structures



# Conclusions (1)

- Non-standard employment not necessarily perceived as precarious
- Individualised / deregulated employment does not imply insignificance of collective phenomena → **Social contracts**
  - **Limits to legal, economic and psychological explanations**
- **However**, TA Workers heterogeneous regarding qualifications, motives / aspirations, work identities and lifestyles

# TAW in Germany

- Growing sector but rather slowly (1,3 % of workforce employed; 25 % women).
- Prevalence of unskilled, technical and clerical workers.
- Prevalence of recruitment from unemployment or non-employment
- Law: Arbeitnehmerüberlassungsgesetz (AÜG): **Major changes in 2004**
  - Abolishment of limitation regarding the length of successive assignment to one client
  - Equal pay and equal treatment principle (Gleichbehandlungsgrundsatz, § 3 Abs. 1 Nr. 3 AÜG) **unless existence of collective agreement for TAWers !**
- Currently 3 collective agreements between DGB or CGB and
  1. Arbeitgeberverband Mittelständischer Personaldienstleister (AMP)
  2. Bundesverband Zeitarbeit Personaldienstleistungen (BZA)
  3. Interessenverband Deutscher Zeitarbeitsunternehmen (IGZ)
  - Regulating pay by referring to job requirements (not individual qualification)  
→ 9 pay groups from unskilled to academic education and experience.
  - Minimum wage € 7,38 in West and € 6,42 in East Germany

# Conclusions (2)

- **Social contract** between TWAs and TAWs could be based on:
  - Dependency, power asymmetry → solidarity (?)
    - Role of **protection** through collective bargaining
  - Instrumentalism (**transition** : career step, labour market entry)
  - Professionalism / skill set including flexibility and adaptability
  - Intrinsic motivation
    - Role of **retention** strategies
  - Unlikely:
    - Commitment and loyalty (old psychological contract)
    - Workplace community / networks
    - Class consciousness
    - Social status / symbolic capital