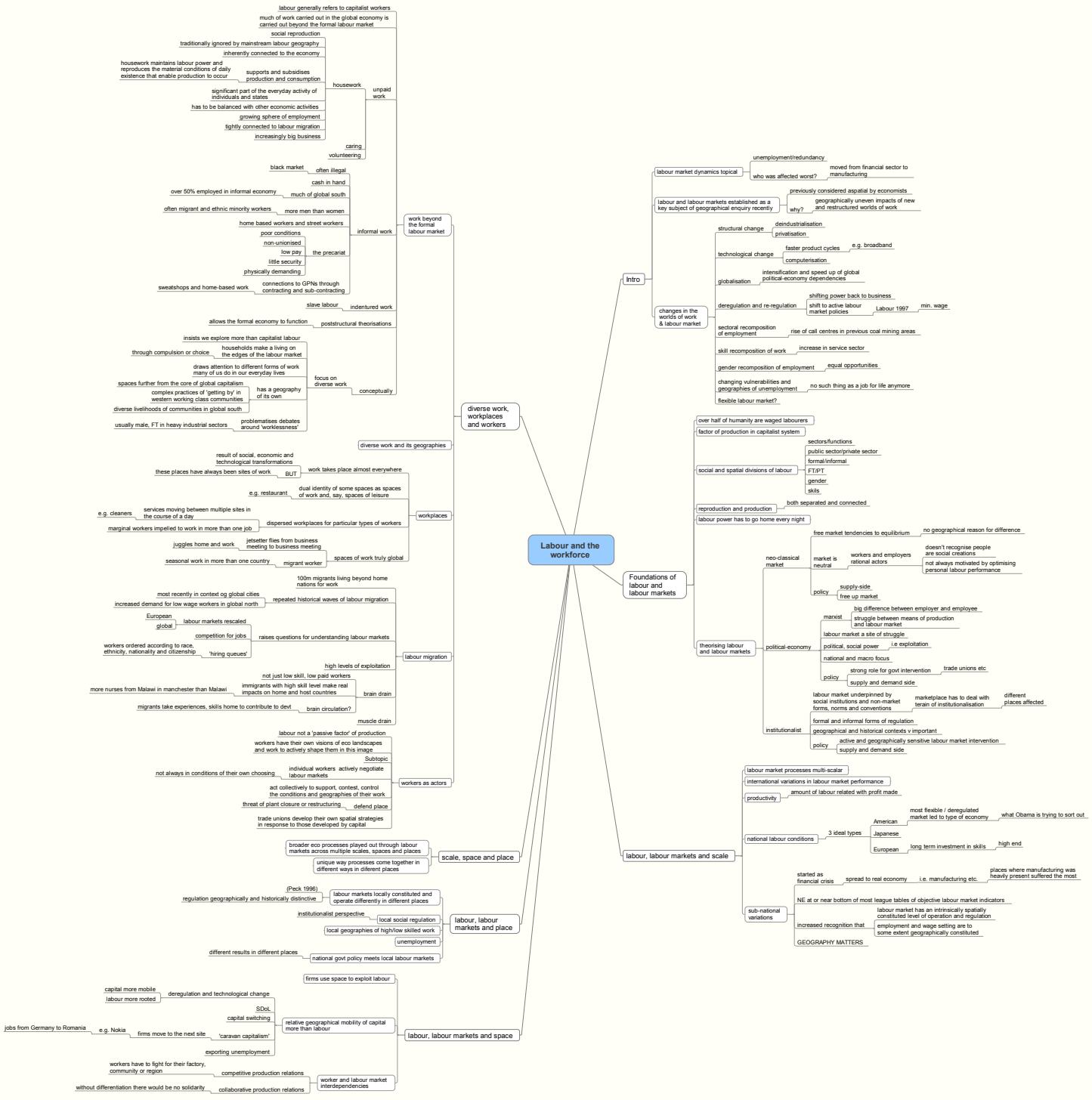
Labour and the workforce
diverse work, workplaces and workers
work beyond the formal labour market
unpaid work
housework
labour generally refers to capitalist workers
much of work carried out in the global economy is carried out beyond the formal labour market
social reproduction
traditionally ignored by mainstream labour geography
inherently connected to the economy
housework maintains labour power and reproduces the material conditions of daily existence that enable production to occur
supports and subsidises production and consumption
significant part of the everyday activity of individuals and states
has to be balanced with other economic activities
growing sphere of employment
tightly connected to labour migration
increasingly big business
caring
volunteering
informal work
black market
often illegal
cash in hand
over 50% employed in informal economy
much of global south
often migrant and ethnic minority workers
more men than women
home based workers and street workers
the precariat
poor conditions
non-unionised
low pay
little security
physically demanding
sweatshops and home-based work
connections to GPNs through contracting and sub-contracting
indentured work
slave labour
poststructural theorisations
allows the formal economy to function
conceptually
focus on diverse work
insists we explore more than capitalist labour
households make a living on the edges of the labour market
through compulsion or choice
draws attention to different forms of work many of us do in our everyday lives
has a geography of its own
spaces further from the core of global capitalism
complex practices of 'getting by' in western working class communities
diverse livelihoods of communities in global south
problematises debates around 'worklessness'
usually male, FT in heavy industrial sectors
diverse work and its geographies
workplaces
work takes place almost everywhere
BUT
result of social, economic and technological transformations
these places have always been sites of work
dual identity of some spaces as spaces of work and, say, spaces of leisure
e.g. restaurant
dispersed workplaces for particular types of workers
services moving between multiple sites in the course of a day
e.g. cleaners
marginal workers impelled to work in more than one job
spaces of work truly global
jetsetter flies from business meeting to business meeting
juggles home and work
migrant worker
seasonal work in more than one country
labour migration
100m migrants living beyond home nations for work
repeated historical waves of labour migration
most recently in context og global cities
increased demand for low wage workers in global north
raises questions for understanding labour markets
labour markets rescaled
European
global
competition for jobs
workers ordered according to race, ethnicity, nationality and citizenship
'hiring queues'
brain drain
high levels of exploitation
not just low skill, low paid workers
immigrants with high skill level make real impacts on home and host countries
more nurses from Malawi in manchester than Malawi
brain circulation?
