

# Precarious Work Undermines Decent Work: The Unionized Hotel Workers' Experience

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This paper determined the drivers and impact of precarious work on the hotel workers and their unions. Based on the proposition that precarious work undermines decent work, a descriptive study with the use of the survey method among 93 respondents from 12 unionized hotels was undertaken. Results showed that the main reason that drives the hotel management to resort to precarious work practices is to lower expenses or costs for salaries and benefits and increase profit. Precarious work has also significantly weakened the union as an organization since their membership continues to decline and their source of fund is reduced. Precarious employment prevents women workers from becoming regular employees, thus, they cannot become union members, and denies them of decent pay. The health and safety of precarious workers are at risk since they have multiple jobs in multiple outlets in the hotel and they are assigned to irregular or very limited hours of work and/or long work shifts/work days or work weeks. Therefore, precarious work creates insecurity and leads to increases in inequality and poverty, which undermines the principles of Decent Work. One strategic course of action to abate the prevalent practice of precarious work in the hotel industry is to amend or craft new laws that will give more protection to job security in the workplace.

*JEL Classifications:* L20, M12

*Keywords:* precarious work, decent work, unionized hotels, women at work, non-regular work, workers at risk

***“Work is a good belonging to all people and must be made available to all who are capable of engaging in it.”***

***(PCJP, 2004)***

Work is an essential human activity in society. It transforms people, sustains organizations, and empowers nations. Work gives meaning and is an expression of one's feelings, thoughts, and full humanity. It is a source of self-esteem, self-actualization, and security. Work is also a

source of livelihood for a decent life. “Work is a fundamental right and a good for mankind, a useful good, worthy of man because it is an appropriate way for him to give expression to and enhance his human dignity” (Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace [PCJP], 2004, p.180). Work, in the past, has meant as stable, full-time job, representing substantial progress over an earlier age when labor was treated little differently to products (Evans & Gibb, 2009).

To afford protection to working people in many parts of the world, the Decent Work

Agenda was established. This concept is rooted on the conditions of freedom, equality, security, and human dignity (Gust, 2006). Decent Work Agenda was introduced in 1999 by Juan Somavia, the long-serving Director-General of the International Labour Office (Hoffer, 2012). Decent work embodies the principles of workers' rights, social protection, employment promotion, and social dialogue (Gust, 2006). The principle of the workers' rights is to ensure that work is associated with dignity, equality, freedom, adequate remuneration, social security, and voice for representation and participation for all categories of workers. The principle of social protection is aimed to provide security against a variety of contingencies and vulnerabilities to reduce suffering, anxiety, insecurity, and material deprivation. The principle of employment promotion is to provide adequate employment opportunities for all who seek work and work should yield remuneration that meets the essential needs of the workers and the family members. The principle of social dialogue is to provide voice and representation to participants in the production process. It means that they should be able to defend their interests, to articulate their concerns and priorities, and to engage in negotiations and discussions with other actors in the production system and with the public authorities on social and economic policies.

Decent work, therefore, stresses the necessity of work in people's lives, independence, and dignity. It gives equal recognition to all workers and underlines work as the source of value creation, rejecting ideological and discriminatory class-based concepts (Hoffer, 2012). Decent work also emphasizes that quality employment creates social value for the welfare of society and dignity of persons regardless of religion, race, gender, and age. It means it includes the "millions of workers outside the formal economy and demands decent living conditions for all who work, as well as for those who should not work or who cannot find adequate work" (Hoffer, 2012, p.64). Decent work is not only being paid the minimum wage for work done in a day. Although,

according to the Global Wage Report of 2010/ (International Labour Organization [ILO], 2010), developing countries are now increasingly relying on minimum wages, and overall, minimum wages are applied in about 90% of countries in the world.

However, in the past decades, the traditional work process and the standard employment model (a worker with one employer, worked full year and full-time without a pre-determined end date, mostly on employer premises, and was entitled to benefits given by the employer or through the social security system) have been changing in a number of vital ways (Evans & Gibb, 2009). This is partly attributable to globalization, intensified global competition, technological change, and corporate restructuring (Evans & Gibb, 2009). Particularly, globalization as a "movement across boundaries has brought new efficiencies and vast new markets for business but it has also exacerbated inequalities and lessened the power of states to control business for the common good" (Williams, 2013, p.2). It seems that globalization, increasing deregulation of labor market, stiffening competition, as well as the global financial, economic, and social crises that we have been experiencing since 2007 have brought about worldwide the nosedive in the observance of decent work but also the re-emergence and continuous growth of precarious employment over the years. Historically, precarious employment flourished in a context where unemployment was widespread and "it has been a pervasive feature of labour markets in developed countries since the first industrial revolution, apart from a brief interregnum in the 30 years after World War II" (Quinlan, 2012, p.19). In the 19th century, precarious employment was associated with exploitative forms of home-based work, indentured, and child labour (Quinlan, 2012). Today, these same patterns can be found in many developing countries together with a large informal sector that is unregulated, but often still linked to the formal sector through global supply chains (Benach et al., 2007, 2010 as cited in Quinlan, 2012, p.17).

