**Eloisa Betti**, University of Bologna, Italy, email: [eloisabetti@gmail.com](mailto:eloisabetti@gmail.com)

***Gender and precarious labour in industrial and post-industrial Western Europe (XIX –XXI century)***

The contribution investigates the historical relationship between gender and precarious labor in XIX-XXI century Western Europe, by comparing the historical path of countries such as Italy, France, England and Germany thanks to both primary and secondary sources. A gendered historical approach actually shows that different production modes and working conditions were present not only in late 19th – early 20th century but also in Fordist and post-Fordist societies, questioning the “Standard Employment Relationship” as a norm even in Western Europe. Women, as well as migrants, experienced a significant level of precariousness even in the so-called golden age of the 20th century. Sexual division of labour and sex-based discrimination seem to lie at the very heart of the gendered nature of precarious work, a long dureé nexus that has characterized both industrial and post-industrial European societies. By approaching the question of job precariousness as a multi-faceted phenomenon, this contribution claims that the subsequent spread of precarious work in the 19th, 20th and 21st century was directly affected by labour and women’s movement struggles, on the one hand, and by the role of the state and politics in defining and redefining the labour law relationship, on the other. The gender approach plays a crucial role in deconstructing well-known periodization and interpretation (i.e. Fordism/Post-Fordism) mainly provided from economic history and sociology as well as in investigating the relationship between economic cycles and employment stability, which appears to be the fruit of a non-linear process, not exclusively dependent on the economic cycles. The relationship between precarious labour and free/unfree labour will be explored, in order to understand how job precariousness have influenced the recurrent spread of unfree labour in industrial and post-industrial societies and viceversa.