



## **IKON and Industrial Relations Unit (IRRU) Joint Seminar**

Seminar Speaker Series – Summer 2022

**Speaker:** Deborah Giustini, KU Leuven  
**Title:** Embedded Strangers in One's Own Job? Invisible Work: A Practice Theory Approach  
**Date:** Tuesday 19 July 2022  
**Venue:** Hybrid – Warwick Business School, room 2.214 and Teams Meeting  
**Time:** 13:00 – 14:30 (BST)  
**Abstract:**

This seminar discusses invisible work in the language interpreting sector in the UK. Informed by a practice theory approach, this seminar discusses the ways in which the organisation of work itself, besides externally enacted mechanisms, can become a precondition for its devaluation. I reframe invisibility as a functional labour logic enacted according to the elements that accomplish work in terms of purposeful, normative, skilful, and competitive actions. I exemplify these arguments through an ethnographic study of freelance simultaneous interpreters in the UK, who face contradictions between deontological and stakeholders' expectations of self-annihilation and the need to display an expert role for securing professional and economic security in a precarious work environment. Interpreters are to behave as unobtrusively as possible, but in doing so they might fail to command material and symbolic rewards. As a consequence, the organisation of interpreting work entails constant compliance and resistance to being unseen, as the twofold cornerstone of professionalism but also devaluation. This reframing contributes to social practice and invisible work scholarship by uncovering the organisational and performative interrelation of the work dynamics, which demand a negotiation of hidden/visible status.

**Deborah Giustini** is postdoctoral fellow and lecturer at KU Leuven and alumna of the University of Manchester (PhD Sociology). She uses practice theory & ethnography to study invisible labour, professional expertise, power & workplace discrimination, and digitalization tensions in the language industry and platform economy. She is part of the Practice Theory Consortium (Lancaster University), editorial board member of *Interpreting & Society* and of the *British Journal of Sociology*. Her research features in journals such as *Work, Employment and Society*. Deborah is also a Chartered Institute of Linguists (CIOL) accredited interpreter and executive council member of the International Association of Translation and Intercultural Studies (IATIS).

**Registration:** Book now via email to [IKON@wbs.ac.uk](mailto:IKON@wbs.ac.uk) . Please state if you will be attending in-person or online via Teams Meeting.