Recent data from the International Institute for Labor Studies' (2012) World of Work Report in 2007 and 2010 on the incidence of precarious employment revealed that the percentage of involuntary part-time employment in advanced economies such as Japan, Romania, Spain, Italy, and Greece has increased. Based on the same report, the incidence of involuntary temporary employment in advanced economies such as Bulgaria, Portugal, Greece, Spain, and Cyprus has also increased in a much higher percentage compared to involuntary part-time employment. It is interesting to note that worldwide, women are more often in precarious work situations than men, who are more likely to be in permanent, full-time, regular, and better-paid jobs, particularly in Eastern and Western Africa, Southern Asia, and Northern Africa.

The term precarious employment is widely used to describe "irregular and insecure work arrangements that have grown substantially in both rich and poor countries since the late 1970s" and it has been adopted and increasingly used by academic researchers and later policymakers since the 1980s (Quinlan, 2012, p.3). Moreover, according to Evans and Gibb (2009, p.4), precarious work refers to "forms of work characterized by atypical employment contracts, limited or no social benefits and statutory entitlements, high degrees of job insecurities, low job tenure, low wages and high risks of occupational injury and diseases." From a workers' point of view, it is related to uncertain, unpredictable, and risky employment. The main drivers of precarious work are: (1) "low road" approaches to competition whereby cost-cutting is achieved at the expense of product and the job quality, wages, and a clean environment; (2) new forms of subcontracting and outsourcing, facilitated by falling costs of coordination and transportation afforded by new information and communication technologies; and (3) new management and contractual forms, which loosen the traditional ties between workers and employers, as indicated by the increase in low wage jobs, temporary employment and self-

employment, often taking the form of disguised employment (Evans & Gibb, 2009).

Corollarily, ILO (2007) reported that precarious work is characterized by a combination of factors such as: (1) a limited duration or a high probability of the worker's losing the job; (2) little or no opportunity for workers to control the working conditions; (3) absence of benefits or social security provisions; and (4) a low income in tandem with poverty. Likewise, precarious work is typically non-permanent, temporary, casual, insecure, and contingent. Workers in these jobs are often not covered by labor law and social security protections. According to Metal World (2007), precarious work is caused by employment practices designed to maximize employer profits and flexibility and to shift risks onto workers. In highly-industrialized countries, full-time jobs are being replaced by precarious jobs, while in developing countries precarious work has always been the norm. As documented by Metal World (2007), the employment practices often associated with precarious work include the following: (1) direct hire on temporary labor contracts; (2) hiring in labor via employment agencies or labor brokers; (3) contracting out functions to other companies; (4) personal labor contracts as bogus "self-employed" workers; (5) abusive probationary periods; (6) disguised employment training contracts; (7) on call/daily hire; (8) illegal or involuntary part-time work; and (9) home working.

Moreover, according to the International Union of Food, Agricultural, Hotel, Restaurant, Catering, Tobacco and Allied Workers' Associations (2011b), a partial list of the various types of precarious employment arrangements would include: (1) outsourcing, contracting-out or subcontracting; (2) casualization, contractualization, contingent or fixed-term contracts leading to the creation of a large pool of permanently "temporary employees;" (3) use of labor agencies; (4) bogus "self-employment" and independent contractors; and (5) abusive use of seasonal and probationary employment and traineeships.