migrants take experiences, skills home to contribute to devt
muscle drain
workers as actors
labour not a 'passive factor' of production
workers have their own visions of eco landscapes and work to actively shape them in this image
Subtopic
individual workers actively negotiate labour markets
not always in conditions of their own choosing
act collectively to support, contest, control the conditions and geographies of their work
defend place
threat of plant closure or restructuring
trade unions develop their own spatial strategies in response to those developed by capital
scale, space and place
broader eco processes played out through labour markets across multiple scales, spaces and places
unique way processes come together in different ways in different places
labour, labour markets and place
labour markets locally constituted and operate differently in different places
(Peck 1996)
regulation geographically and historically distinctive
local social regulation
institutionalist perspective
local geographies of high/low skilled work
unemployment
national govt policy meets local labour markets
different results in different places
labour, labour markets and space
firms use space to exploit labour
relative geographical mobility of capital more than labour
deregulation and technological change
capital more mobile
labour more rooted
SDoL
capital switching
firms move to the next site
e.g. Nokia
jobs from Germany to Romania
'caravan capitalism'
exporting unemployment
worker and labour market interdependencies
competitive production relations
workers have to fight for their factory, community or region
collaborative production relations
without differentiation there would be no solidarity
Intro
labour market dynamics topical
unemployment/redundancy
who was affected worst?
moved from financial sector to manufacturing
labour and labour markets established as a key subject of geographical enquiry recently
previously considered aspatial by economists
why?
geographically uneven impacts of new and restructured worlds of work
changes in the worlds of work & labour market
structural change
deindustrialisation
privatisation
technological change
faster product cycles
e.g. broadband
computerisation
globalisation
intensification and speed up of global political-economy dependencies
deregulation and re-regulation
shifting power back to business
shift to active labour market policies
Labour 1997
min. wage
sectoral recomposition of employment
rise of call centres in previous coal mining areas
skill recomposition of work
increase in service sector
gender recomposition of employment
equal opportunities
changing vulnerabilities and geographies of unemployment
no such thing as a job for life anymore
flexible labour market?
Foundations of labour and labour markets
over half of humanity are waged labourers
factor of production in capitalist system
social and spatial divisions of labour
sectors/functions
public sector/private sector
formal/informal
FT/PT
gender
skills
reproduction and production
both separated and connected
labour power has to go home every night
theorising labour and labour markets
neo-classical market
market is neutral
free market tendencies to equilibrium
no geographical reason for difference
workers and employers rational actors
doesn't recognise people are social creations
not always motivated by optimising personal labour performance
policy
supply-side
free up market
political-economy
marxist
big difference between employer and employee
struggle between means of production and labour market
labour market a site of struggle
political, social power
i.e exploitation
national and macro focus
policy
strong role for govt intervention
trade unions etc
supply and demand side
institutionalist
labour market underpinned by social institutions and non-market forms, norms and conventions
marketplace has to deal with terain of institutionalisation
different places affected
formal and informal forms of regulation
geographical and historical contexts v important
policy
active and geographically sensitive labour market intervention
supply and demand side
labour, labour markets and scale
labour market processes multi-scalar
international variations in labour market performance
productivity
amount of labour related with profit made
national labour conditions
3 ideal types
American
most flexible / deregulated market led to type of economy
what Obama is trying to sort out
Japanese
European
long term investment in skills
high end
sub-national variations
started as financial crisis
spread to real economy
i.e. manufacturing etc.
places where manufacturing was heavily present suffered the most
NE at or near bottom of most league tables of objective labour market indicators
increased recognition that
labour market has an intrinsically spatially constituted level of operation and regulation
employment and wage setting are to some extent geographically constituted
GEOGRAPHY MATTERS