

La soutenance de mémoire de Master en sciences sociales  
- *pilier géographie* - de

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**Worker Cooperatives' Potential to Transform Migrant Women's  
Social Position and Agency:  
A Participatory Mixed Methods Study in New York City**

aura lieu le

**21 novembre 2019 à 15h00**

dans l'alvéole B.1.38 (FLSH).

Directrice de mémoire : Prof. Yvonne RIAÑO

Experte : Dr. Sarah SCHILLIGER

**Résumé :**

For many migrant women in New York City, structural discrimination and administrative hurdles complicate access to well-paid and safe labor. Worker cooperatives have been shown to reduce precariousness and economic exclusion of marginalized groups. However, while much is known about the worker cooperatives' economic impact on workers' lives, other social effects remain far less explored. The present research contributes to filling this gap by examining the change in the social position and agency of migrant women in their everyday lives after joining a worker cooperative. Combining an intersectional perspective with Bourdieu's different forms of capital and the concept of self-empowerment, I analyze changes in everyday lives of migrant women who are members of nine different cleaning- or care-worker cooperatives in New York City. A participatory research approach gave access to data sources, including interviews, participatory observations and a quantitative survey. The findings reveal that worker cooperatives have empowering effects on migrant women beyond the sphere of paid work. While the additional unpaid workload as co-owners of cooperatives represents an extra burden for many migrant women, they now have better wages, more flexibility and safer work places. Furthermore, they acquire different leadership skills, enlarge their social network beyond their ethnic communities and earn increased respect as co-owners of a business. Through worker-ownership, migrant women increase their economic, cultural, social and symbolic capital, which enables them to exercise more agency not only in their paid work life sphere, but also in their families and during leisure time.