

**WEDNESDAY 20 APRIL 2022, 16:45 - 17:45**

## **WORK, EMPLOYMENT AND ECONOMIC LIFE STREAM PLENARY**

### **CSR and corporate control of regulatory processes: the impact on labour and the workplace**

**Convenors:** Jonathan Preminger, Jill Timms, Rachel Cohen

#### **ABSTRACT**

In 2020, Joel Bakan released a follow-up film to his 2004 book *The Corporation: the Pathological Pursuit of Profit and Power*. The film, subtitled *An Unfortunately Necessary Sequel*, explores the use of corporate social responsibility (CSR) as a tool that enables corporations to capture the process of regulation and shape it to their interests – at the same time shrinking the areas of social life that remain under effective democratic oversight. A parallel process was the withdrawal of direct state intervention in the social-economic sphere, and the increasing use of market mechanisms to reach “desired outcomes”, placing increasing power in the hands of market actors.

The Covid pandemic forced us to reimagine state capacities, demonstrating the state’s willingness to directly intervene on a massive scale but also its ability to bypass democratic processes and evade democratic accountability – to the benefit of government’s corporate buddies.

Focusing on the classic sociological question of the relationship between democracy, voice and participation on one hand, and economic systems and market actors on the other, this stream plenary will explore the impact of this de-democratisation and de-politicisation on labour and the workplace, linking to key sociopolitical challenges such as inequality and climate change.

**Chair:** Jill Timms, Department of Sociology, University of Surrey and WEEL Co-Convenor

#### **Speakers:**

##### **Dr Rami Kaplan**

Rami is an Assistant Professor in the Departments of Sociology and Anthropology and Labour Studies at the Tel Aviv University. He works at the intersection of political sociology, organizational sociology, and political economy, and often applies historical and comparative approaches. His research spans various aspects of global corporate capitalism, including its historical emergence and expansion, business and society politics, corporate power and social responsibility, global diffusion of ideas and practices, global governance, neoliberalism, transnational business elite networks, and global environmental politics. See: <https://english.tau.ac.il/profile/ramikaplan>

##### **Prof Stephen Vertigans**

Steven is currently Head of School of Applied Social Studies at Robert Gordon University, Aberdeen. His research interests include different forms of violence, resilience in informal settlements and corporate social responsibility, particularly within the energy sector. See: <https://www3.rgu.ac.uk/dmstaff/vertigans-stephen>

##### **Dr Luc Fransen**

Luc is Associate Professor of International Relations and member of the Political Economy and Transnational Governance Research Group, as well as the Transnational Configurations, Conflict and Governance Research Group at the University of Amsterdam. Luc’s research interests include the politics of Corporate Social Responsibility, sustainable development in global supply chains, private standard-setting, transnational civil society activism and international organizations. See: <https://www.uva.nl/en/profile/f/r/l.w.fransen/l.w.fransen.html>