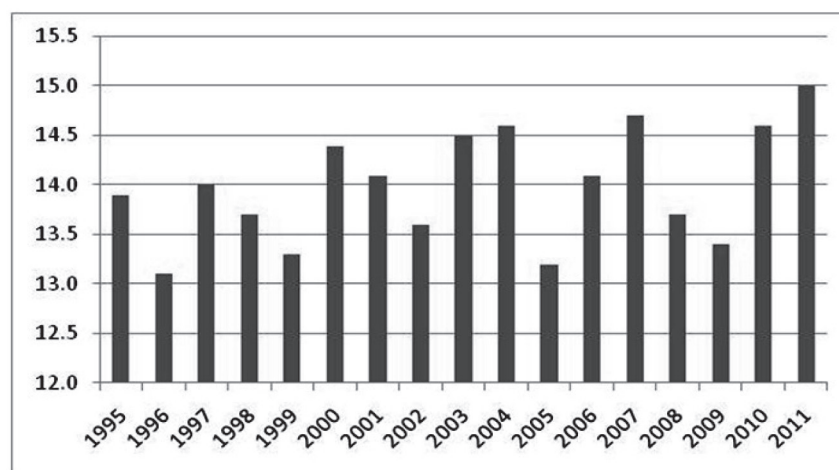
Given the above cited practices, it can be said that “precarious jobs are those with a short time horizon, or for which the risk of job loss is high. This includes irregular work, with limited control over workplace conditions, little protection from health, social security, and low income. The concept of precariousness involves instability, lack of protection, insecurity, and social or economic vulnerability” (Rodgers, 1989, p.3). Precarious employment clearly challenges the Decent Work Agenda because its practices undermines the principles of workers’ rights, social protection, employment promotion, and social dialogue that brings insecurity, uncertainty, and unpredictable working conditions to millions of working people in the world of work.

The rapid increase in precarious work is being driven both by the actions of corporations and governments. Across the world, national labor laws are being amended to better enable employers to create yet more precarious jobs at the expense of stable employment. For example, in 2006, the Australian government introduced new labor laws that immediately plunged millions of workers into precarious employment by taking away their right to protection from unfair dismissal. The laws also encourage contract and temporary work (Metal World, 2007). Recently, the European Union

has launched a consultation paper promoting ‘flexicurity’, the idea that employment growth is stimulated when employment protections such as unfair dismissal laws are reduced and casual employment is increased (Metal World, 2007). According to Evans and Gibb (2009) in Canada, part time, contract, and temporary work as well as self-employment, now corresponds to around one-third of the workforce nationally. The contract and agency workers are often given the same work done by permanent workers but for less pay. Contract workers are only paid while on assignment, so that it is often difficult for them to maintain sufficient hours in order to earn a living wage. Similar to other countries, in Japan, part-time workers are by far the largest numerical group within the non-regular category. They make up roughly three-quarters of the non-regular group. Their average hourly wage is 40% of what regular workers earn and many of these workers are women, young people, and older workers (Evans & Gibb, 2009).

### *A Brief on Precarious Work in the Philippines*

The Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) defines employees in precarious work are those that “relates to wage and salary workers



**Figure 1.** Employees in precarious work (% of total employment)

Source: Adapted from “LABSTAT Updates: Beyond the unemployment figures,” (Bureau of Labor and Employment Statistics [BLES], 2012, p. 1-7).

in any work arrangements, that differ from the commonly perceived norm of “full-time protected regular wage and salary employment” (BLES, 2012), such as short-term, casual and low paying jobs that do not provide the usual non-wage benefits and social security normally found in regular employment contracts. Data in Figure 1 shows that employees in precarious work in percentage of total employment from 1995 to 2011 averaged 13.8%. Noticeable high proportions of precarious employment occurred in 2004, 2007, 2010, and 2011.

Moreover, based on the BLES (2011) Yearbook of Labor Statistics, it can be inferred that the incidence of precarious work reduces the pool of workers who can be unionized. In 2003, 19.2% of the employees in non-agricultural establishments with 20 or more workers worked either on casual, seasonal, contractual, or per project basis. There was a slight increase to 19.6% in 2004 and decline to 18.0% in 2008. However, in 2010, the share of precarious employment rose to more than one-fifth of employees (21.2%). The BLES data also revealed that by type of non-regular employment, the average percentage of those hired as contractual is highest, followed by casuals, and then part-time. According to type of industry, the Real Estate, Renting, and Business Activities sector has the most number of non-regular workers and the Manufacturing industry as second in the list with numerous non-regular workforce. The alignment of the Philippine economic policy to global markets suggests that the occurrence of precarious work is likely to increase in the future.

## OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

Most of the data on precarious work that are found in the ILO publications are on OECD countries, Africa, and Latin America, revealing little knowledge coming from developing economies in Asia, such as the Philippines. It is with the aim to acquire more information and address the issue of precarious employment that is

affecting the Philippines, particularly, the workers and the unions in the hotel industry. Specifically, the objectives of the study are focused on the following:

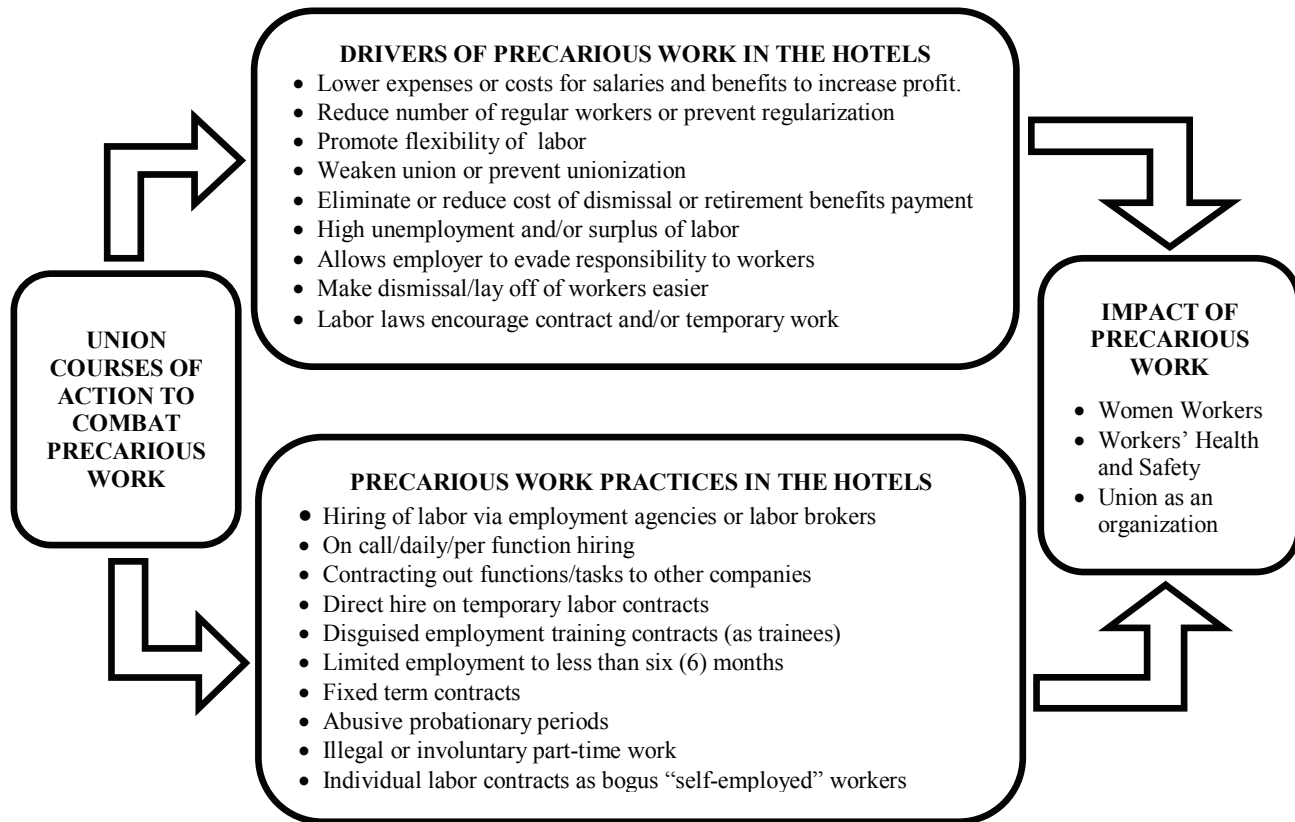
1. To determine the employment practices that are often associated with precarious work in the unionized hotels;
2. To know the factors that drive the unionized hotels to resort to precarious work practices;
3. To describe the impact of precarious work on the following: (a) women workers; (b) workplace health and safety; and (c) union as an organization; and
4. To determine strategies or courses of action that can be taken by the Unions to combat precarious work practices in their workplace.

## THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The framework shows various aspects of precarious work that were investigated. The drivers that prompt hotel management to resort into precarious work arrangement are enumerated in the top box, the specific precarious work practices in the unionized hotel are listed in the bottom box, the impact of the drivers and the practices of precarious work in cited on the end box of the diagram, while the union courses of action to combat this enemy of decent work are highlighted on the left side of Figure 2.

