

Wednesday 12th March 2014
3.30pm – 5.00pm

Room 839, Graham Hills Building
50 Richmond Street, Glasgow, G1 1XU

Department of Human Resource Management
In conjunction with
Marie Curie Changing Employment
Research Seminar

Jean Jenkins, University of Cardiff

**Time Banks and Dead Horses: The Manipulation of Working Time in
Indian Garment Factories**
Paul Blyton and Jean Jenkins

Long before it relocated to the twenty-first century's industrialising regions of the global South, garment manufacturing had a long and notorious history as a 'sweated trade' (Cadbury and Shann, 1907; Phizacklea, 1990). Studies of British garment workshops (for example, Cunnison, 1965; Edwards and Scullion, 1982; Lupton 1963) highlighted the range of employer control strategies in this context. In particular, Sheila Cunnison's work (1965) concentrated on work allocation as a means of managerial control, and she described the 'dead horse' system, which involved payment for work in advance of its performance, as a powerful mechanism for establishing a debt relationship between worker and supervisor. In its present day locations, a range of poor employment conditions continue to thrive within the global garment supply chain and in this paper we examine a specific aspect of such conditions with echoes from the past, in the form of 'time-banking' as practised in the ready-made garment factories of Bangalore, India. By means of payment for time in advance of work undertaken, it is common practice in these present day garment factories for workers to be brought into a situation of *time-debt* to their workshop - a debt they will never be able to repay and which binds them to the workplace. More specifically, in the absence of adequate regulation or the means and/or the will to enforce it, employers have considerable scope to increase employee dependence – through debts of one form or another – and thereby maximise their compliance.

