

The Globalization of the Temporary Staffing Industry

A two-year project funded (2004-2006) by the Economic and Social Research Council in Geography, School of Environment and Development, The University of Manchester, UK

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This project is examining the globalization of temporary staffing industry. The ongoing work is mapping the business levels of the largest transnational agencies, before exploring the ways in which they operate geographically and functionally. The research is based on an analysis of existing quantitative data and a programme of semi-structured interviews with commentators on, and senior executives in, the global temporary staffing industry. The second stage of the research has involved conducting a wide range of interviews in three differing markets for temporary staffing: Australia, Japan and Sweden.

Project Objectives

1. 'Mapping' the global temporary staffing industry
 - To identify the leading trans-national temporary staffing agencies, and to map their activities at the global and national scales;
 - To undertake a comparative analysis of the growth and organisational structure of these firms
2. 'Grounding' the global temporary staffing industry
 - To explore how the activities of trans-national temporary staffing agencies in particular countries are situated in the wider production networks of the firms;
 - To explore how the activities of trans-national temporary staffing agencies in particular countries – Australia, Japan and Sweden – are grounded in, and shaped by, the political-institutional, competitive and regulatory contexts in which they are operating.

The Interviews: an overview

The following are the types of issues that formed the basis for the interviews:

- **Corporate histories and evolution**
- **Company structure and activities**
- **Internationalisation strategies**
- **Diversification strategies**
- **Growth strategies: industrial and geographical markets**
- **Industry innovations**
- **Competitive pressures**
- **Future developments**

Dissemination strategy

We are committed to disseminating our findings to as many audiences as possible. This dissemination will take a number of forms for participating companies:

Website

Our website can be found at:

<http://www.sed.manchester.ac.uk/geography/research/tempingindustry/>

This is an open-access site outlining the details of the project and provides a means through which we communicate our findings.

Working Papers

Throughout the project's duration we will produce working papers. These will be loaded onto the website and will be available to all those interested in the research, although their length and nature means that first and foremost they will be academic outputs.

Working Briefs

Throughout the project's duration we will write short (2 or 3) pages summaries of our findings which tend to be based on thematic issues or geographical studies. There are currently Working Briefs on our website on a range of topics such as the internationalisation of the industry, Eastern Europe and case studies of Australia, Sweden and Japan. They are available to all those interested in our research, although their primary audience will be policy-makers and those inside the industry.

End of Project Report

At the end of the project we will write a summary report that details the main findings. This will consist of a short executive summary and a main report, and will be loaded onto the website so that all interested parties can download copies.

End of Project Workshop

In addition to producing written outputs during the duration of the project, we will also host an end of project workshop in Manchester in September 2006. At this meeting we hope to bring together academics, managers, analysts and policymakers to discuss the state of the global staffing industry and its future development.

The Globalization of Temporary Staffing Workshop

Monday 4th & Tuesday 5th September 2006

Monday 4th September

2.00 – 2.15pm: Welcome and introductions

2.15 – 3.30pm: Session 1

The globalization of the temporary staffing industry: project overview

3.30 – 4.00pm: Tea

4.00 – 5.30pm: Session 2

The top 20 transnational agencies: firm strategies and organisational structures

7.30pm: workshop dinner

Tuesday 5th September

9.30 – 11.00am: Session 3

National market dynamics: possibilities and problems of international expansion

11.00 – 11.30am: Coffee

11.30 – 1.00pm: Session 4

Policy agendas: responding to, or driving, regulatory change?

1.00 – 2.00pm: Lunch

2.00 – 3.30pm: Session 5

Workshop review: summary of discussions, and the future research agenda

3.30pm: Tea / departure

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