## METHODOLOGY

A descriptive research design with a triangulation approach to gather data was used. Initially, a survey was conducted in 12 unionized hotel establishments which are affiliated with the National Union of Workers in Hotel Restaurant and Allied Industries - International Union of Food, Agricultural Hotel, Restaurant, Catering, Tobacco and Allied Worker's Associations (NUWHRAIN- IUF) in the Philippines. Of the



*Figure 2.* Operational framework on precarious work

12 participating hotels, eight are located in Metro Manila and four are operating in the provinces. Based on a 95% reliability level and a margin of error of 0.10, 93 valid responses from supervisory (20) and rank-and-file (63) employees who are union officers and members were chosen through convenience sampling. Their responses were used for the data analysis. The data came from the 2-page pre-tested structured questionnaire developed by the researcher. This questionnaire I developed was also content-validated since the items came from the review of related literature and cross validated with key trade union leaders who have been working in the hotel industry for many years. Secondly, one-on-one interviews of key informants like the local union fulltime secretary (2), NUWHRAIN-IUF fulltime staff (2), and some workers who are hired by the hotels in a precarious arrangement were conducted (4). Lastly, to get a better glimpse of their work situation, some casual, outsourced, and apprentice

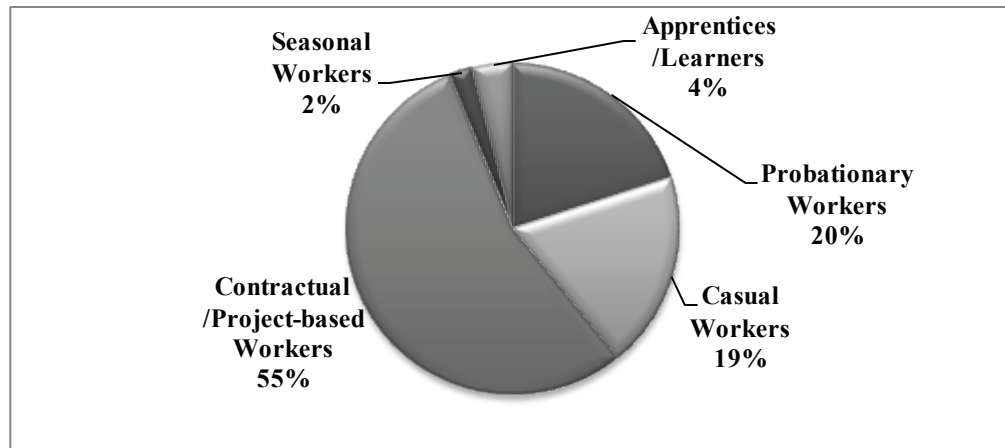
workers were observed while they were on duty in three NUWHRAIN-IUF member hotels.

To secure a brief profile on the extent of precarious employment in the Philippines and at the industry level, a content analysis of government publications such as the Bureau of Labor and Employment Statistics and National Statistics Office data were also utilized.

## FINDINGS

### *Statistical Profile of Precarious Work in the Hotel and Restaurant Industry*

The data from 2009/2010 BLES Integrated Survey (BITS) (BLES, 2010-2011) as illustrated in Figure 3, reveal that precarious work is prevalent in the Philippines. Across industries, there are 850,085 non-regular workers classified as probationary (179,384), casual (170,817),



**Figure 3.** Total employment and number of non-regular workers in hotel and restaurants with 20 or more workers by category, Philippines as of June 2010

**Source:** Adapted from 2009/2010 BLES Integrated Survey (BITS), (BLES, 2010-2011).

contractual/project-based (445,020), seasonal (128, 815), and apprentices/learners (26,049). In the hotel and restaurant industry, there are 26,049 employed as contractual/project-based, casual, probationary, and seasonal workers to meet their needs. Figure 3 shows that the majority (55%) of the non-regular workers are hired as contractual/project-based workers. Contracted out services to employment agencies are mostly on security, food/catering, janitorial, general administrative, and logistics/transport work. Among the hotel and restaurants engaged in subcontracting with 20 or more workers, the type of jobs/services contracted out are Finance/Accounting, Transport Services, Billing and Payment, Courier Services, Human Resource, Data Processing/Encoding, and Learning/Training.

Table 1 shows that there are 11 specific employment practices that are often associated with precarious work in the participating hotels based on the actual work experience on the union officers and members in their respective hotels. The top of the list is the hiring of labor via employment agencies or labor brokers (40.2%). This is followed by on call/daily/per function hiring (32.2%). Third in the rank is contracting out functions/tasks to other companies (31.3%).

### **Survey Results**

These precarious work arrangements are more commonly done in the Food and Beverage Department where they hire waiters, food attendants, stewards, and bartender assistants. In the Housekeeping Department they employ roomboys and cleaners/janitors. In the Engineering Department they contract out electricians and engineers. In a lesser degree, the other departments that are also affected are Laundry, General Services, Administration, and Accounting.

