
Labour commons: Exploring alternative concepts and practices of work

Asimina Christoforou*^{1,2}

¹Athens University of Economics and Business – Greece

²Hellenic Open University [Patras] – Greece

Abstract

In this article we examine alternative concepts and practices of work associated with labour commons. A labour commons is a space where labour is perceived as a shared resource and work relations are organised in ways that serve common needs and goals. Thus labour is not a commodity; it is seen as an inherently social activity, a human capability organised and reproduced on the basis of rules and systems of cooperation and social welfare. We argue that in contemporary capitalist societies wage labour may not be "free", because it ceases to provide the means for pursuing substantive human values of social and environmental protection. We suggest a re-conceptualisation of work by creating labour commons via cooperativist values and institutions, which foster self-management and participatory democracy.

Keywords: labour commons, social capital, cooperatives

*Speaker