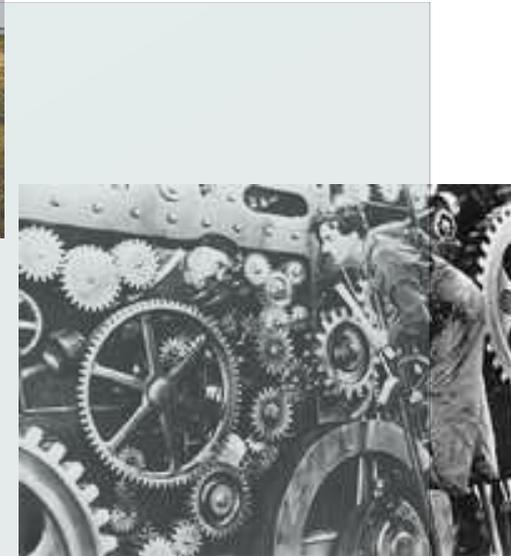


# Sociologia del Lavoro



## L13: The future of work

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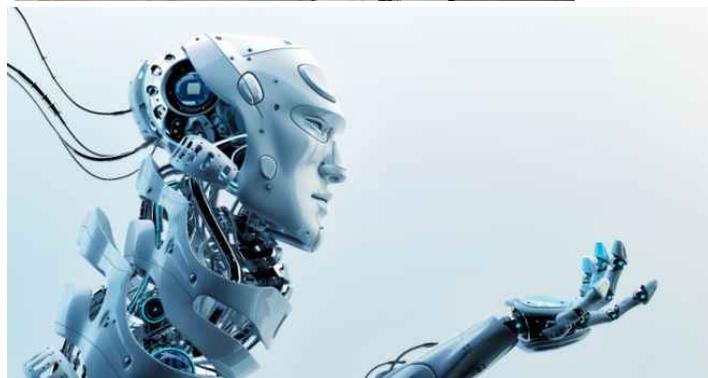
## Fonte principale

C.C. Williams, *Re-visioning the future of work: towards a new mindset*,  
India Economy Review (2009).

# Verso quale lavoro?



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**What is going to happen?** Many competing visions of the future of work:

- the future of work is rosy / work full of despair
- radical changes are occurring / the future will be much like the present.
- scientifically rigorous descriptions / prescriptions of what ought to be

**Objectives of the paper:**

1. to provide a more comprehensive tour of the multiple perspectives
  2. to advance thinking about the future of work.
    - Firstly: the dominant narratives are set out,
    - Secondly: some alternative counter visions
    - Thirdly, some prominent visions of the future of formal employment.
- Although multifarious stories are told, a similar storyline is adopted across nearly all visions which will need to be transcended to advance understanding.

## Dominant Visions of the Direction of Work:

- Products and services are increasingly being produced and delivered by people in formal jobs meaning that informal work is disappearing (**the ‘formalization’ of work thesis**);
- Capitalism is permeating ever wider and deeper into every facet of life (**the ‘commodification’ thesis**);
- Emerging of an open world economy with businesses increasingly operating in a de-regulated seamless global market-place (i.e., **the ‘globalization’ thesis**)
- Industrial society is being replaced by post-industrial societies (i.e., **the ‘post-industrialism’ thesis**);
- Post-Fordist flexible work practices are replacing Fordist mass production (i.e., **the ‘post-Fordism’ thesis**);
- Post-bureaucratic work organization is steadily replacing the bureaucratic one (i.e., **the ‘post-bureaucracy’ thesis**).

**Common storyline:** 1. dichotomy, 2. temporal and normative passage from 1 side to the other, 3. labels are created in term of “... ation”, “... ism” or “post ...”

**Formalization, Commodification and Globalization narratives are dominant and widely accepted. But there is little evidence on these theses (cfr. Table 1. and figure 1.)**

**Table 1: Unpaid Work as a % of Total Work Time, 1960 – Present**

Country	1960-73	1974-84	1985-Present	Trend
Canada	56.9	55.4	54.2	Formalization
Denmark	41.4	-	43.3	Informalization
France <sup>a</sup>	52.0	55.5	57.5	Informalization
Netherlands	-	55.9	57.9	Informalization
Norway	57.1	55.4	-	Formalization
UK	52.1	49.7	53.9	Informalization
USA <sup>b</sup>	56.9	57.6	58.4	Informalization
Finland	-	51.8	54.5	Informalization
20 Countries	43.4	42.7	44.7	Informalization

Sources:

a. Chadeau and Fouquet (1981), Roy (1991), Dumontier and Pan Ke Shon (1999)

b. Robinson and Godbey (1997)

Other countries derived from Gershuny (2000: Tables 7.6, 7.12, 7.16)

# Figure 1: Work Organisation in Western Societies: Maximum and Minimum Contributions of Each Sphere

<b>Monetary Exchange</b>	Not-for-profit monetized exchange 4-10%	
	Profit-motivated exchange 39-57%	
<b>Non-monetized work</b>	Non-exchanged work 28-51%	Non-monetized exchange 4-7%

Source: Williams (2005a, Figure 5.1)

## Counter Visions of the Direction of Work:

- Informalization, De-commodification, Localization

<b>Dominant Visions</b>	<b>Counter Visions</b>
Formalization	Informalization of welfare: third way visions of work: post-employment visions
Commodification	De-commodification of employment: non-capitalist visions of work: post-capitalist visions of work
Globalization	Localization of work and welfare: green visions

Source: Williams (2007, Table 1.2)

**Table 2: Dominant and Counter Visions of the Future of Work**

## Futures for employment

**Table 3: Dichotomous Visions of Futures for Employment**

<b>Nature of change</b>	<b>Old</b>	<b>New</b>
Sector-based	Industrial society	Post-industrial Knowledge economy Information economy
Employment Practices	Fordism	Post-Fordism
Organizational	Bureaucracy Compliance	Post-bureaucracy Commitment
	Direct control Hard human resource management	Indirect control Soft human resource management

Source: Williams (2007, Table 1.1)

**What is much more likely**, however, is that organizations have always displayed elements of both sides of the dichotomy and that such dualistic thought was never capable of delineating the lived practices.

## Conclusions:

- **limited** degree to which such visions of the future of work actually reflect lived practice
- **shortcomings** of using only one dichotomy
- there is far greater **continuity** with the past than normally intimated in these visions
- *'Continuity in organizational structure, work and employment might not be as exciting a message, but it is often a more accurate one'*

## Hence:

- **Rather than reproduce 'The basic pattern ... of stereotypical polarization**, limited evidence and neglect of diversity (Thompson and McHugh 2002), a more kaleidoscopic view (Tsoukas and Cummings 1997) is adopted in which there are no universal linear logics but instead...
- **Many fragments moving in different directions in various parts of the picture.**
- None of the individual visions wholly capture and reflect these heterogeneous directions
- **Not only the continuity** with the past **but also the diverse and inconsistent trajectories** in the present that need to be recognized.