These employment practices confirm the observation of IUF General Secretary Ron Oswald (IUF, 2011b, p.1) that “permanent, direct employment is on the way out. It is increasingly replaced with temporary contracts which in fact can last for decades; by outsourced, agency contracts which conceal the real employment relationship and hence the balance of power in the workplace and in society; with seasonal contracts which are year round, bringing all seasons together in a single workplace; bogus self-employment schemes which turn wage earners into contractors; and with phony apprenticeships often disguised as life-long learning.”

**Table 1.**  
*Employment Practice Often Associated with Precarious Work in the Hotels*

<b>Practices</b>	<b>Percentage of Precarious Workers hired (n=93)</b>	<b>Department most affected</b>
Hiring of labor via employment agencies or labor brokers	40.2	Housekeeping
On call/daily/per function hiring	32.2	Food & Beverage
Contracting out functions/tasks to other companies	31.3	Engineering
Direct hire on temporary labor contracts	29.6	Food & Beverage
Disguised employment training contracts (as trainees)	24.8	Housekeeping
Limited employment to less than six (6) months	23.7	Food & Beverage
Fixed term contracts	16.1	Engineering
Abusive probationary periods	15.9	Food & Beverage
Illegal or involuntary part-time work	9.3	F&B, steward
Individual labor contracts as bogus “self-employed” workers	8.7	Engineering
Home working	4.0	F&B, laundry, accounting

There are several factors that drive hotels to resort to precarious work practices according to the trade unionists' respondents as presented in Table 2. The top five factors are: (1) lower expenses or costs for salaries and benefits to increase profit (94.6%); (2) reduce number of regular workers or prevent regularization (93.5%); (3) promote flexibility of labor (91.4%); (4) weaken union or prevent unionization (88.2%); and (5) weaken union or prevent unionization (refer to Table 2) (88.2%). These data reveal that precarious work in these hotels as experienced by the unionists are caused by employment practices designed to maximize employer profits and flexibility in the workload and tasks performed by workers. Moreover, the changes in the labor market are often an effect of the change to which decent work has been reconfigured to introduce precarious work in the hotel industry, and not one of its causes.

Based on Table 3, the bulk (96.8%) of the respondents opined that precarious work practices have significantly weakened the union as an organization since their membership continues to decline and with this trend, their source of funds (which is the union dues paid by the members) is also reduced. When the workers are not regular, they are unable to fully exercise union rights or avail of union benefits and privileges (90.3%) simply because they are not members of the union. As pointed out by one of the National Executive Officers of NUWHRAIN:

Our bargaining power has diminished substantially over the years because of the big drop in our union membership since many of the hotel workers are no longer having regular jobs. The hotel management is not as afraid as before, that we can paralyze the hotel operations through a strike or any form of concerted action due to CBA deadlock or unfair



**Table 2.**  
*Perceived Factors/Drivers for Hotels to Resort to Precarious Work Practices*

Reasons	Frequency (n=93)	Percentage
Lower expenses or costs for salaries and benefits to increase profit	88	94.6
Reduce number of regular workers or prevent regularization	87	93.5
Promote flexibility of labor	85	91.4
Weaken union or prevent unionization	82	88.2
Influence of high unemployment and/or surplus of labor	82	88.2
Eliminate or reduce cost of dismissal or retirement benefits payment	81	87.1
Make dismissal/lay off of workers easier	80	86.0
Allow employer to evade responsibility to workers	79	84.9
Encourage contract and/or temporary work through Philippine Labor laws	79	84.9

**Table 3.**  
*Effects of Precarious Work on the Union as an Organization*

Effects on the Union	Frequency (n=93)	Percentage
Weakens union, lowers membership and reduces source of funds	90	96.8
Unable to fully exercise union rights or avail of union benefits and privileges	84	90.3
Contributes to union busting or dissolution of union	84	90.3
Lessens ability to bargain, to strike, or undertake concerted action	84	90.3
Discourages or prevents union organization or membership	82	88.2

labor practices. The management just keeps on outsourcing hotel employees, especially in the Food and Beverage Department. (personal communications, January 15, 2013)

The broad erosion of bargaining power of workers constrained them to accept precarious work in the hotel even if it compromises their mandate to fight for the workers' right to decent work. The ultimate threat that is posed by the

precarious work is the dissolution of the union when it reaches the point there are no longer regular employees or the number is so small that workers will no longer be interested to unionize. In fact, according to the union officers, their union membership have significantly decline over the years when the hotel management started implementing precarious work schemes such as outsourcing and other forms of contractualization.

**Table 4.**  
*Effects of Precarious Work on Women Workers*

Effects on Women Workers	Frequency (n=93)	Percentage
Minimizes or prevents regularization	78	83.9
Discourages union membership and/or denies union representation	76	81.7
Lower wages and salaries or compensation	72	77.4
Minimal, or denial, or non-improvement, of benefits	71	76.3
Fosters discrimination	68	73.1

The unionists perceived that the re-emerging precarious work arrangements are unfair to women workers as indicated by their effects in Table 4. First, women workers are prevented from becoming regular employees (83.9%) and as such they cannot become union member and denies them of union representation (81.7%). Since they are not regular employees, they receive lower wages (77.4%) and they are not entitled to benefits (76.3%). If they are breadwinners, their salaries are not enough to fend for their family needs and even for themselves. But it seems that they forced to engage in this non-standard work schemes due to the uncertainty about the future of employment and earnings, limited work opportunities, and the stiff competition to find work in the hotel industry. Women workers believe that it is better for them to have meager income, than having nothing at all. In such case, those who are exposed to low and unstable income also suffer greatly during economic downturns. Since they are not regular employees, they are the first to go when labor downsizing is implemented by the hotel management.

This precarious work conditions fosters discrimination, especially to women. The unionists also observed that in the hotels, it appears to be relatively easy for women to enter into low-wage employment (e.g. food attendant, room attendant, laundry attendant, and cleaner), but relatively difficult to move into better jobs like becoming supervisor, department head, or manager. Precarious work is now an increasing

challenge among the workers in the hotels, undermining wages and conditions of work and threatening to divide working people in the industry. It flourishes because government regulation allows it, there is a big labor surplus, and workers are driven to accept work at any cost to guarantee that they can provide for their family and raise their children. An example of this is the experience of one casual female hotel worker as narrated below:

Maria is a room attendant at the Highest Floor of one of the Hotels in Manila. She has been a casual employee for five years. She did not finish college and is a single parent. Her child is now a 2nd year high school student at a public school. As casual workers, during peak months they were the ones asked to do most of the job and even tasked to work overtime (12 hours - a day) because they could not really complain about it unlike the regular employees who have their Union to help them if they file a complaint regarding work abuse. Also, during lean months when there is not much work to be done, the casual employees like her, are usually the ones asked not to report for work. This means they have no salary for the day or several days. When her child gets sick, she has to look for others sources to pay for the medical expenses since she has no income from the Hotel for some days. Maria also sadly said that she has no chance to move to a better paying post in the Hotel since Management prefers graduates of Hotel and Restaurant degree or related courses to become supervisor or manager.

**Table 5.**

*Effects of Precarious Work on the Workplace Health and Safety*

Effects on Workplace Health and Safety	Frequency (n=93)	Percentage
Tendency to have multiple jobs in multiple sites	82	88.2
Assigned to irregular or very limited hours of work; and/or long work shifts/work days or work weeks	80	86.0
Required to do dirty, dangerous, dull, and/or lowest paying jobs	80	86.0
Less or no health and safety equipment, benefits, or social security	75	80.6
Stressful psychosocial working conditions	71	76.3

**Table 6.**

*Action that can be Taken by the Unions to Address/Combat Precarious Work*

Trade Unions' Actions	Frequency	Percentage
Lobby for new or changes in laws to promote job security	86	88.2
Recruit or organize precarious workers into unions	85	86.0
Include contract workers in collective bargaining arrangements	84	86.0
Negotiate for the same wages, working conditions, benefits and job stability for precarious workers	83	80.6
Demand that employers reduce or eliminate the use of contract labor and other forms of precarious work	83	76.3

Table 5 presents the effects of precarious work on the workplace health and safety. The unionists observed that precarious work practices create the tendency to have multiple jobs in multiple sites (88.2%) in the hotel. It means that the job description of a hotel worker has expanded and this has to be done in more than one outlet in the establishment. The workers are now pressured to toil faster but efficiently and accurately. It means that if they perform very satisfactorily, practically, no customer complaint regarding workers' service is received by the hotel management. This redounds to higher revenues as reflected in consistent high room occupancy and food consumption in the food outlets and room

service orders. The contractual or temporary workers are assigned to irregular or very limited hours of work and/or long work shifts/work days or work weeks (86.0%) which the regular workers are seldom assigned to. Therefore, the precarious workers experience toxic or stressful psychosocial working conditions which are not good for their personal wellness and workplace safety. As one Union Supervisor Officer said emphatically:

What is more demeaning is the reality that precarious workers are required to do dirty, dangerous, dull, and/or lowest paying jobs. They do the work that regular employees do not want to perform anymore. They have no option but to follow or else they will lose their job.

There are several courses of action that can be taken by the unions to combat precarious as revealed in Table 6. The trade unionists strongly believe that what they can prioritize to do as a labor group is to lobby for new laws or changes in laws to promote job security (88.2%). This is the spirit behind the role of the unions as catalysts for social change through legislative action. One of the best strategic courses of action to abate the prevalent practice of precarious work is to amend or craft new laws that will give more protection to job security in the workplace.

The unions should also recruit or organize precarious workers into unions (86.0%). Although this is a herculean task they face, they have no recourse but to start recruiting and organizing these non-regular workers to add political power and use this as leverage with management in the hotel industry.

The third action is to include contract workers in collective bargaining arrangements (86.0%). Since the present Labor Code is silent on this matter, the unions can always include this as part of its CBA proposal, where contract workers should be part of the collective bargaining unit, they can be members of the union, and that they will be entitled to the same working conditions as regular workers. This means that unions should be able to “negotiate for the same wages, working conditions, benefits and job stability for precarious workers” (80.6%).

Lastly, as an on-going crusade, the unions should be able to demand that employers reduce or eliminate the use of contract labor and other forms of precarious work (76.3%). There are several venues open to unions by which this can be done. These venues are the Labor-Management Council in the hotel, collective bargaining negotiations, legislative action in Congress, and political action both at the national and international levels with the help of ILO and international labor federations fighting for the same cause to combat precarious work.

## CONCLUSION

Findings revealed that the specific employment practices that are often associated with precarious work in the unionized hotels are the hiring of labor via employment agencies or labor brokers, on call/daily/per function hiring, and contracting out functions/tasks to other companies. The main factors that drive unionized hotels to resort to precarious work practices are to lower expenses or costs for salaries and benefits, reduce number of regular workers, or prevent their regularization that weaken union or prevent unionization, and promote flexibility of labor.

Moreover, precarious work practices have significantly weakened the union as an organization since their membership continue to decline and their source of fund is reduced. When the workers are not regular, they are unable to fully exercise union rights or avail of union benefits and privilege. On the part of women workers, they are prevented from becoming regular employees and as such they cannot become union member and denies them of union representation. Since they are not regular employees, they receive lower wages and they are not entitled to benefits. It can be inferred that precarious employment is undermining worker rights, the scope and coverage of collective bargaining, as well as wages and working conditions in the hotel industry.

The practice of precarious work in the unionized hotels has also affected the workplace health and safety. It creates the tendency for workers to have multiple jobs in multiple sites in the hotel. The contractual or temporary workers are assigned to irregular or very limited hours of work and/or long work shifts/work days or work weeks which the regular workers are seldom assigned to. As such, the precarious workers experience toxic or stressful psycho-social working conditions which are not good for their personal wellness and workplace safety.

These vulnerable workers in the unionized hotels who are exposed to work which are

insecure, unpredictable, hazardous, and with low and unstable income, suffer greatly whether the economy is up or down. The practice of precarious employment has primarily resulted in the declining living standards of the workers and it is contributing to the rising poverty in the country. When workers have small and less income, which is even below the minimum wage, they are not able to afford even the minimum requirements of quality living which includes decent shelter, clothing, to eat three times a day, access to good education, private health care, and simple recreation. On a macro level, lower or no income means no tax collections and revenue for the government which is used to finance government expenditures for education, health, social protection, and other social services necessary to keep a stable and afloat economy. Therefore, precarious work creates insecurity and leads to increases in inequality and poverty which defies the principles of decent work.

Therefore, there is an urgent need to combat the rising incidence of precarious work in the hotel industry. The overall goal is to ensure that precarious, which is the enemy of decent work, does not become the dominant feature of the working relationship between workers and employers. The trade unionists strongly believe that what they can do as a priority is to lobby for new or changes in laws to promote job security. This is the spirit behind the role of the unions as catalysts for social change through legislative action. One of the best strategic courses of action to abate the prevalent practice of precarious work is to amend or craft new laws that will give more protection to job security in the workplace. The hotel industry trade unionists recognize that theirs and the other private initiatives will not be adequate. It is imperative that a strong government action be taken. It must take up the challenge by reversing its policies of labor deregulation and contractualization that have facilitated the growth of precarious work but instead have at their core, creating good jobs and improving the quality of work which is in accordance with the Decent Work Platform of the International

Labour Organization. "The ideal firm envisioned by Pope Benedict, however, would attend to the dignity of all significant stakeholders involved. Paying a living wage respects the dignity of the workers and enables them to exercise their right of participation in the society" (Williams, 2013, p.4).

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